

April 2023

# PITCOMBE

# *news*



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## April 2023

In this issue

Crossword

Snowbirds

Parish matters

MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR THE PARISH OF PITCOMBE

# What's on...

# April 2023

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Sunday 2nd	11am <b>Palm Sunday</b> Holy Communion
Sunday 9th	<b>11 am Easter Sunday Holy Communion</b>
Tuesday 11th	<b>NO Parish Council Meeting this week</b>
Sunday 16th	<b>9.30am Morning Prayer</b>
Tuesday 18th	<b>7.30pm Pitcombe Parish Council HVH</b>
Sunday 23rd	<b>6 pm Evening Prayer</b>
Sunday 30th	No service at St Leonards

# Weekly

Wednesdays at 7.30	<b>Short Mat Bowls Hadspen Village Hall</b>
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# welcome

## PITCOMBE NEWS

A cornucopia of fresh contributions this month, emphasizes the richness of the start of Spring.

A first (in your editors' experience) is a unique crossword, with clues relating to this parish alone, in both cryptic and straight form, which should appeal to a wide range of tastes. The brains behind this belong to Steve Bruce-Jones, who has offered to make them a regular occurrence, depending on the level of enthusiasm from readers. You are therefore encouraged to respond, either positively or otherwise, to your editors (contact details below) to gauge whether Steve's crosswords should become a regular feature. They (your editors) take a partisan view by encouraging this inspired initiative and are strongly in favour of seeing more of them.

Another local contribution is from an enthusiastic group of church bellringers, rehearsing at St Leonard's Church. They are clearly inspired by the skills they're developing, and amount of fun they're having, and would like to encourage others to join them. Elsewhere, there is a report by Richard Waller on the Jazz evening on 11 March, held at the Village Hall. He eloquently describes the delight of the toe-tapping audience, which implies that a repeat of these musical evenings would be welcome.

On a more considered note, the Parish Council report describes the implications of replacing the bridge over the river in Pitcombe. Consideration is given to the cost and the disruption to the lives of residents while under construction. Finally, our local farmer, Kevin Spratling is advertising the availability of produce relating to his pig-rearing enterprise, with mouth-watering joints of pork, sausages and bacon for sale. Support our local agriculture!

*Contributions please to the Editors by 15th of the month—contact*

Editors: Jane and Anthony Hodges

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# MARCH 2023

You are warmly invited to our services at St Leonard's, with a service every Sunday in April apart from the last one. Due to Easter, the times are a little different this month and are as follows:

Palm Sunday Holy Communion on 2<sup>nd</sup> April at 11:00 - Preb. Mark Ellis

Easter Sunday Holy Communion on 9<sup>th</sup> April at 11:00 - Rev'd Mike Vockins

Morning Prayer on 16<sup>th</sup> April at 9:30 - Rev'd J Evans

Evening Prayer on 23<sup>rd</sup> April at 6:00pm - Rev'd J Evans

Sunday April 30<sup>th</sup> - no Service at St Leonard's

Now that the clocks have moved forwards an hour and the evening are lighter the church will be open for visiting from 10am to 4pm. In the next few weeks' time you may see a wire grill in a wooden frame over the front of the porch. It's easy to open so that you can enter the church, but it's there to stop the jackdaws nesting in the porch, as their nesting material and droppings make a quite mess! The grill will be taken away a after few weeks so that the swifts and swallows can take up residence.

Last week Maureen and I visited London to see a show, when we witnessed something that we have reflected on and discussed since we have got home. While we were having breakfast in our hotel, a lady sat down next to us and started to eat her full English breakfast with a cup of hot tea. After a while the restaurant manager arrived and quietly asked the lady for her room number, and after some discussion, it became clear that she was not staying in the hotel and had walked in off the street. She then left with the restaurant manager and was presumably escorted off the premises. And there sat the breakfast and the cup of tea, which got colder with time, food that would then have been thrown away. The question we asked ourselves is, should the restaurant manager have let her eat her breakfast before asking her to leave, so that she was fed and the food wasn't wasted?

On the one hand, I'm sure that hotels in London are troubled by people coming in off the street, and crime shouldn't be allowed to pay. On the other hand, we wondered what events in her life had led the lady to act in this way, and what were her current circumstances. A moral problem to which there are no easy answers.

