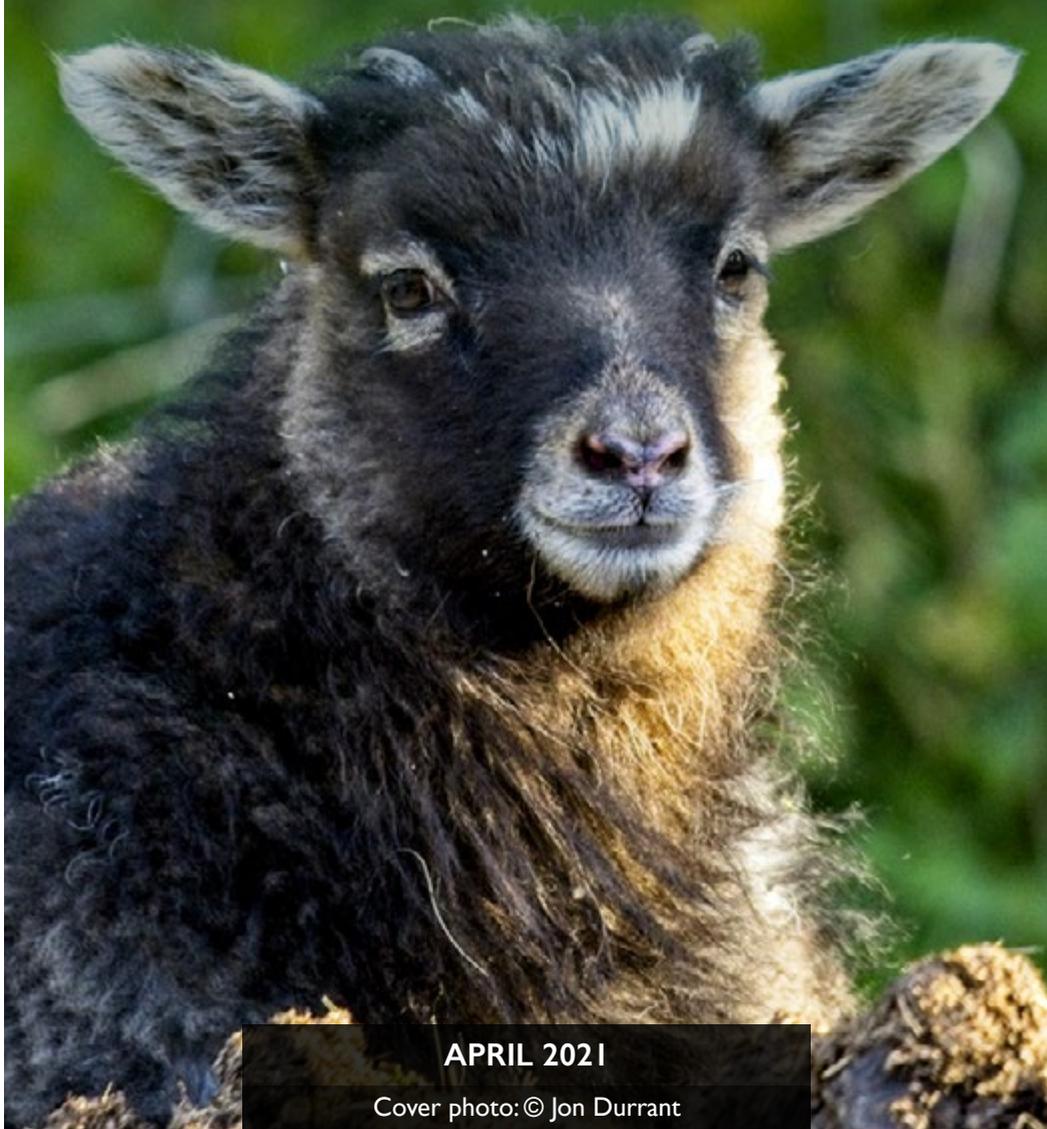


The Beacon

Ashwick, Oakhill & Binegar News



APRIL 2021

Cover photo: © Jon Durrant



**BEACON
TRINITY**



Church Services – April 2021

We continue to be ruled by pandemic restrictions and are not rushing to hold in-church services until we come further out of lockdown.

Once again, we will not have a service inside. Instead, there will be a: –

Family celebration round an Easter fire outside Holy Trinity Church in Binegar at 9am on Easter Sunday

You will see elsewhere in The Beacon, that there is an Easter Trail in Oakhill and the Methodist Chapel and All Saints are included. The Easter story will be shown with an Easter garden.

