

West Ashton Magazine



Rio the Cotswold ram, Larkrise Community Farm. 'Watch out ladies, I've got my eye on ewe.'

Photo Ashley Wicks

In This Issue...

NHS Day

Disaster

Nature Notes

And Much More....

Our community magazine keeping you up to date in West Ashton, Rood Ashton, East Town, and Dunge.

The West Ashton Magazine is published quarterly by the West Ashton Parish Council. WAPC has devolved full authority for the magazine to an independent volunteer Editorial Group formed for the sole purpose of producing this magazine. The intention is to inform and entertain the residents of West Ashton. The magazine is distributed free of charge to all residents of West Ashton village. The Editors warmly invite you to submit reports, articles and photographs relating to past or future village issues and events, or any subject that may be of interest to the readership. The editors reserve the right to edit any submissions and make corrections, omit material or do minor reorganisation to any submitted work and reserve the right to reject any submissions. We prefer typed or electronic material. Photos will be returned on request.

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All contributions welcomed. Please send them, in the first instance, to Jo Watkins.

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EDITORIAL

It goes without saying that these haven't been the best of times. Only those who are able can continue to enjoy the footpaths and get out. For those on their own life must be difficult during these never-ending difficult times. The bright side is that a good proportion of us will have been vaccinated, and hopefully will be allotted more freedom after 8th March. Please can I add a request that all correspondence must be accompanied by a name and address, as otherwise, in accordance with editorial policy, I will be unable to include them in the magazine. The sender's details can be withheld if requested. I would like to thank Briken Motors for their past sponsorship, and Paul Pursey and JW Ransome Skip Hire for their future support in the printing of this magazine. During the January snowfall, thanks go to one public spirited person who took the trouble to clear a pathway along the pavements in Bratton Road. Never again will I take anything for granted. Hopefully normal life will return this coming year.

Jo Watkins



**Footpaths through the snow.
Photos Geoff Watkins**



Photo Neil Heard

In Memoriam - Daphne Petrie 1934-2021

Colonial by birth, Daphne's childhood was spent in India where her father worked for the Indian railways. With an older brother and sister, an ayah looked after her until she was five when she was sent off to school in the Nilgiri Hills as her parents lived in remote stations. As it was a military school, all the pupils were taught to march. Her mother thought this was highly unsuitable for a young lady, so she was then sent to Bishop Cotton's School for Girls in Bangalore until she was 18. Daphne had a typical colonial upbringing where recreational activities centred around the Institute where dances were held, and she and her family played billiards and her parents bridge.

At the tender age of 19, she sailed to England to make her fortune. Eventually after several moves and jobs including a four month stay in Rome, Daphne had her first interview with the Dorchester Hotel. She didn't get the job as she was in competition with a debutante, but was lucky second time around. Starting off as an office junior, she ended up as an Assistant Public Relations Officer. From then on, she mixed with celebrities, royalty and big shots from the business world. She knew Lord Snowden well, and helped with the publicity for the wedding of Pamela Mountbatten. Daphne had many reminiscences of Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton and played a major role in arranging Richard's 50th birthday party. She was entrusted with sole responsibility for the Queen Mother's fox fur wrap when visiting the Dorchester, which she tried on and did a twirl when no-

one was looking.

Daphne met her husband David while they were both working at the Dorchester Hotel, and lived in London until 1993 when they retired and moved to Bratton Road. With a complete change of lifestyle, they both immersed themselves in village life, with Daphne supporting David with his nursery business and joining in with Village Hall activities. She was an accomplished embroiderer, a skill learned in India, and was a member of the Embroiderer's Guild. A very popular lady, Daphne had many friends far and wide, was generous with her time and immensely supportive and kind to everyone she met. Ill health forced Daphne and David to move from Bratton Road. She will be sadly missed. It was a privilege to have known her.

Jo Watkins



In Memoriam – Roy And Margaret Matthew, Ashton Heights

Roy was a local man, who along with his brother Brian started the engineering and engraving company Matthew and Sons on Trowbridge Road Westbury in 1964. Whilst Brian ran the engineering side, Roy managed the engraving section which proved to be a highly successful and well respected business. Roy took great pride in the finished product and his many valued customers. He took part in many local fund raising events for charities and also enjoyed organising the company's annual staff outings such as to London's West End shows. Along with his wife Margaret, he enjoyed his many cruise holidays, but had also enjoyed living in West Ashton having moved from Westbury many years ago until his recent death in The Oaks Nursing Home.

Margaret was a very quiet but kind and caring lady and whilst not having any children of her own, was always interested in

and enquiring after other people and their family's welfare. For some years she played an active role within the engraving company. Margaret was a very keen and accomplished gardener and enjoyed passing her knowledge on to others. She spent a lot of her time tending her large garden and like her husband Roy thoroughly enjoyed her cruise holidays. Shortly after she moved to West Ashton, Margaret joined the village Wives group and was a regular and familiar face at the monthly meetings until eventually poor health prevented her from attending. She was a familiar sight in Tesco, travelling up and down the aisles in her motorised scooter. Even with her own health issues she continued to look after Roy and will be sadly missed by those who knew her.

Wendy Bartlett



Village Hall Coffee Morning

Not to be outdone by Covid, and keeping the spirit alive, Margaret and Paul Workman brought Christmas cheer to all the regulars by delivering (socially distancing of course) mince pies (individually wrapped). What a kind thought. Roll on the re-opening of this popular event.