To finish on a lighter note, we now look forward to spring, the apple blossoms in the Hadsphen valley and the warmer weather. I wish all the readers of the Pitcombe News a very Happy Easter.

**Philip Pidsley Churchwarden**

# RECTOR'S RUMINATIONS

About a year ago, as we started to take stock of the impact that the Covid pandemic had on our society, the phrase 'the new normal' began to gain currency, as we speculated about the extent to which some of the changes we experienced during the pandemic might become more or less permanent features of life, and which things from the past would revive and continue unaffected.

Sometimes, we adapt to change quite quickly and things that at first seemed strange and perhaps even uncomfortable can soon become 'normal'. The obligatory wearing of seatbelts in cars, for example, became widely accepted as normal practice quickly. The adoption of metric weights and measures much less so.

Christians celebrate the great festival of Easter this month. Every year, Easter invites questions about what is normal and what is not; what is ordinary and what is extraordinary.

We confront first the fact that the popular, charismatic itinerant preacher from Nazareth was brutally killed. He was executed by a method that seems to us exceptional in its cruelty and degradation. Yet, in those times of political and oppression and military occupation, this was normal – there were many crucifixions.

Then we are confronted by the empty tomb and the reports that Jesus, having been pronounced dead, was now alive. Familiarity with this story, told and told again over the nearly 2,000 years since those first reports began to circulate can, if we do not pay attention, result in this event losing its capacity to shock, surprise and undermine our sense of normality.

Easter is all about the revelation of the truly extraordinary amid the ordinary, the presence of the divine within the mundane. Which is why the story is still being told. Christ is risen! Alleluia!

**Rev'd Jonathan Evans**

# PARISH COUNCIL



It was good to see some residents at our recent meeting and it was apparent that news of the proposed replacement of the bridge in Pitcombe has aroused concern. I will therefore make that the focus of this report. We received an email from the Highways department outlining the planned works:

“Our intention is to replace the structure more or less on a like for like basis. The main difference will be that the arch barrel will be of a concrete composition and will be hidden from general view. All the spandrel walls and parapets will be reconstructed using masonry and lime mortar, thus hiding the internal concrete construction from general view. We aim to re-use as much of the existing masonry as possible, however I estimate that that may be as little as 20%. The remainder will be sourced from local quarries or other suppliers, to closely match the original and be in keeping with the conservation area.

The Engineer leading the scheme so far has made initial enquiries into flexible concrete arches and is waiting response from one of the main manufacturers. The detailed design for the scheme will be carried out internally, this will include applications for any and all permits that will be required to proceed the scheme; consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority, Ecology surveys (endangered species etc) and any relevant permits gained, permits to work in the watercourse, consult with utility and service providers to ascertain what equipment they have in the area and take steps to avoid or divert them, road closure application, consult with the relevant Local Authority relating to the conservation area etc. Once the design works are complete the scheme will be put out to our Framework Contractors for competitive Tender, the contract will be awarded to the most financially advantageous to the Council.

Our design team have an extensive workload at present with at least three other bridge replacement schemes in the pipeline, alongside multiple minor works designs to undertake. I would suggest that the time frame for this scheme will be circa 12 months, barring any issues with environmental constraints, conservation concerns or even last-minute budget slashing!

I hope this goes someway to explaining what we aim to achieve, and you can convey this to the parish. There will be unavoidable disruption when this scheme hits the ground, but the result will be a replacement bridge aseptically (sic) closely matching the existing, especially once the masonry has weathered in.”

Whilst broadly welcoming this detailed report, the Council expressed serious concerns about how this will be achieved with minimal disruption to the lives of the residents; especially those who live on the far side of the bridge. We will press for involvement in these decisions and clarification about the time-scales and measures to allow access during construction.

Otherwise, the meeting covered a wide agenda including a decision to plant a mature oak tree to commemorate the coronation of our new King. Councillors remain concerned about the works being undertaken without any permissions at Cole Stile Farm. (Subsequent to the meeting an application for planning permission has been received at SSDC and this will be discussed at our meeting in April).

