

PITCOMBE

news

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February 2021

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The Happy Cooker pg 11

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MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR THE PARISH OF PITCOMBE

What's on... ...this month

Friday 5th

Black bin collection

Tuesday 9th 7.30 on Zoom

Pitcombe Parish Council Meeting

Thursday 11th 7pm on Zoom

Licencing of Revd Jonathon Richards as new Rector of the Benefice of Bruton

Friday 19th

Black bin collection

...weekly

Sundays

Online services held by Rev Dan

Richards—details in Church Warden's Report

...later

Vaccinations for all who want them!

welcome

PITCOMBE NEWS

If you were reporting to someone on Mars about the goings-on between our last publication in December and this one, you'd have an awful lot to talk about. Global events which have affected us all and endlessly reported on. The Pitcombe News will attempt to distract you by embarking on more refreshing aspects of the news, albeit it parochial, along with some welcome trivia. We are indebted to Sexey's School for nobly stepping in to undertake the printing of this edition, where more regular printers are beset with lockdown issues. News that vaccine jabs are becoming a reality in the Parish is well articulated by Charles Brook in 'A chink of Light'. As a grateful receiver, he has encouraging words about how the process is going.

The wheels of the Parish Council keep rolling, despite the pandemic. Its monthly report highlights a number of different planning applications worthy of note, as well as expressing concern about the state of the bridge over the River Pitt in Pitcombe. The previous editor of the PN, and our mentor, Sue Chamberlain, ever alert to current happenings, has contributed two pieces this month. One is about the annual Star Count in February, which you are encouraged to join, and the other a philosophical tableau entitled, 'Time for Ten Things'.

Our Church Warden, Philip Pidsley, steadfastly reports on the activity at St Leonard's, although the holding of services has ceased. The church is open for private prayer (check the times) and Reverend Dan Richards holds an on-line service every Sunday available on the internet. Elsewhere, the Pitcombe News's Annual Accounts are published, which indicate a satisfactory financial condition, helped along by a generous grant from SSDC, which was available to Village Halls within their jurisdiction. All this and lots more, so please browse the contents for other articles, designed to inform, amuse and entertain. With very best wishes from your editors, who are happy to be back, after a bizarre but memorable couple of months.

contribute

Editors: Jane and Anthony Hodges

The next edition will be March 2021. Please send any articles or advertisements to the Editors by 15 February at the latest. Our contact details can be found in the Parish Directory in the centre of this magazine.

LATEST

We had a brief period in December when we were able to hold services, and the Carol Service and Christmas Day Service went ahead with appropriate limit on numbers, social distancing and covid 19 rules in place. The Christmas flowers and decorations looked beautiful, and I would like to thank the team for making St Leonard's look so welcoming for these seasonal services.

Regrettably, due to the increase in covid-19 cases, we have now ceased to hold services St Leonard's until the situation improves. However, the church is open for private prayer on Sundays between 10:00am and 4:00pm. We ask you to wear a face covering and to ensure that social distancing of 2 metres between individuals, or those from separate households, is adhered to, and please also use the hand sanitiser provided on the chest, on the right-hand side immediately through the door, upon entering the church.

Note that, the Reverend Dan Richards holds an on-line service every Sunday at one of the churches in the Bruton Benefice, and these services can be found on the St Mary's Bruton web-site at: <https://www.stmarysbruton.org/church/welcome-st-mary-virgin-bruton>

I am very pleased to say that we will soon have a new priest, and I would like to thank our retired clergy for the way that they have kept the church alive during this difficult period. The Reverend Jonathon Evans will be licenced as Rector of the Benefice of Bruton at a special service on February 11th, which due to current restrictions, will be a zoom service.

As I write this contribution to the Pitcombe News, the covid-19 case numbers are falling, and the Government's vaccination programme is gathering pace. If the covid-19 situation continues to improve, and with spring on the way, I am optimistic that at some point we will be able to resume our usual way of life.

Philip Pidsley
Churchwarden

From Prebendary Mark Ellis.

It was in July 1957 that Prime Minister Harold Macmillan pronounced

"We've never had it so good". I remember it well. I was still at school slogging away at my A levels of Maths, Physics and Chemistry, preparing with excitement for all the opportunities of the big world out there.

Of course, the Prime Minister was perfectly correct. Our country had experienced very difficult times during the first half of the 20th century including two tragic world wars. In 1957 we were still recovering from a period of austerity and we were being encouraged to look forward to a new era of peace and prosperity. Harold Macmillan prophesied " You will see a state of prosperity such as we have never had in my lifetime- nor indeed in the history of this country".