Jo Watkins

Public Sector Network • Special Announcement • January 2021

PSN is proud to be supporting The NHS, Social Care and Frontline Workers' Day event planned for the 5th July 2021 and organised by the Pageantmaster Bruno Peek. We are sharing this in the hope you will help to raise awareness and encourage your staff, students and the public to participate. The aim is to help everyone recognise, celebrate and express gratitude for the crucial contribution of all those working within the frontlines of Health and Social Care. - www.nhsfrontlineday.org

Over the decades the NHS has faced crisis, economic downturns, periods of prosperity, growth and so much more. However, none would argue that these past long months have brought a new respect and affection for the NHS and



the people who work for it; we have relied on them to treat us during the coronavirus pandemic and to keep to safe – and they have not let us down.

Let's not also forget the tens of thousands of care home workers too who have given their skills and service – often putting their own health on the line to keep safe the elderly and vulnerable.

I believe a national, annual day when we remember to thank them all - for being there when we need you most – is not only appropriate, it taps into the nation's high regard it has for NHS staff and all care and frontline workers. It will comprise of a series of events throughout the day, all of which (bar the ringing of the bells) can be enjoyed during lockdown - although we hope this won't be the case.



Shepherds Drove VE Day celebrations last year

Photo Naomi Harford

These milestone events (which are outlined fully on the website www.nhsfrontlineday.org) are designed to involve as many aspects of our wide and diverse society as possible, and are being organised to raise money for NHS Charities Together, set up to support 250 hospitals and their charitable trusts, and for the National Care Association, a membership body representing 1.6 million workers caring for some of society's frailest citizens.

It is impossible to predict whether the crisis caused by COVID-19 will be over on July 5, 2021, so the following events could be subject to change, but provision will be made in the planning for all eventualities.

However, the guarantee is that ALL

proceeds raised will be used in supporting the health and wellbeing of NHS staff and Care Association workers and will be divided equally between those member hospital trusts and care providers.

The plan is to make this an annual event, growing in size and stature involving individuals, local communities and others. Those taking part are being asked to register their involvement on the website www.nhsfrontlineday.org and they can also download a special certificate to keep as a permanent reminder of their participation in this most special of events.

I do hope that you will take part in one or more of the above activities on July 5 2021.

These activities include:

- 10am: The raising of the Rainbow Flag
- 11am: The Two Minute Silence, playing of the Last Post and Reveille
- 1pm: The Nation's Toast to the Heroes of the NHS, Social Care and Frontline Workers
- 1pm – Onwards: Garden Parties at Home and celebrations in the gardens of Pubs, Hotels and Restaurants etc.
- 3pm Afternoon tea, led by the members of the National Federation of Women's Institutes and the NHS Big Tea Initiative
- 8pm: Clapping & the Ringing of Church Bells

A DIY JOB TOO FAR

I'll have a go at most things when it comes to Do It Yourself, and of course 2020 provided many opportunities to "get those jobs done!" Our garden rises approximately 1.5 meters (5 feet in old money) from patio ground level, so to gain access there is a flight of six steps. Now, over the years, I have had cause to move these steps on no less than five occasions and, for mostly aesthetic reasons, November saw me making the last of these. Adjacent to the steps ran a length of wood cladding, forming a decorative wall against a sheer drop of clay. Apart from the glorious weather we experienced dur-

ing the first pandemic lockdown, we really did have a lot of rain in 2020, so much so that the weight of water in the ground started to make the wooden wall 'bow'. Ok I thought – dismantle the wooden wall, replace it with a breeze block wall, then reface the blocks with the original wood – simple! Except, having partly built the blocks, on the morning of 25 November we were awoken to a sudden thud! The photo tells it all. Suffice it is to say that I was subsequently 'instructed' to employ a professional to finish the job, which is just what I did.

Paul Workman



OUR NEW PARISH COUNCIL CLERK – NICKY BULL



I was born in Bath and my first job was with Barclays Bank starting as a junior. During my varied career spanning 30 years I passed my Chartered Institute of Banking exams and became an Associate, and later moved into Human Resources gaining my Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development as a Member.

After Barclays I worked as an HR Manager for a Motorcycle Specialist in Bristol for 15 years, and my last job before retiring was covering maternity leave in a bun factory in Warminster. I gained several pounds in that job, as we had to quality taste the cinnamon, Chelsea and other buns on a daily basis!

In January 2020 I signed up with Wiltshire Host Families which involved taking in for-

eign students from March 2020. You know what happened next.....! As I was unable to get involved with the Host Families I volunteered to help the scouts maintain the land at Jubilee Wood, and had a great time for a few months learning new skills. I love to travel and have been lucky enough to fly on Concorde and more recently climb Sydney Harbour Bridge, and zip wire across Victoria Falls. When we are able to move around again I would like to travel to Japan and Canada, and catch up with friends in the USA.

I live in Shepherds Drove, and as you may know I have recently taken over as Parish Clerk, so if you have any issues to report you can e-mail westash-tonpc@outlook.com or ring 01225 754552.