It was agreed that our next meeting will take place on 18<sup>th</sup> April to ensure the availability of the clerk. Please note this is the third Tuesday of the month rather than the second. With thanks to all who attended.

**Richard Waller**

### **Sonnet 98**

**William Shakespeare**

From you have I been absent in the spring,  
When proud-pied April, dressed in all his trim,  
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything,  
That heavy Saturn laughed and leaped with him.  
Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell  
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,  
Could make me any summer's story tell,  
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew:  
Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,  
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose;  
They were but sweet, but figures of delight  
Drawn after you, – you pattern of all those.  
  
Yet seem'd it winter still, and, you away,  
As with your shadow I with these did play.

# THE HAPPY COOKER



## Smoked Haddock Souffle

.Surprisingly easy and absolutely yummy! Serves 6

### Ingredients

500g young spinach

500g undyed smoked haddock

290ml whole milk

1 bay leaf

10 peppercorns

55g unsalted butter#55g plain flour

4 eggs

Salt, freshly ground black pepper, nutmeg

### Method

Oven set at 180\*. Grease 6 ramekins. Wash and steam spinach til just wilted, drain and add black pepper and grating of nutmeg. Divide spinach between ramekins.

Put the smoked haddock in an ovenproof dish, with milk, peppercorns and bay leaf and poach in oven for 15 minutes. When fish is cooked, strain off the milk and put aside. Make a roux with flour and butter and add the poaching milk to make a white sauce. Simmer for 10 mins and season. Add salt with caution as smoked fish can be salty. Flake cooked fish and add to the sauce. Separate the eggs , and beat the yolks onto the white sauce and fish mixture. Turn up oven to 200\*/Gas 6. Whisk egg whites until stiff but not dry and fold them into the sauce mixture with a metal spoon. Divide between the ramekins, then run your finger round the top of each one so that the souffle doesn't catch when cooking and can rise easily.

Place ramekins on a baking tray and put into a hot oven. Cook for 30 to 35 mins until well risen and brown on top. Serve immediately.

# Learning to Ring Church Bells

## **How difficult can it be! We thought.**

As relative newcomers to the area, we wanted to attend some local events so we could meet people and carry out some volunteer work in the community.

Last Summer we read an article in the Pitcombe News. It offered the chance to learn the ancient tradition of Bell Ringing at St Leonard's, Pitcombe.

We jumped at the chance.

We attended a few sessions where we chatted to ringers and watched the bells being rung. It was clear to see that there were various standards of ringing. Some experts and some learners. We were very excited to have the opportunity to have a go.

Pitcombe Church is a dedicated ringing hub with Karen Dunn at the helm, assisted by Kevin Spratling. Karen and Kevin are very patient teachers. They offer a diverse way of teaching so even the slowest of us is gaining a good understanding of the skill.

As there are just 2 of us learning, we are getting one to one tuition at present. But we need more people. There are 6 bells at Pitcombe, and we can't ring all of them at once. Karen's vision is to have a local band to ring Pitcombe Bells. With various events looming, such as the Kings Coronation, weddings, Evensong and Christmas, we really need more ringers.

If you are concerned about causing a disturbance. Fear not. During lessons, the bells are muffled and connected to a computerised simulator. Only we can hear the bells inside.

So, if you fancy having a go, come on down and join us on Thursday evenings from 7 -8.30pm. There may even be a pint at the Montague Arms afterwards.

**Nicky Bolton and Mark Hutton.**

## **Postscript:**

**The person to contact if you're interested** is [karen.dunn80@icloud.com](mailto:karen.dunn80@icloud.com) - Editor



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# Snowbirds

The winter in Canada is even longer and colder than in Hadspen so our Torontonion daughter bought a house in Barbados where the temperature is around the high twenties year-round; parental duty required a visit and we complied. Before you dump tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere from your flight, pause for thought.

The surface area of Barbados is 430 sq kms just a little smaller than the Isle of Arran (432); the population of Arran in 2003 was 5,058, and I don't imagine that there has been a huge increase since then, whereas Barbados notched up 282,200 in 2021. With 5 flights daily from UK, not to mention from North America and the rest of Europe, there are a lot of chaps about and they all cluster along the west coast because the east, which is much more beautiful, is rugged and exposed to the trade winds which blow reliably.