There will also be an Easter garden in the car park at Holy Trinity.

We expect to have in-church services starting in May as restrictions ease.

Please visit www.beacontrinity.church or:

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facebook.com/beacontrinity

Follow us on Instagram! 
instagram.com/beacontrinity





Happy Easter!

I always remember Easter as a child. It was one of the few Sundays we went to church, then when we got home, I would have my Easter eggs - we always received a box of 8 small toffee filled eggs from our parents and then other eggs from family and friends. As I only started to go to church for myself when I was 16, I never really thought much about why we had eggs at Easter. Back then I don't remember anything about an Easter bunny, but later I learnt where some of these traditions came from.

Venerable Bede (a monk who lived 672-735 AD) said the name Easter originated from an Anglo-Saxon springtime goddess named Ēostre, who gave her name to the month Ēosturmōnath, the equivalent of April. We don't know how the Anglo-Saxons worshipped Ēostre, but it does seem likely that many of our Easter traditions involving eggs and hares or rabbits have their origins in pre-Christian beliefs around the cycles of nature and fertility.

In Germanic countries, the tradition of a hare bringing Easter eggs to children is first mentioned in 1682. In the Middle Ages children in England would go from door to door begging for eggs on the Saturday before the Lenten fast. Today we continue to have chocolate eggs as the focus of our celebrations. Egg Jarping - a game similar to conkers where two players tap the pointed ends of their eggs together until one breaks sounds like a particularly fun thing to do, even if a little wasteful of eggs!

Of course, Easter is the central Christian festival and unlike Christmas, it is a moveable feast. The date of Easter Sunday is calculated on a lunisolar calendar based on the Jewish calendar. The Bible tells us that Christ died and was resurrected during the Jewish festival of Passover. Many of the Christian traditions of Easter relate closely to those of Passover, including the eating of lamb, which in Jewish culture symbolises the annual sacrifice of a lamb in the Temple, and in Christianity symbolises the sacrifice of Christ, the Lamb of God.

In 325AD the date for Easter was fixed as the Sunday after the first full moon after spring equinox. This 'Paschal' full moon is not the astronomical one that we see in the sky. Instead, the Western Church it is based on a complex 84-year cycle.

So, what about the eggs? For me it symbolises new life and Easter recognises the new life available to all because of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Rick Hill'.

Mindline Somerset

Emotional support and mental health helpline



01823 276 892

Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Bereavement support

The Somerset Bereavement Support Service is here if you've been bereaved and need emotional support or someone to talk to.



Call **0800 304 7412**

9am to 5pm, Monday to Saturday.

In partnership with



Coronavirus Vaccine Scam (Official)

Coronavirus vaccinations are free of charge. The NHS WILL NEVER:

- Ask for your bank account or card details
- Ask for your pin or banking passwords
- Arrive unannounced at your home to administer the vaccine
- Ask for documentation to prove your identity such as a passport or utility bills

Community corner



Betty Howell

Betty has asked us to pass on her sincere thanks to Oakhill Surgery and Southmead Hospital for the speed with which she was diagnosed with, and treated for, an Embolectomy - blood clot in her right arm. (Betty knows the correct medical terminology because of her earlier career in nursing!). Hopefully, she is now recuperating but wanted to express her gratitude for all the help she has received, particularly as she lives in such a small village. Betty is also an avid reader and supporter of The Beacon! We send our best wishes and prayers to you Betty and wish you the best of health.

Julia Barrett

Many of us were both shocked and saddened to learn of the death of Julia on the 3rd March. She was a widely known and much respected, active member of our community and our thoughts and prayers are with her husband Paul and her family, as well as her much-loved Bichon Frise dog, little Lucy. Julia's absence from her daily walks around the village with Lucy will be keenly felt - R.I.P. Julia.

Plants Plants Plants - Make your garden beautiful!

Tim Ambrose, one of the newer members of Ashwick & Oakhill Village Hall Committee, is hoping to raise money for the Committee this year through the sale of plants and shrubs from his home in Oakhill. He is stocking a wide range of fruit plants/bushes, shrubs and perennials at very reasonable prices and offers free delivery within Oakhill and Ashwick (with no minimum spend) and within 5 miles of Ashwick (subject to a minimum order of

£25). Please help support the Village Hall by requesting a mini brochure (PDF format) from tambrose1@sky.com.