So how has our society used the time since then? We have certainly had a great rise in our standard of living, but we have become more materialistic, with commercial pressures telling people that happiness comes from possessing more and more. What a shock this Covid pandemic has caused us. What we have seen in this present crisis are numerous examples of love, care, compassion and self-sacrifice by those in the front line of our caring services.

We can learn so much from them. Perhaps Lent gives us the opportunity to look at our own lives and reassess our priorities. Please pray for Jonathan as he prepares to take up his new ministry as Rector of this Benefice in these difficult days. Pray for God's blessing upon him that his guidance may inspire and encourage all of us. I look forward to hearing the Church bells ringing out again calling us to join together in worship once more. Remember, "Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning" Psalm 30 v 5. With my prayers.
Mark

Postscript:

If any parishioner wishes to attend the zoom service, licencing Jonathan Evans as the Rector of the Benefice of Bruton at 7pm on February 11th, please contact Philip Pidsley on philip.pidsley@btinternet.com

A chink of light

In a week when, to our national shame, we are still reporting the second highest number of new cases (USA is highest), the highest number of Covid-related deaths in Europe and the second highest deaths per million population in the world (Italy is highest), there is one national and local achievement we should welcome. Whether or not these figures will turn out to be correct when the history of the pandemic comes to be written remains to be seen but our record in vaccination is something of which we can be proud.

The UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has a proud record of independence, integrity and reliance on scientific evidence, so much so that it was the model for the European agency and indeed that Agency was in London until Brexit came along. The speedy approval by the MHRA of vaccines made by Pfizer, AstraZeneca and Moderna (with more to come) has been vindicated by other regulatory agencies round the world and, despite the logistical difficulties (need for very cold storage), it's the Pfizer one that has so far been deployed in Somerset.

We had our shots at Verrington Community Hospital on 16th January and were by no means the first from Bruton and Castle Cary to receive them. From the moment we arrived at the car park entrance, the volunteers in their *gilets jaunes*, the secretaries, healthcare assistants, doctors and nurses were charming, friendly and reassuring. As an example of how local services serve local people best, this was outstanding – and, had the government left Track and Trace to the local Medical Officers of Health, who have been tracking and tracing tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases for decades, that national service would not have been such a failure.

I left with two concerns: **the first** was that nobody stressed that vaccination is **not** synonymous with immunity and that the usual rules need still to be followed. Antibody levels rise over three weeks and, hopefully, reduce the severity of disease but they do not prevent mild or asymptomatic infection which could, of course, be passed on. **The second**, the MHRA bowing to pressure and unilaterally extending the interval between doses of the vaccines, which has been criticised round the world, surrenders that reputation of which it used to be so proud. We don't know how quickly antibody levels reduce, what protection they will give as they decline, nor what effect delaying the second dose will have on overall immunity.

We'll just have to see what happens. Keep your fingers crossed that we don't have yet another wave of infections in the elderly who may believe that they are protected. Stay safe, wear a mask in public and wash your hands. **Charles Brook**

Let's count the stars

6 — 14 FEBRUARY

The Campaign for Rural England is running their annual Star Count this February. A perfect 'thing to do' during lockdown. Here are the details:

A dark starry sky is one of the most magical sights imaginable. But light pollution means that many of us can't see the stars. Our annual Star Count is back, and we'd like you to help us map of the nation's view of the night sky - this year, from home.

*It's easy to be a part of Star Count: just look to the heavens between 6-14 February and **count the number of stars you see in the constellation of Orion**. It's a safe, outside activity to do as a family or household, from your home, garden, balcony or even bedroom window, and everyone can take part. As we're all asked to stay at home, please don't travel to do a Star Count.*

Not sure how to take part? Here are our five simple steps for doing a Star Count from home.

- 1 – Find a good spot to do your Star Count. This could be your garden, balcony, doorstep or even bedroom window. You'll need to be able to look south*
- 2 – Turn off all the lights in your home so it's as dark as possible.*
- 3 – Look south in the night sky (the way satellite dishes face)*
- 4 – Let your eyes adjust to the dark – the longer you wait, the better. Count the number of stars you can see within the rectangle formed by the four corner stars.*
- 5 – Head to our website to submit your count and help us map the nation's view of the night sky.*

*Want to take part? GO TO **www.take part.cpre.org.uk**
And become 'A citizen scientist'*



Tom Spratling on his landmark birthday! The letter opposite – which has beautifully scribed by Tom's daughter Shirley Netherway

1920 - 2020 .