Having had to close Jubilee Wood once again due to Covid restrictions, there is not much to report. Our Scout Groups are continuing to provide some very successful on-line scouting. However, providing what is essentially a group activity through Zoom has not come easy to some of our leaders, and some parents are worried about the amount of screen time that their children are exposed to. So, while some of our groups and sections are flourishing, others are sadly struggling. Hopefully, it will not be too long before we can get back to face to face scouting and do our bit to help improve the health and well-being of our children

The heavy rain of recent weeks and months has left the ground waterlogged, but things are nothing like as bad as they were when we had to wade through thick mud to plant the trees. Working as individuals, we are slowly completing winter maintenance tasks such as hedging and ditching. Replacement trees, mainly alder, have been planted where there are gaps and we continue to remove tubes where the trees are sufficiently grown. The tubes and stakes are being saved for use in the new woodland that we hope to create in neighbouring fields if we can raise enough money to enable us to do our bit to help fight climate change. Unfortunately, the deer are damaging some of the smaller trees and over-browsing the shrubs. They normally lie up in Biss Wood and visit Jubilee Wood and the local fields to feed at dawn and dusk. There is a lot of evidence to suggest that increased visitor numbers to Biss Wood are changing the habits of both the roe and muntjac, which are be-

coming nocturnal feeders in order to avoid early morning joggers. To enhance biodiversity and encourage wildlife, shrub cuttings are being nurtured to plant on the woodland edges, and wildflower seed has been sown on parts of our two largest clearings. An unmown strip is being left around the clearings and on either side of the rides to encourage butterflies, moths and insects.

I have reported previously how well our trees are growing but, much to our pleasant surprise, it has been necessary to begin coppicing hazel and thinning some trees where they have been growing too densely. The wood generated is being saved for fencing. Hopefully, it won't be too many years before Jubilee Wood is displaying brilliant autumn colours that rival those that we saw this autumn in Biss Wood. I'm told that the purple leaf colours are borne on a North American variety of ash, so we will be shopping for some of these for our new woodland – but only if they are resistant to ash die-back of course

John Cox, Chairman, Wiltshire West District.

Creating a better world



**We prepare young people
with skills for life**

Larkrise Farm Managers AGM Report - Wednesday 14th October 2020

Lockdown no 3 has arrived, luckily though this time things have been slightly different as we have been fortunate to be able to stay open for adults. Being able to keep them in a routine has certainly helped with their wellbeing, with all staff following the guidelines enabling us to keep everyone safe on the farm. We have at the moment, two members of staff back on furlough but on a part-time basis, and another two members working from home a couple of days a week. January saw one of our long-standing adults celebrate his 40th Birthday, Damian Chilcott who has been with us for around 22 years, **HAPPY BIRTHDAY DAMIAN**

Some of our staff have been learning new skills. As we are unable to accept school students at the moment, we have been offering certain students 'online lessons'. This has been very interesting not only for

the students but some of the staff included, they have surprised

themselves with their new skills. We are able to walk around the farm talking through the lesson with a student following what they have been learning on the farm before the lockdown. Where we are unable to use real ponies on some of the subjects, we have had help from our friendly wooden horse 'Woody'. Less maintenance with Woody, no mucking out, no feed costs and stands still forever!! Stay Safe everyone,

Wendy Self, Farm Manager



West Ashton School

Thankfully we made the most of our time in school during the Autumn term as once again we are learning remotely. Despite the social distance restrictions, our youngest children were able to perform their annual nativity and the rest of the school could enjoy it as it was broadcast into each classroom. Many other Christmas activities had to be tailored or cancelled and we very much missed our Christmas Service at St John's. Children were surprised though by a visit from Father Christmas who respectfully waited on the playground outside each classroom, waved, wished the children Happy Christmas and then left a gift for each of them. We were also able

to celebrate with staff and pupils enjoying lunch and crackers together in their classrooms, not quite the usual Christmas dinner but great fun with lots of enthusiastic dancing!

January has seen the school open to only essential key worker children with the majority learning from home via live or recorded lessons. The snow did break up the monotony a little and provided a wonderful opportunity to share stories the following day. We are all very much looking forward to having our school community back under one roof.

Alex Blake-Thwaite, senior teacher

NATURE NOTES



Holly Westlake sent this picture in of an owl that flew down her daughter's chimney. She didn't find it straight away and took it to a wild-life sanctuary where it was rehydrated and fed. It was collected and released in her garden. The good news is they have seen it since it flew off.



Photo Rich Fricker



A tree in blossom, Kettle Lane
Photo Paul Workman



Candlesnuff fungus spotted in Flowers
Wood – Photo Peter Hughes

POTTERING IN THE GARDEN

What a challenge with a title such as this when we seem to be having so much rain, the very time we should all be keeping off our gardens, as it does more harm than good to even be walking across it! Having been given one of those kneeler stools, as a Christmas gift that allow you to sit or kneel for weeding, I braved the elements in January to weed as far as I could reach without leaving the lawn area. Nothing short of madness really, but dry, cold and windy I can do, as it's not the weather, but the type of clothes you wear - well, according to my daughter.

I have spent lots of time in the greenhouse, potting on scented stocks, which were from seed planted as soon as I collected them from the plants. I feel I need to slow them down for fear that they will be in flower before they can be planted out after the last frosts. So as a safety measure I will transplant the rest of the seedlings in the tray that would have been surplus, and otherwise wasted.

I believe I have had a fox that comes to drink at night from the header basin of my pond, who puts his paws on the cascade and nudges it just enough, so that the water outlet is spilling onto the garden. The pump continues until the water level is down below the pump, so must raise the new one to a higher point, as the fish, by the time I noticed, were in one and a half foot of water. **S.O.S** A human chain would have reduced my stress, but that was not a possibility in covid times. Thank goodness for the water butts and hoses, and a deter-

mined me, with a rotation of buckets to add to the depth more quickly!