It's a place to see some special gardens and top of those in my opinion (beats Flower Forest, the other contender for the title) is Andromeda Botanic Gardens which is a few feet up from the seashore on the east coast and seemingly protected from the gale. Its founder, Iris Bayley (nee Bradshaw, later Bannochie after Dr Harry Bayley died), was a self-taught Bajan scientist who created the 8-acre garden round her house in 1954 on land that had been in her family since 1740. She exhibited at Chelsea on numerous occasions winning many medals. There's even more to Andromeda Botanic Garden; from 1954 to 1985 the laboratory in the residence was used by the US Navy to track soviet submarines operating in the Atlantic, an open secret to the fishermen on that coast but presumably not known in USSR.

If you don't like lying on beaches, which I don't, there's lots of time to read and I discovered Tom Bradby's Kate Henderson, head of the Russian desk at MI6. The trilogy, Secret Service, Double Agent and Triple Cross, kept me very happy in siesta time.

**Charles Brook**

## Bruton Flower Club

At our meeting on Monday, we had a flower swap. Members brought flowers and foliage with a container and then swapped these randomly with another member who arranged them. The results were fabulous with some traditional and some more contemporary designs. A great way of trying out something you might not normally attempt.

At our April meeting on 3rd April, we have a members' demonstration. This will include Margaret Bown, a talented flower arranger and teacher, showing us some flower arranging basics. A good meeting to come along to if you would like to know more about how to arrange flowers.

Our meeting starts at 7.30pm, at Hadspen Village Hall, and visitors are always welcome. If you would like any further information, then please let me know.

**Judy Hayter 07788 311191**



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## Jazz comes to Hadspen

On a Saturday in early March a small corner of Somerset was translocated to Paris or Chicago as the Hadspen Village Hall was converted into a speakeasy. Intimate tables were lit with tea-lights and a bootlegged bar supplied thirsty customers with strong liquor. All that was missing was the rugged figure of Humphrey Bogart in a white tuxedo to complete the shady ambience of the golden age of nightclubs and jazz.

Music was provided by Ali and the Swing Cats who comprised Ali Foyle – vocals and violin; Nick Strong – piano and bass; Al Falkingham – guitar and vocals. The band originally formed in 2020 and managed only one gig before lockdown. Their ambition now is to perform live in every village hall in Somerset and they will surely entertain many a crowd in their progress. Featuring Ali on vocals and jazz violin the songs are given a new lease of life by the band some with sounds reminiscent of the Django Reinhardt / Stephane Grapelli Hot Club de Paris era while others have a more gentle smooth jazz treatment. The band extended its musical adventure into the 1950s world of Tom Jobim (the father of bossa nova). The performance was broken into three sets with breaks to refresh glasses and to circulate a little with the other guests. We had been invited to bring our own nibbles but this was supplemented by a variety of scrumptious snacks by the HVH catering team.

The music was varied and seductive in its influence on the room and a couple of the braver souls were even moved to dancing. With pulsating rhythms, swinging bass-lines, soaring solos and polished performances the band had our feet tapping along with some old favourites. There was a sprinkling of entertaining anecdotes along the way and we learned that one lovely romantic song was first performed in 1940 by Vera Lynn and was not initially a success but has since become a standard with some of the greatest singers of all time. As the evening drew to a close, “there was magic abroad in the air...there were angels dining at the Ritz...and a nightingale sang in Berkeley Square”.

With thanks to the hard workers of the Village Hall Committee for a super evening which took us briefly away from the muddy lanes and chilly darkness to the glamour and illicit charm of the Jazz Age.

# P I T C O M B E P A R I

## Parish Council

<b>Chairman</b>	Richard Waller	01749 812754 rjtwaller@hotmail.com
<b>Parish Clerk</b>	Anne Tuck	07538 502812 clerk@pitcombepc.org.uk.