From Tom . To Everyone.

Many Thanks for all the Birthday Greetings . Congratulations Phone Calls and Presents for my Birthday on December 28th. I would have liked to have met and thanked you all in person, but restrictions said No - So I couldn't.

On the day we had a very small Birthday party when I opened all my cards and gifts and ate a beautiful cake made and decorated by Peter Wyalts granddaughter. It was lovely. A proper birthday cake with fruit. Thankyou Kottie.

my mother said that December 28th was my proper birthday, but my birth certificate says January 28th 1921. Which is right? My mother was. She said she knew because she was there!

my granddaughter hoped she could get it put right and after pressing a few buttons and making a few calls, she was given a number to try. But when the answering voice said that she was through to Buckingham Palace, Rosemarie was very surprised she was told that proof would be needed to correct the error before anything could be sorted out. Here I understand thanks are due to Philip Pidsley who worked hard to track down Parish records which had details of my Baptism and date of birth. Thankyou Philip.

Well it worked and in due course with the correct paperwork in place I received my card from the Queen on December 28th.

It was a very good day I shall always remember
Thankyou all for being a part of it
Tom Spratling.

If you could change one thing about your health – what would it be?

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THE HAPPY COOKER



Giant Cous Cous with butternut squash & herbs

Delicious for lunch or supper as a main or side dish!

Serves 4 Prep 20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1 preserved lemon | 4 tbsp mint leaves |
| 750 butternut squash, peeled and cubed | grated zest of half a lemon |
| 3 tbsp olive oil | 1/2 a long red chilli, finely chopped |
| 1 large onion finely chopped | 2 little gem lettuces, shredded |
| 1 clove garlic - crushed | 100g pine nuts, toasted |
| 250g giant couscous (normal works too) | 60g golden raisins |
| 1 cinnamon stick | 1 tsp ground allspice |
| 20g flat leaf parsley chopped | |

METHOD

1. Halve lemon, scoop out pith and discard. Chop flesh finely
2. Heat oil in a capacious pan, and sauté cubed butternut, stirring for 10 mins; add onions and garlic and continue sautéing for another 8 mins until all tender.
3. Prepare couscous according to pack instructions incorporating the cinnamon stick. When ready, drain and add to the vegetable pan, along with remaining oil, chopped lemon, zest, chilli, parsley, mint, lettuce, pine nuts, allspice and s&p.
4. Toss to mix well and cook until gently heated through. And serve!

Farewell from Hillview

As we prepare to leave this beautiful valley in mid-February for the bright lights of Cheltenham and the joys of grandchildren, we wanted to say a fond farewell.

Over the last 7 years we have really appreciated the kindness and friendship of our lovely neighbours. When we arrived just before Christmas 2013, we were quickly welcomed into the community with notes through the letterbox and friendly faces at the door. We are also grateful for the dedication of the Hadspen Village Hall committee and the Parish Council to making Pitcombe such a special place.

During this horrible pandemic the community has shown that, even without the ability to meet in person, community spirit is still thriving. Long may it continue.

Our very best wishes to you all and fingers crossed for better times soon, Alison & Andy Dawson

We wish you well Andy and Alison and thank you very much for your many contributions to the Parish of Pitcombe

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Parish Council

Chairman	Richard Waller	01749 812754 rjtwallar@hotmail.com
Parish Clerk	Zoe Godden	07742 930521 clerk@pitcombepc.org.uk

St Leonard's Church

The Rector

Benefice Office Secretary benefice@stmarysbruton.org

Bell-ringing	Tina Harley	01749 813262 tina.harley@btinternet.com
Church Flowers roster	Tina Harley	01749 813262 tina.harley@btinternet.com
Church Wardens	Philip Pidsley	01749 813842 philip.pidsley@btinternet.com
PPC Secretary	Carole Wyatt	01963 350222 carolewyatt@btinternet.com

Friends of St Leonards

Secretary	Cathie Brook	01963 351492 catherinebrook@aol.com
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Hadspen Village Hall

Chairman	Robin Currie	01749 814899 arctheduke@gmail.com
Bookings Secretaries	Penny Mounsey	01963 359488 penny.mounsey345@btinternet.com
	Jan James	01963 350464 janet.james945@btinternet.com
Secretary	Sheelagh Douglas	07733 102819. sdmdouglas7@gmail.com