It's mid January as I'm writing this, and the 'Tete- a- Tete' daffodils are in tight green bud, snowdrops are showing their closed white heads, hellebores already flowering, so it's a great feeling that spring is on its way with better times ahead. **TOP TIP** that comes to mind, is to get out there as soon as the weather permits. It's definitely what I intend to do!

Holly Westlake



Parish Council Matters

Parish Council, Nicky Bull is the parish council clerk and can be contacted on 01225 754552 or email: westash-tonpc@outlook.com

The West Ashton Parish Council website is now up and running and can still be reached via the old website. Please take a look as it now has an audio facility - <http://www.westashton.org.uk/>

If you have any comments or wish to contact the parish council please contact Nicky.

Parish Councillors are: Richard Covington (Chair), Simon Alford (Vice-Chair), Steve Molloy, Ian Robertson, Horace Prickett (Wilts Councillor).

The parish council continues to meet online using “Zoom”.

Neighbourhood Plan – The examiner is nearly 90% towards completing her report and will then be considering whether an area site visit is needed, which will have happened by the end of January.

The outcome will be a referendum in May and final adoption of the plan.

Fly Tipping – Contact Wiltshire Council on 01225 777234 or online at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/parkingtransportandstreets/roadshighwaysstreetcare/mywiltshirereport.htm>

Community Speed Watch (CSW) – The kit to carry out speed watch has been allocated and a couple of sessions have been

done. Again, it would be really helpful for more volunteers to get involved. It is usually only a couple of hours a week and unlikely to be more than once every two or three weeks.

Footpath – Mr Pike the owner of the field between the school and church has agreed that the some soil can be stripped back and stone laid underneath then covered back over with soil so that there will be a similar surface to the one that led from the school grounds to the church. The contractor who will do the work is aiming for a date in April when the ground conditions will be better. All being well and if the surface of the path settles and the grass grows back nicely then hopefully Wiltshire Council will be in a position to sign the path off towards the end of May.

Recreation Area – The area has had its annual inspection, which has resulted in few issues to be addressed on the basis of a risk assessment. Unfortunately some rubbish has been dumped in the area and the waste bin needs relocating.

Pavements – There has been an increase in dog fouling again along the pavements that were then cleaned on the 21st January 2021 by Wiltshire Council’s street scene team using their footway sweeper. It is an offence for dogs to foul pavements so for the small number who do not, please go prepared to clear up after your dogs as most people do.

Highways – As some of you may have seen in the Wiltshire Times, there has been a letter complaining about the hedge cutting on the West Ashton road towards Dunge. The hedges have also been cut along Sandy Lane and East Town. Farmers normally cut hedgerows in January and February to tidy them up and encourage growth for the coming year. The regulations do not permit the cutting of trees or hedges between 1st March and 31st August., they can only be cut between those dates with derogation, which can be applied for before any new grass ley or oil seed rape is sown in the autumn.

This is the reporting about the letter to Wiltshire Times: <https://www.wiltshiretimes.co.uk/news/19026274.road-west-ashton-bratton-left-in-appalling-state-claims-woman--think/>. The photo in the paper doesn't look good but the hedge was in a mess before and branches were also sticking out into the road before it was cut.

Richard Covington, Parish Council Chairman

Wiltshire County and Parish Council Elections May 5th 2021

MAKE SURE YOUR VOTE COUNTS

WEST ASHTON PARISH COUNCIL IS LISTED FOR AN ELECTION BUT YOU MUST BE ON THE ELECTORAL REGISTER BY APRIL 12th.

With the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions and to ensure we all stay safe, if you haven't I would encourage you to apply for a postal vote for the May 2021 Unitary Council election.

It is easy to action and anyone on the electoral register can apply via:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-a-postal-vote

Once you've printed and completed the postal vote form, please can you send it to:

Electoral Services, Wiltshire Council, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN

IF I CAN HELP OR BE OF ASSISTANCE, PLEASE CONTACT ME - Cllr. Horace Prickett, Southwick Division (West Ashton, Southwick and North Bradley) on 01225 766 685 OR 07888 99 70 50 or Coppersend@aol.com or Coppers End, 2 Hawkeridge Road, Yarnbrook, BA14 6AD

Disaster! On How a Second Cuppa Probably Saved My life

Some of you who have driven through Dunge on the way towards Edington, Bratton or Steeple Ashton may have been wondering why the bungalow on the left has a large panel of timber across the front. Well, it's like this... Jane and I have been observing the Covid-19 regulations really well and have kept ourselves fairly well isolated – not hard out here in Dunge. On a pleasant morning of 23rd of September, Jane and I decided to have a second cuppa. This was somewhat unusual as I wanted to surge ahead with work on my laptop and Jane would be busy in the kitchen, as always. Her baking prowess has resulted in noticeable expansion to my tummy – a condition I intend to reverse in the New Year. I said that last New Year! I digress, back to *that* day.

As we settled at the kitchen table a few things happened at once. The cat gave a shriek and shot like a streak of black lightning along the passage towards the bedrooms. There was a crash – a big one – and the sound of glass shattering. Being stuck in a wheelchair means I don't get around that quickly but Jane leapt up to investigate. "There's a car in the living room wall," she said, rather matter-of-factly. "Er" I answered, not often being quick on the uptake. I wheeled in and there it was. Where the radiator should have been was a hole filled with the grill, fairing and number plate of a small car. Well, have a look at the photos and you'll see the devastation. We still had the car parts in the front garden until December! The car itself was just a few days old!