The Captain Tom Foundation

The Foundation is asking us to 'save the date'. They are planning a special event to commemorate the life and spirit of Capt Sir Tom on Friday, 30th April, which would have been his 101st birthday.

This month's cover...

This month's photograph of a North Ronaldsay ewe lamb, called Bella, was taken by Jon Durrant. Please send photos for the cover (portrait orientation, in colour) to: magazine@beacontrinity.church
Thank you.



The felling of a diseased, dangerous tree behind the properties at Halycon Park, Oakhill, captured by Jan Monkman (top).

'Neighbourne Spring' scene taken by Thomas Atthill (right)



Tales of old

January 2021 was the coldest In Lockdown, we shelter from a virus and grumble. Yet our fate is easier than the fate of those who lived around 1600. Three volcanic eruptions in the Americas had darkened global skies, making 1560-1630 the *Little Ice Age's* coldest.

Like the current warming, the cooling climate brought extreme weather. The recently-transcribed *Bristol Chronicle* recorded severe floods and frosts, destructive storms and unseasonal blizzards, droughts, bad summers, crop failures, food shortages and famine.

In 1596, "A great famine in divers places and in the city of Bristol all kinds of grain was very dear so that the poor was in very great want."

In 1603, "upon the 4th October was the greatest snow that ever was known by the memory of man, which continued four days. And by reason that the leaves were then upon the trees, very many trees of all sorts, especially of fruit trees, were thrown down by the roots."

On 20th January 1607, "there arose such a high flood that the sea drove over the banks and drowned all in the marsh country" (the Levels). "It drowned the cattle and carried away . . . many houses and trees" drowning those who had climbed up for refuge. 2,000 perished. The land was left defiled by salt and drought came in the summer.

Then, on 20 November, "began a frost which lasted till the 8th February 1608." The *Great Winter* had arrived and the "Severn and Wye were so hard frozen that people did pass on foot from side unto the other and played gambols."

Extreme weather was frequent and often brought hunger or famine.

Add to this plague, which came, went and came again in most decades. Outbreaks of cholera, malaria, smallpox, influenza, *spotted fever* (typhus) and even *Bronze John* (yellow fever) took lives. Infectious fevers were ever-present and tuberculosis never far away. Whole families fell victim to epidemics such as these.

There were neither vaccines nor remedies. Yet despite the violent weather, debilitating hungers and deadly epidemics, people survived.

If this all seems a bit familiar: take heart. Our ancestors, like Rector Henry Russell, had it much tougher and got through.

Richard Higgins

Grenville's Ramblin's...



At the time of writing one of the TV channels is running a serial with the title 'Call the Midwife'. Although the story line is not what might be called my cup of tea, it brings to mind a District Nurse and Midwife that I remember as Nurse Searle (I hope I've spelt her name correctly) who was, I remember, living and working in the Oakhill, Binegar area in the 1930s.

I especially remember her because in one week in July 1937 she attended not only the birth of my sister but also the birth of three other baby girls in this locality. Hers being a single-handed occupation, it would have been for her quite a busy time, (doctors only being brought into a situation in working class homes if absolutely necessary) because following the birth of a baby, she would also have to make visits for several days to ensure that mother and child were getting on OK. It would obviously been quite hard going seeing that her means of transport in all winds and weathers was like the Midwives on the TV - a pushbike!

I, having avoided the TV 'Call the Midwives', and Molly, obviously thinking it might be beneficial for me, purchased the book written by Jennifer Worth.

Jennifer Worth was it seems a highly trained hospital nurse before being trained as a Midwife and the TV series is based on her stories. Being a bit short of reading material during the current lockdown and also to show a bit of appreciation for the gift of the book, I decided to have a look at it. On reading the introduction, to my surprise it turned out to be one of those books that when you pick it up its hard to put it down!

I can't say that I've ever given much thought to Midwives except to remember Nurse Searle in 1937. However, Jennifer Worth's story begins around a dozen years later after WW II in the early 1950s when she joined a group of Midwives led by Anglican Nuns, who were running a District Nursing Clinic in an old convent adjacent to the docks in the East End of London. The Nuns saw it as their calling, together with other trained Midwives, to go out to the homes of the poor in the slums in the surrounding area in order to give much needed medical care to the inhabitants, especially mothers giving birth. It seems that these Nuns, like many other people at that time and for many years before, were concerned about the lack of welfare and health care for people of the lower classes and had fought from the mid 1800s until the Nursing and Midwives profession was made legit by an act of Parliament in 1902.