## St Leonard's Church

<b>The Rector</b>	Rev'd Jonathan Evans	01749 812775 mobile 07305 736042 rector@stmarysbruton.org.
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<b>Benefice Office</b>		01749 813080 benefice@stmarysbruton.org
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<b>Bell-ringing</b>	Tina Harley	01749 813262 tina.harley@btinternet.com
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<b>Church Flowers roster</b>	Tina Harley	01749 813262 tina.harley@btinternet.com
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<b>Church Wardens</b>	Philip Pidsley	01749 813842 philip.pidsley@btinternet.com
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<b>PPC Secretary</b>	Carole Wyatt	01963 350222 carolewyatt@btinternet.com
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## Friends of St Leonards

<b>Secretary</b>	Cathie Brook	01963 351492 catherinebrook@aol.com
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## Hadspen Village Hall

<b>Chairman</b>	Chris Mounsey	01963 359488 penny.mounsey345@btinternet.com
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<b>Bookings Secretaries</b>	Caroline Donald	01963 351954 caroline.t.donald@gmail.com
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	Jan James	01963 350464 janet.james945@btinternet.com
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<b>Secretary</b>	Maureen Pidsley	01749 813842 maureen.pidsley@btinternet.com
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## Neighbourhood Watch

<b>Co-ordinating Officer</b>	Vacant	
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# Castle Cary Gardening Association

Resorting to talking about the weather is a bit of a cop-out, but what weather! It's been hail, deluges, deluges with hail and a few moments of bright sunshine. Its not very conducive to happy gardening but it does fill the ground-water supply after the driest February for 30 years. The buds are fattening and there is definitely a feeling that Spring is sprung! Hurrah!

Our next speaker, **Rosemary Le Grand**, is taking us away from an English Spring to the sunlit idyll of Ischia to tell us about Sir Henry Walton's garden, **La Mortella**. Or rather his wife, Lady Susana Walton's garden. Rosemary is one of the club's favourites as she is so enthusiastic and well informed with utterly stunning photographs. This promises to be another of her lovely, transformative talks which will send us off into April with a warm glow. The talk is on **Wednesday April 5<sup>th</sup>** at 7 for 7.30pm. We meet at Caryford Hall (BA7 7JJ) and provide free refreshments. There is plenty of parking that is floodlit for the return journey.

On **May 13<sup>th</sup>** we are holding our annual **Plant Sale** at the **Market House**, Castle Cary from 8.00am until midday-ish. The Coronation has meant that a number of plant sales are happening that same day so be generous and do the rounds. But do try us first.....

Membership is £10 for the year of ten talks and discretionary discounts on gardening 'stuff' at Dave Marsh and Julian Shave in Cary. Visitors are welcome for £2. Full details of all our programme and this summer's show schedule are on our website [www.castlecarygardening.com](http://www.castlecarygardening.com)

**Erica Holt**

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# St Leonard's PCC

## ST LEONARD'S CHURCH, PITCOMBE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

### VESTRY MEETING

To be held at 6.00pm on Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> April 2023  
at St Leonard's Church

#### A G E N D A

1. Opening prayer
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of Vestry meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022
4. Election of Churchwardens 2023/2024
5. Any Other business

### ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING to follow Vestry Meeting

#### A G E N D A

- Apologies
- Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022
- Matters Arising
- Rector's report
- Electoral Roll Report - Lady Harley
- Receive the 2022 Accounts and Treasurer's Report - Mr Peter Wyatt
- Appoint the independent examiner of accounts for 2023
- Churchwarden's Report - Mr Philip Pidsley
- Receive the revised Safeguarding and Data protection policies
- Election of members to the Parochial Church Council
- Any Other business
- Closing Prayer

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# Somerset Beekeepers Association

## **Somerset Beekeepers Association – South East Division**

Last year Wise Energy approached our chairman, with the offer of land on the perimeter of their Hook Valley solar farm on the outskirts of Wincanton, to set up an apiary. Ours is a small division with between 70 & 80 members and without the funds to finance such a project, so the gift of not only land but a large shed with electricity laid on was welcomed with huge enthusiasm.

Equipment and bees have been donated by members and going into winter there were 10 hives on the site and all the colonies appear to have survived and will be inspected thoroughly when the weather warms up, usually at the beginning of April.