As many of you may know, I'm the chairperson of a local charity, Trowbridge Link. Our visitor was a lady who had volunteered to be a driver and was coming round to pick up her PPE pack. She stepped out of her car and, thankfully, was unhurt. Within half an hour we had the fire brigade, police, the landlord and his agent. To make sure the driver was uninjured, Jane called for an ambulance which arrived soon after with two paramedics. Who else came to join the party? Oh yes, a building surveyor from Wiltshire Council. As you can by now imagine, this was blowing a big hole in the maximum of six people per household! Oh well, the nice police officer was there, he didn't seem to notice. He did say, "There's only about forty or fifty feet from the gate to the front of the house. What on earth was she doing?" "About twenty-five miles per hour," I replied. Rumbblings were now being made by the building surveyor about us having to move out. We whinged and were told we could stay. The rest of the house seemed habitable so why move? Meanwhile the poor driver was in our kitchen repeatedly saying that she was fine and that she had to get another car immediately because she had a Link task that very afternoon. We informed her that drive was covered by another driver. Builders provided through the agents came along in the afternoon and shored up the front of the house to make sure it wouldn't collapse with cracks in the walls, damage to a roof timber, the living room floor destroyed, and more.



repairs will start until Easter, so it is said. We try not to go in there now unless absolutely necessary. It's now referred to as "The Room of Doom!" Our landlord has been brilliant as have the agents. We can't thank them enough. Anybody want to buy a second-hand car number plate? It would be ideal if you have a car with registration WV70 TYB.

**** Update ****

Of our own belongings, we lost three rugs, written off by the water from the radiator pipes as well as a laptop, iPad, lead crystal bowl and coffee maker, all of which were on, or next to, my antique desk which was shattered by the impact. If I had been sitting there instead of having another cup of tea, I would have been written off too. Jane had nightmares for over a week. The cat, I hear you ask, or had you forgotten? She was under the bed in the spare bedroom and didn't come out for ten hours.

The outlook? With the Covid-19 restrictions, things will move agonisingly slowly. We've had a number of visits from surveyors and recently a couple of builders from firms invited by tender to put in their quotations. By the time these are processed and a lucky builder is selected by the insurance company, it will be into the New Year. It is probable that no building

Christmas was saved! We had a site meeting in December, repairs started in January 2021, Covid-19 permitting, and we didn't have to move out. They should be finished by Easter.

Paul Boyce

Upper Dunge Bungalow



Life in a Village on a Designated Strategic HGV Route and the lost £8.5m



Last remaining flexi-bollard designed to stop vehicles mounting the pavement.

It's nearly a year since the start of the first Pandemic lockdown and the start of HGVs banned from Bath being diverted to the A350. The first lockdown saw far fewer vehicles using Yarnbrook Road and more walkers, runners and cyclists. All returned to super-normal by summer with an estimated 300 extra diverted HGVs thundering through our village every day. We clung to the prospect of the West Ashton Yarnbrook relief road for which Wiltshire Council had secured £8.5m government funding. Work was expected to start in July 2020. Surveyors had been spotted on site, but not diggers. We wrote to Wiltshire Council to find out what was happening. In August 2020 Cllr Bridget Wayman (Highways Transport and Waste) told us that the works were out to tender and that it was expected that contractors would be on site in early 2021. In December 2020 we wrote again to Cllr Wayman to discover that the requirement to spend the £8.5m government funding by 31 March 2021 wouldn't be met and the money would be lost. The Council said "The Yarnbrook West Ashton relief road remains a commitment for us and

will be delivered as the required access and mitigation for the Per-simmon development at Ashton Park...I cannot give you a timeframe for delivery as it is dependent on the occupations of the houses to be developed." A "Yes, Minister" moment for me. So it looks like we have to lump life on the road for another decade or more. I've turned to working to make Yarnbrook Road look more cared for by working to clear the footway of overgrown hedges and encroaching soil and vegetation that narrow the footpath by up to a metre in places, and to pick up the unbelievable amounts of rubbish chucked out of passing vehicles. The Parish Steward did a great job in 2020 of clearing the footway from WA crossroads to the lay-by outside 54/56 Yarnbrook Road. But this needs to be extended down to Kettle Lane and done annually. My Yarnbrook Road neighbour got the council to put up flexi posts to stop vehicles mounting the pavement. Sadly at least one of these was quickly crushed. We are doing work ourselves and will keep on the case via the Parish Council.

Pauline Hume, Yarnbrook Road

LE LOCKDOWN

Having been fortunate enough to escape to our holiday home in south west France for three months last August, we found it interesting to experience Covid restrictions and a lockdown there – far stricter than the UK.

En route to France we stopped in Jersey for a few hours to change vessels where we were given a Covid test and had the results back in under 24 hours. Having received daily texts for three days asking us to reply WELL if we were OK or COVID if not, Neil sent a text asking them to stop contacting us as we had replied each day. Within minutes he had a call from the States of Jersey Health Department explaining that this process would last for 14 days so accordingly we sent out daily replies.