Neighbourhood Watch

Co-ordinating Officer	Sue Chamberlain	01963 350616 sechamberlain@btinternet.com
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S H D I R E C T O R Y

Pitcombe News

Co-editors	Jane Hodges	01963 351429 janepamelahodges@hotmail.com
	Anthony Hodges	anthony.hodges@hodesassociates.org

Short Mat Bowls Club

Secretary	Carole Wyatt	01963 350222 carolewyatt@btinternet.com
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U3A

Bridge	Kate Mair	01963 351544 kateandbillmair@hotmail.com
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Patchwork	Jan Wilcox	01747 840335 mail@janwilcox.plus.com
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History	Bruce Bower	01747 840335 bowersxb@btinternet.com
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<u>Pilates</u>	Shirley Rutter	07733 085 077
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Avon and Somerset Police

Emergencies	999
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Non Emergencies	101
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Healthcare

Bruton Surgery	01749 812 310
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Wincanton Health Centre	01963 435700
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Shepton Mallet Treatment Centre	01749 333600
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Local Government

District Councillor,	Robin Bastable	01749 812335 robin.bastable@southsomerset.gov.uk
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County Councillor	Anna Groskop.	01749 812520 amgroskop@somerset.gov.uk
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Roads and Transport	roadsandtrans-
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Jobs in the garden



Edible Crops

- Sow salad leaves and hardy herbs into gutters
- Sow early vegetables in gutters: lettuce, radishes, onions, chard, spring onions, peas, sugar snap peas (for tips)
- Sow broad beans into root trainers for planting out in 4-6 weeks' time.
- Sow tomatoes, aubergines, and peppers in a heated propagator
- Chit early and maincrop potatoes
- Put early potatoes in potato bags/pots for forcing early.
- Plant fruit trees and bushes in a mild spell
- Prune fruit trees while they are dormant.

Flowers

- Start sowing slower-growers under cover: antirrhinums, cleomes and cobaea
- Sow hardy annuals inside for early flowering
- Order dahlias, gladioli and summer- flowering bulbs

Pitcombe News Receipts & Payments Account Year Ending 31st December 2020				
Receipts				
b/f 2019	£1,007.71			
Advertising	£133.00			
Grants & Donations	£193.00			
Total Receipts	£1,333.71			
Payments				
Printing	£841.85			
Total Payments	£841.85			
Surplus of Receipts over Payments	£491.86			
NatWest Current a/c	£491.86			
<i>Note.</i>	<i>Pitcombe News Balances are held as part of total balances in</i>			
	<i>Pitcombe Events a/c</i>	<i>totalling</i>	<i>£851.12</i>	<i>of which</i>
	<i>£244.80</i>	<i>represents a surplus from Jubilee Party</i>	<i>and</i>	
	<i>£166.45</i>	<i>represents balance in Men's Supper Fund</i>		

Time for 10 things

1. Take time for WORK

It is the price of success

2. Take time for THOUGHT

It is the source of strength

3. Take time for PLAY

It is the secret of youth

4. Take time for READING

It is the foundation of knowledge

5. Take time for PRAYER

It washes the dust of Earth from your eyes

6. Take time for your FRIENDS

They are the source of happiness

7. Take time for LOVE

It is the only sacrament of life

8. Take time for DREAMING

It draws the soul up to the stars

9. Take time for LAUGHTER

That helps to carry the burden of life

10. Take time for PLANNING

Then you will also have time for the first nine things

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PARISH COUNCIL



The new year has come in with fresh hope for us all. The vaccine programme is rolling out nationally and finally we are hearing that members of our own community are being jabbed at Wincanton. There is still a need for caution and the council has displayed appropriate guidance on the notice boards. Residents are reminded they can call 0300 790 6275 if they need any help themselves or are concerned about relatives or neighbours. Lines are open seven days a week between 8am and 6pm.

Following the discussion at the December meeting of a Notification to build a barn on land adjoining Mill Lane, Pitcombe, it was decided at SSDC that this proposal should be subject to a full planning application. Accordingly, no approval has been granted for the substantial barn on this site. Concern arose during the Christmas period that works were beginning, including widening the entrance and laying hard core. This has been brought to the attention of the relevant officer at SSDC who has the powers of enforcement in this matter. Concern was expressed at the meeting about the presence of pigs on this site, with reference to smell, nuisance and welfare of the animals. The clerk was instructed to bring this matter to the attention of the appropriate authority.