This divisional apiary will provide a valuable facility for teaching new beekeepers the practical side of beekeeping, having covered theory on the beginners' course in January. There will be opportunities too, for more experienced members to acquire new skills such as queen-rearing. In late August we hope to organise a 'Taster Day' for anyone wishing to learn more about keeping bees.

Last year provided an excellent honey harvest which allowed the division to donate pots of honey to local Food Banks in Bruton, Castle Cary and Wincanton.

**Tina Harley**

# Bruton & District Horti Soc

The year moves on apace and Bruton Horti Soc can report that February's talk on Mediterranean wildflowers in nature and the garden was offset by some beautiful photographs. The Snowdrop Visit to the Old Vicarage in Shaftesbury, took place on a lovely day, and was well supported. Finally, Forest Lodge, the glorious garden of James and Lucy Nelson in Penselwood was all that it promised to be, with its wonderful array of spring flowering trees and plants.

Our annual visit to Castle Gardens in Sherborne takes place on **Wednesday April 19<sup>th</sup>** where we enjoy a short talk and the pleasures of a 25% discount on all shopping. **This is for members only and booking is essential. Do feel free to join our Society (£6 for a year's sub) and access to a world of beautiful gardens on our doorsteps.** The last in our series of Winter Talks is entitled 'Fuchsias My Way' by Derek Dexter, who has many years' experience growing, exhibiting, and winning prizes for his fuchsias takes place on Monday 24th April at 7.30pm

An important date for all diaries is **Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May 9.30am when we hold our Annual Plant Sale and Coffee Morning in Bruton Community Hall.** Come and see the array of plants and seedlings all produced by our clever members.

## ***Jobs in the Garden***

### ***Edible Crops***

*Sow quick growing half-hardy annuals: pumpkins, squash, sweetcorn, basil and French and runner beans.*

*Direct sow hardy annuals: salad leaves, lettuce, carrots, beetroot, peas, chard and spinach.*

*Direct sow green manures, eg phacelia on fallow ground, waiting for half-hardy annuals*

*Plant early (if not already done) and maincrop potatoes.*

*Continue to sow tomatoes and cucumbers (undercover for later crops) pot on earlier tomatoes and cucumbers ready for planting under cover.*

### ***Flowers***

*Direct sow hardy annuals eg. poppies, marigolds, dill, nigella and Cerinthe.*

*Start planting out half-hardies eg. cosmos, in sheltered spots towards the end of the month.*

# A PITCOMBE QUIZWORD

A mixture of 'straight' and cryptic (*italicised*) clues.

1		2		3		4			5	6		7
8									9			
								10				
			11									
12		13										
14							15					
						16						
17												
									18		19	
20					21							
22					23							

**ACROSS**

1. Local takeaway or an Asian taxi (8)
5. *Vehicles for our headless Rector?* (4)
8. *Total is zero* (8)
9. Polish river used as a border line (4)
11. Crowning (10)
14. Jungle vines (6)
15. and 19d. A neighbouring parish (6,4)
17. *Carrie and I are confused by how much sunlight falls on this area* (10)
20. and 6d. Nickname for our railway (4,3,5)
21. Sweet ingredient used by The Happy Cooker? (8)
22. Type of window (4)
23. Familiar name for one of our locals (3,5)

**DOWN**

1. Iranian currency (4)
2. Tennis champion who rhymes with 22 (4)
3. Philip invites us here in each issue of PN (2,8)
4. *God with gold writer* (6)
6. see 20
7. Man's best friend at this time of year? (8)
10. *Shout about a boy who's dressing* (5,5)
12. A pause or word missing in writing (8)
13. *Rugby team who lost their fight in 2022* (8)
16. Elephant-headed Hindu god (6)
18. *Type of owl - not in north* (4)
19. see 15

Too hard or too easy? Want more? Tell your editors. Solution in next issue.

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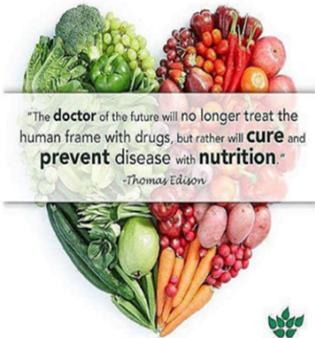
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## If you could change one thing about your health – what would it be?

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