Prior to going into lockdown at the end of October at one day's notice, face masks and social distancing were compulsory in all shops with no exemptions, sanitizer available at the entrance and inside all shops, supermarkets disinfecting trolleys and directing shoppers to return used trolleys to a different place. All was fine and we felt incredibly safe particularly being in such a rural part of south west France. When lockdown was introduced on 30th October it certainly meant lockdown. We were restricted to the distance we could travel from our home and only for essential purposes with exercise being limited to five Kms from your home and for a maximum of one hour. Travelling to another department wasn't allowed and a curfew was introduced from 2100 to 0600 every night. Every time we went out we

had to carry a signed, timed and dated 'attestation' (exemption certificate) with us indicating the reason why we were out. If stopped by the gendarmes without such a certificate it was a €135 on the spot fine and if you couldn't pay for whatever reason, the gendarmes escorted you to the nearest cashpoint machine! Even before lockdown when face masks were compulsory, we heard of a local builder's merchants which let a customer in without a mask. When he left the shop the gendarmes were waiting and the customer was fined €350 and the shop €750. You certainly didn't dare flout the rules.

We decided to come home in early December when lockdown should have been lifted because of pending Brexit and the potential changes there could be to regulations, particularly surrounding pet travel. However, lockdown was extended but the journey home was the best in the 31 years since we bought the house – very little traffic on the roads and a very quiet ferry. Sadly, due to the new strain of the virus now gripping the UK, we are unable to return at the moment but will be back out there as soon as we can as life certainly feels far safer in the Gers. Finally, we just wanted to say a huge thank you to all our friends/neighbours who kept an eye on the house during our time away and doing our shopping during our self-isolation after we got home. You know who you all are and we're so grateful.

Roe Heard

Dee Dee's New Book

Long before Richard Brinsley Sheridan's new play 'The Rivals' gave it a name, the malapropism – known to the Irish as *coil-each focal suas*, to the Spanish as *palabra polla* and to the Australians as verbal cock-up – has been an endless source of merriment and not a little confusion. Dancer Dee Dee Wilde, a well known practitioner of the art of malapropism, now brings us this book of funny, bizarre and often naughty verbal accidents, charmingly illustrated by the author. The publisher is Austin MaCauley and a donation will be made to Help the Aged.



Reindeer wearing face masks, photo Neil Heard

A Piece Of West Ashton History Revisited

A few months have passed getting used to different tiers and now the latest lock-down, and we have been busy throughout! As you can see from the photo of the stone it has been repaired and is ready to become part of the barn again. My cousin, Richard, is a skilled cabinet maker and he has agreed to make the surround which will be mounted on the side of the barn in Shepherds Drove for the villagers to see and enjoy. We hope it will be completed in the next couple of months, subject to restrictions!

Nicky Bull



Photo of the stable block at Manor Farm, Bratton Road taken in 2001 by Pauline Hume. The building had an Edward V111 stone that was mentioned in an earlier issue of the magazine.

A First Class Idea - Spreading A Little Christmas Cheer

As we all wanted to keep in touch with our friends during the festive season and continue to send Christmas cards to keep in touch with one another, Lyn Pybus put her thinking cap on and came up with an admirable solution. She was more than happy to drop off any Christmas cards for anyone who went to Coffee Morning, W.I., Wives, or church services in the village and unable to deliver them, or find someone in the village who was willing to do so. To those living in outlying areas of the village, or further afield in the Trowbridge area, physically delivering cards is a problem and mailing is expensive. All we had to do was to drop them off in her porch and they would be delivered. It was as simple as that, and she and her helpers would do the rest. A network of 'Village Elves' very kindly stepped in and undertook the task of collecting and delivering cards for anyone unable to do so themselves. On behalf of everyone concerned, Lyn would like to thank all the 'Elves' for their splendid work in spreading much needed and appreciated Christmas cheer.

The Magazine 10 Years Ago

Parish Council – organised a ‘stone pick up’ on recreation land, Shepherds Drove, so that the council could be asked to roller the surface to have the area ‘**Fit for Purpose**’ before summertime. **Development of land off West Ashton Road, opposite the Wimpey estate.** Richard Covington attended this planning meeting and was largely instrumental in having any decision on this application deferred until such time as the Wiltshire Highways Department were able to demonstrate what proposals they would be making for the highway infrastructure in the area. **Review of parish boundaries.** It appeared that the Town Council had ambitions to enlarge the town boundary of Trowbridge quite considerably by taking in quite large areas of land from smaller parishes such as ours. A letter would be written to the officer in Wiltshire Council responsible for such reviews and to other senior council members to voice concerns and to state opposition to any such proposal. **Speed limits on the A350.** A report was received from WC regarding the speed limits within our parish which stated the present limits were suitable and no changes were necessary. Councillors

responded seeking a lower limit than the 50mph in force at the time. **Council charges.** The West Ashton part of the overall Council Tax would remain unchanged for the year 2011/2012.

The school – The headteacher organised a public meeting to tackle the parking issue head-on. Villagers and school children celebrated their own film success at an exciting film premiere of ‘West Ashton: Our Village History’. The 10 minute film featured the social history of the village and personal stories from villagers Cyril Sweetman, Sylvia Mills and Ken Rogers, who were interviewed by Year 6 students. The interviews were edited together by project leader and film producer Jamie McDine, who helped transport students back to the 1930s (thanks to the power of film) – with boys and girls playing on opposite sides of the playground and going on nature walks. The children all produced beautiful animations to illustrate the stories they had been told, from the famous Armstrong Whitworth Whitley crash landing, to the weavers working in their cottages. The film also featured beautiful images from around West Ashton, Rood Ashton and East Town.