So it is, having rambled myself into a corner of something that I know little or nothing about, I can only say Thank God for all those people who fought so hard to lay the foundation for the wonderful Nursing Service that we benefit from today.

Oh yes, Jennifer Worth's book is Worth a read! --- No pun intended.

Grenville Reakes

The April Garden

JANE EVANS



April and Spring have sprung at last! Suddenly there are loads of jobs to do as the weather warms up.

If you have not already done so order annual plants like geraniums, begonias and petunias online for summer bedding and hanging baskets.

Sow sunflowers, nasturtiums, petunias and scabious undercover, to attract bees and butterflies. As will direct sown wildflower seed mixtures.

Plant up hanging baskets with plug plants and keep under cover until all risk of frost has passed.

Check your patio plants aren't drying out. The warmer weather will quickly affect soil moisture soils - mix water storing granules with the compost to improve water retention.

Replace the top 5cm of old compost in your containers.

Lift and divide established border perennial plants, like Hostas to improve vigour and create new plants.



Continue to plant herbaceous perennial and biennial plants like foxgloves and osteospermum.

Pinch out the tips of fuchsias and sweet peas to encourage bushy growth.

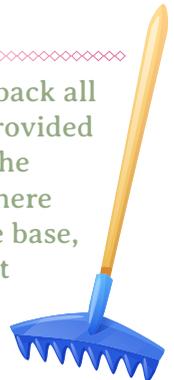
Divide primroses once they have finished flowering.

Plant or pot on any hardwood cuttings taken last year.

Provided the soil isn't frozen or waterlogged move evergreen trees/shrubs.

Tie in climbing roses, check tree stakes and ties, loosen any that are tight.

Prune penstemons, cut back all old shoots to the base provided there is new growth at the bottom of the plant. If there are no new shoots at the base, cut just below the lowest set of leaves.



Prune Forsythia after flowering, cutting back to strong young shoots.

Tie in new stems of honeysuckle and clematis, train them along supports.

Deadhead daffodils and tulips, leave foliage intact to dieback naturally.

Houseplants may require more water as warmer weather and longer light hours encourage them to grow.

Harvest asparagus spears when they are no more than 18cm tall.

Support pea and bean plants now. Thin carrot seedlings to achieve good-sized carrots, do this in the evening when there are fewer carrot flies about.

Sow marrow, pumpkin, squash and courgette seeds under cover.

Sow perennial herbs such as rosemary, sage, thyme and lemon balm in the greenhouse. Sow chives, coriander, dill and parsley directly into the ground.

Direct sow pak choi outdoors for a taste of the orient.

Use horticultural fleece on cold nights to protect fruit blossom from late frosts.

Sow lawn seed now on well prepared soil and keep the soil moist while it germinates. For an instant lawn, lay new turf this month and keep it moist until established.

Check compost bins to see if you have any that's ready to use.

Buy fresh potting compost and store it in a cool dry place.

Look out for signs of pests and diseases, early prevention is easier than curing an infestation.

Top up bird feeding stations and bird baths to encourage birds into your garden.

Record what you have sown and planted in your diary - it will help later in the year.



Taken from Thompson & Morgan's "What to do in the Garden this month"
www.thompson-morgan.com/in-the-garden-this-month

Oakhill & Ashwick Local History Group

Within Living Memory – the Shops and Businesses of Oakhill

Oakhill village doesn't have a shop anymore – a fact bemoaned by many. But in the past, until well after WW2, there were quite a number. Some older residents can still remember most of those mentioned here.

The most important shop was the Co-operative Stores – the 'Co-op' to most people. This was part of a chain – then and now – and Oakhill's was at what was then called 'the Batch', the crossroads on the Bath Road, the main shop being where the Upholsterer's is now. The Co-op sold general groceries downstairs; upstairs they had a haberdashery (not many of those about anywhere any more!). The Co-op also had a number of other outlets in the village. The photograph here of Fosse Road shows the Manager's House

(next to the Oakhill Inn), on its far side (right on the road) the butcher's shop with a bakery behind. There was also an abattoir opposite just out of sight (this picture is from the turn of the century, so beyond living memory, but the shop buildings remained until the 1970's).