We also discussed the current state of some footpaths in the parish. Although muddy conditions under foot are expected at this time of year, it was felt that local landowners have a responsibility to enable safe access through their land and this includes managing livestock thoughtfully. The council has asked the respective landowners for their help in this matter and will seek the support of the relevant county officer to improve the footpaths. We are also investigating the relevance of an organization called Gleam to the preservation of our paths and green lanes. Councillors are concerned about the state of the bridge over the river Pitt in Pitcombe as there is evidence of general deterioration. The highways department has been alerted to these concerns and has been on site recently, so we are hoping for their support in ensuring the bridge continues to be protected. We are exploring the support provided by the Ancient Monuments Society and the potential benefit of seeking a listing for the bridge as a structure by Historic England. The bridge dates back to the 18th century and was once a main crossing point for the original turnpike road between Wincanton and Castle Cary.

Finally, for those interested in local government restructuring, there are details of the proposal to change our own arrangements to a unitary authority. The options replace SSDC and SCC with a single authority encompassing either the whole of Somerset or dividing the county into two separate units, roughly comprising East Somerset and West Somerset. If you wish to explore this further, there are details on the PPC website and on the websites for SSDC and SCC. Happy reading.

Richard Waller Chair



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Fascinating Fact

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, 1848

This relatively unknown Treaty (to your editors anyway) was of tremendous importance in terms of the enormous amount of land handed over to the USA by Mexico.

The fully named **Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Limits and Settlement between the United States of America and the Mexican Republic** is commemorated every year on 2nd February after a war that lasted two years.

It gave the United States the Rio Grande as a boundary for Texas, and gave them ownership of California and a large area comprising roughly half of New Mexico, most of Arizona, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado and California! Mexicans in those annexed areas had the choice of relocating to within Mexico's new boundaries or receiving American citizenship with full civil rights.

And all this for the princely purchase price of \$15million!

American Dirt

By Jeanine Cummins

I read this gripping novel in the 'first' lockdown and found it unputdownable! It is about the ordeal of a Mexican woman who had to leave behind her life and escape as an undocumented migrant to the United States with her son.

The fascinating historical fact above brought this read to mind again.

JH

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An Ode for our times by Pam Eyres

I'm normally a social girl
I love to meet my mates
But lately with the virus here
We can't go out the gates
You see, we are the 'oldies' now
We need to stay inside
If they haven't seen us for a while
They'll think we've upped and died

They'll never know the things we did
Before we got this old
There wasn't any Facebook
So not everything was told
We may seem sweet old ladies
Who would never be uncouth
But we grew up in the 60s -
If you only knew the truth!

There was sex and drugs and rock 'n
roll
The pill and miniskirts
We smoked, we drank, we partied
And were quite outrageous flirts
Then we settled down, got married
And turned into someone's mum,
Somebody's wife, then nana,
Who on earth did we become

We didn't mind the change of pace
Because our lives were full
But to bury us before we're dead
Is like a red rag to a bull!
So here you find me stuck inside
For four weeks, maybe more
I finally found myself again
Then I had to close the door!

I'd while away the hour
I'd bake for all the family
But I've got no flaming flour!
Now Netflix is just wonderful
I like a gutsy thriller
I'm swooning over Idris
Or some random sexy killer

At least I've got a stash of booze
For when I'm being idle
There's wine and whiskey, even gin
If I'm feeling suicidal!
So let's all drink to lockdown
To recovery and health
And hope this awful virus
Doesn't decimate our wealth

We'll all get through the crisis
And be back to join our mates
Just hoping I'm not far too wide
To fit through the flaming gates!

Make a Difference

Last summer the BBC initiated an appeal for unwanted laptops and tablets to be donated to help children who were working from home and being educated remotely. With the resumption of lock-down and the closure of schools, this appeal has been resurrected and, unsurprisingly, the local schools in Bruton and Cary are very keen to participate. Pitcombe residents have already had success in placing unwanted laptops with Bruton Primary and Sexeys.

Ideally, the data on the machine should be removed but the schools will give you guidance and some of them have engaged an independent computer company to wipe the machines and prepare them for use by the students. A direct call to any of the schools in the area should result in an enthusiastic response.

Charles Brook has flagged up that James of Brue Computers (who advertises in these pages) is generously giving his services, clearing the donated laptops and ipads of data. Bruton Primary has an urgent need.

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