New And Used Stamps For RNIB

If you would like to donate any postage stamps to this very worthy cause, then simply tear the stamps from any envelopes you receive through the post, but please REMEMBER TO LEAVE 1cm around each stamp, put them into an envelope and leave them in our front porch. I will leave a box, clearly marked for any ‘stamp’ donations you may wish to give. My address is:- 25 Bratton Rd, West Ashton. BA14 6AZ

Lyn (Pybus)

Pets Corner



Meet Conker, the latest addition to Clare Humphries' expanding herd of donkeys. Conker is about 13 years old, and comes to Clare after his previous role as a companion to an aged horse. Conker is very friendly, but his place in the herd pecking order is still being discussed (at length), even though he is a brother to two of the existing members. He is seen here in his winter coat, but come spring you can be sure that the rough coat will be shed, and Clare will be kept fully occupied with her task of clipping, shampooing, oiling, primping and preening the whole lot of them ready for the upcoming showing season (Covid willing).

Peter Hughes

Do you know what Services the Bobby Van can offer?

www.bobbyvan.org

Our clients do **NOT** need to have been victims of Crime. We can visit anyone aged 60 or over, (or younger if they are vulnerable through health or disability). It is a **FREE** service that we offer. We are able to do a security check and if appropriate make their home secure. We change locks, install door security chains, door viewers, window locks and other items to make the property as secure as we can, (for which there is **no charge**). We are also able to offer a **FREE** Fire risk assessment on behalf of Dorset and Wilt-

shire Fire and Rescue Service. Again, even if we fit new alarms there is no charge. The Bobby Van Trust also has an 'On-Line safety' section to the Charity. A team of Police vetted volunteers can contact clients to ensure that they have basic knowledge to keep themselves secure on their mobile devices. Again it is a **FREE** service. Please feel free to pass on this advice to anyone you feel that would benefit from it or even better encourage them to sign up to Community Messaging.

Village Hall News...

As is to be expected with another lockdown and the hall closed again there's not really a lot to say. Just the weekly checks carried out by Simon that keeps the insurers happy. Hopefully when this all over we can get going again and have a village event.

There is a further grant available via Wiltshire Council from the government so hopefully we will be successful with our application again.

The storm damage has been repaired, Paul has made an excellent job of it. The hall will be 100 years old in 2022 so hopefully the repair will be good for the following 100 years. The village hall foundation stone was laid on 2nd September 1922 and officially opened on the 19th December 1922 by Viscount Long. The hall's 90th Celebration was on Saturday 22nd December 2012 and was known as the "Village Hall 90th Birthday Celebration". It was an open evening with a free buffet of light refreshments and a celebratory toast. The evening start-

ed at 7.30 for 8pm - Ticket Only but Free Admission. There was a presentation and a display of the history of the hall. Now looking forward to the 100 year celebration in 2022.

The 50 Club draw was carried in a COVID compliant way by Sylvia Preston and Sarah Lloyd in their support bubble. The drawn numbers were then sent to Jackie Bradley to cross reference the numbers with names. The winners are listed below:

The village hall committee took the decision that in the current climate it was not practical to renew the 50 club for the time being whilst there is a COVID lockdown because this would need door to door delivery of the forms and handling of cheques etc. Hopefully "Normal Service" will be resumed later in the year.

Richard Covington, Chairman, Village Hall committee.

2020/21	First	Second	Third
October	Sylvia Preston	Peter Hughes	Sandra Brain
November	Ron Pybus	Sylvia Bee	Ray Stride
December	Gaynor Beavan	David Webb	Ann Ogden
New Years Eve	Tom Hill	Pamela Piggott	Ursula Jenkyn
January	Nicky Bull	Ann Loverock	Betty Cronan
February	Eileen Eggleton	Sarah Bradley	Sarah Rozkosze

St John's



Is God In The Storm? I have always loved storms – all sorts of extreme weather, in fact. This evening the edge of Storm Christoph was passing over the South West of England, and although the winds were not unusually strong, the sound of it outside still stirred memory and emotion in me. The feeling of being warm and safe indoors, while an Atlantic depression swirls outside, goes back to early childhood and fills me with both excitement and a cosy sense of security and wellbeing.

Earlier this evening, aware that the wind was picking up, and not wanting to be disturbed all night by the sound of the safety-gate giving access to the scaffolding currently surrounding our house at eaves level swinging in the wind, I took a roll of strong, bright orange duct tape and nervously climbed the scaffold ladder in the growing dusk. After several attempts – one of which left my hand hopelessly swathed in tape – I managed to secure the gate and return to the house, strangely pleased that my unwillingness to be kept awake by an intrusive sound I could do nothing about had conquered my fear of climbing an exposed ladder to roof height in the gathering wind. I could almost imagine myself a nineteenth century mariner bravely battening down the hatches in anticipation of a terrifying Atlantic gale!

Back indoors, I remembered a night at Lee Abbey in North Devon when a similar weather system was blowing across the South West. I had managed to wangle my favourite room, up in the eaves at the quietest corner of the house, with dormer

windows overlooking the woods and down to the sea. Fitted into what must once have been an attic space, the room is on three levels, each a couple of steps apart, and unusually has its own bath – ideal for relaxing after a day's windswept walking along the dramatic cliffs, moors and river valleys of the northern tip of Exmoor National Park. Always a peaceful and calming place, away from normal responsibilities, mobile phones – and even internet except in one area of the house – the sound of wind and sea added to a pleasing mixture of excitement, warmth and safety. Later, I shared these musings with our Bishop on a Zoom call. 'Was God in the storm?' He asked. Christoph won't have been the deepest depression or brought the wildest weather of this season (although it did give concern further north where rivers were already swollen by snow-melt), and here we only experienced its weak southern edge, but yes for me, God is always in the storm – provided I am safe indoors!

Allan Coutts



Photo Peter Holland

The Festive Season at St John's Well

Christmas has long gone and Easter Eggs are appearing in the shops, the seasons advance no matter what the pandemic throws in its way!

St John's monthly service plan faltered in November when lockdown revisited. Regrettably, the cancellation of the annual Christmas Concert and the Children's Christingle Service also fell under the same fate. However, St John's was fortunate to be able to hold, in a somewhat muted way, a Revised Christmas Carol Service on Sunday 20 December and an afternoon Christmas Eve Communion Service. Both these services were held under covid restrictions, with wearing of masks and no singing of the well loved carols. The carol service saw over 30 attending and as no singing was allowed by the congregation, a social distancing choir could sing; we were extremely blessed to have two of the local Steeple Rock Singing Group attend (Debby Bailey and Adrienne Hale) singing the six carols and a superb Christmas Blessing written by Philip Stopford. With the five bible readings and an extremely uplifting address from Rev. Allan Coutts, all captured the meaning of the day. In essence, an inspirational time for all, and a certain buzz filled the church with festive cheer, not forgetting how wonderful it was to be in our rural church, which had been festively decorated, and seeing friends (even though social distancing). The Christmas Eve Communion Service saw over 20 attend; again no singing by the congregation was allowed, but the three carols were sung by Ruth Barber (who also played the flute) and Ian Gibbons (who played the guitar), both from St Thomas Church, Trowbridge. St John's appreciated their

valued time at this busy time of year. The two readings and the communion service made the relevance of this special service more meaningful, and we were so thankful that it took place.

May I thank all those who took part in making these two services special and making St John's Church provide a spark of festive cheer and highlighting the real meaning of Christmas.



Photo Jean Robertson

Maintenance and upkeep of the church still remain a priority, and with the damp weather and non use, adds its own problems to the building. Unfortunately, at this time of writing (end January), it is hard to predict the schedule of future services.

The Prime Minister was due to give details of revised restrictions in mid February; this would influence whether the Easter Services can go ahead. All Easter services were cancelled last year, and it is sincerely hoped this will not be the case in 2021.

Hence, at this time of writing, no dates can be finalised. May St John's Church wish you a safe and optimistic year, when we all can be vaccinated from this forbidding virus.

Just remember: The future is not cancelled – just on hold! Stay Strong and Stay Safe.

Jean Robertson



Other Useful Numbers	Contact Information	
Builder	Paul - New build, extensions, renovation specialist, alterations.	01225 753997/07799 563347 19 Bratton Road,
Invictus Plus Care <i>CQC reg</i>	Kay Kamunga home care for the Elderly and Disabled	01225 760356
Foot Reflexologist	Annie Ritchens	01225 752002 Mob 07967630429
Garage Services	Briken Motors Garage....MOTs, servicing etc,	01225 755203
Newspapers	Richard –Seend News	07702 868863 seendnews@gmail.com
Parish Council	Chairman: Mr Richard Covington	01225 761904
Police Concerns	David Bradley Neighbourhood Watch Village Co-ordinator Neighbourhood Policing Team PC Mathew Till	01225 754100 Non-emergency No 101
Refuse	Community skips in Canal Road, Trowbridge for larger items.	http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/rubbish-collection-days
Seamstress & Soft Furnishings	Clare Humphries, curtains, dress-making and alterations	01225 767703 Mob 07929 122631
St. John's Church	Services Sundays 10.30am. Rev Allan Coutts	01225 777331
West Ashton Boomerang Taxi West Ashton to Trowbridge.	Taxi service. Mon-Sat West Ashton to Trowbridge. Price each way: adult £1.60; child 80p; children under 4 free. Bus passes can be used.	Morning pickup 9.30am, return 12 noon Or 2pm. Tel: 0800 371297 to book.
West Ashton C of E School	Debby Huxham Head Teacher	01225 754354
West Ashton Ladies Skittles Team	Liz Hickerton	01380 870437
Footpath Warden	Paul Workman	01225 766998
Beauty Salon Manicure Pedicure Facials etc	Kelly Beavis (Gift Tokens)	31a Bratton Road 07766117813

Regular Activities In The Village Hall

Dance Class	Tuesdays at 10am	Dee Dee Wilde	01380 871608
Dog Training	Thursday's at 6.30pm	Ken Scott	07867 820497
Pilates	At present on YouTube	Amie Hawker	07738 449245
Tai Chi	Monday's at 10.30am	Brian Wooding	01985 213474
Wives Group	730pm 1st Wednesday of the month	Marlene Pike Sylvia Preston	01380 870272 01225 765858
WI	Fourth Wednesday of the Month	Holly Westlake	01225 755866
Yoga	6.15pm Most Monday's duration 1.5hrs	Angeline Nicholson	01380 830458
Coffee Mornings	Fridays 10.30 to Noon	Margaret Workman	01225 766998
Zen Judo Classes	Age 8+ Village Hall 7.00-9 Fridays.	Colin Delve	colin.delve@dano ne.com
Moo Music	10 to 10.40 & 10.50 to 11.20	Nicola	07534799276
Taekwondo	Fridays 4.20 to 5.00 & 5.00 to 5.45	Nick	07921855900

TO BE RESUMED WHEN RESTRICTIONS ARE LIFTED