During WW2 housewives would take their ration books to the Co-op: several Oakhill residents still remember doing this. Mr Ashworth was the Manager; the family came to Oakhill from Wales. In WW2 their son Edgar was in the Army, he died as a Japanese POW in Indonesia. Although his parents were told Edgar had been captured in early 1942 it was almost 4 years before they received official confirmation of his death. For all that time, while coping with running the Co-op, being



Fosse Rd, early 1900's, Oakhill Inn on the far left

at war, supply difficulties and so on, they must have been terribly anxious about their only son. Along, of course, with many others at the time.

Meanwhile, the Hill Brothers ran a coal business from a yard at the top of Zion Hill. Coal was the most important way of heating in those days, so they were very busy. The Hills' sisters ran a sweet/cigarette shop from their left-hand front room. Selling sweets was a popular option for a little extra money; they could easily be sold from your own cottage. There was also a newsagents run by Elsie Compton (later Elsie Bryant) from a shop in the High Street, opposite the entrance to The Old Maltings. This later became the Townsend Stores, and is now a private house.

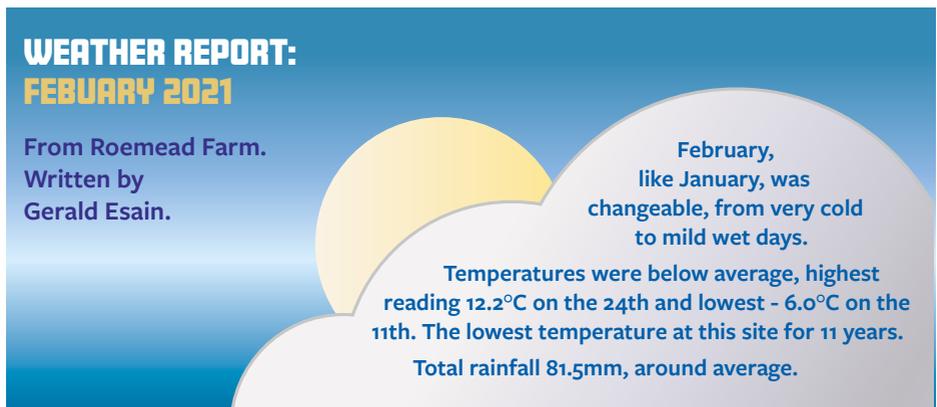
There was a Post Office in the High Street for many years. Mr and Mrs Arthur Reeves ran it from the 1930's until they retired in 1969. As for milk supplies, Brewery Farm and Neighbourne Farm both ran milk rounds, right up into the 1990's. In the earlier part of the period, if you didn't have your own milk delivery, you could still get milk by bringing a pint or half pint jug to the float and having it dipped into the milk churn.

Other tradesmen included Alfred Moon the blacksmith, who had a forge between the

entrances for the Oakhill Inn and the Church. He walked to work from Nettlebridge every day. Mr Crocker was a cobbler who worked in Dye Lane – he was known to always keep tacks in his mouth which he could spit out as and when needed for his work. Masters' Cycle Repair business took over the old telephone exchange in the 1970's. Joe James had a timber yard in the area between the Methodist Chapel and Coombe House where he lived. His yard later became a garden ornaments yard for a time. You could also get an upmarket meal, or have a celebration gathering at Oakhill House into the 1970's. The largest business was of course the Brewery, though the original Brewery had closed after 1925 there was still malting in the village.

Gradually almost all these businesses have closed down. Only a few remain – such as the Oakhill Garage, which used to have petrol pumps but now only sells cars, and the Upholsterer's that replaced the Co-op. And – very important! – there is still the pub. The Oakhill Inn has been going longer than any other business in Oakhill: we don't know when it started but it was going strong by 1782.

Lin Thorley



WEATHER REPORT:
FEBRUARY 2021

From Roemead Farm.
Written by
Gerald Esain.

February, like January, was changeable, from very cold to mild wet days.

Temperatures were below average, highest reading 12.2°C on the 24th and lowest - 6.0°C on the 11th. The lowest temperature at this site for 11 years.

Total rainfall 81.5mm, around average.



EASTER BUNNY CHASE

PRIZE FOR EVERY CHILD

REFRESHMENTS
FROM OUR POP-UP
CAFE AT THE REC

ASHWICK & OAKHILL
VILLAGE HALL
PRESENTS:

SATURDAY

3 APRIL

10am - Midday

START AND FINISH AT
THE VILLAGE HALL,
ZION HILL, OAKHILL

£3.50 PER
CHILD OR 2
FOR £6

TO BUY YOUR MAP IN ADVANCE
PLEASE CONTACT
aandovillagehall@gmail.com
OR TEXT 07974 311 465

The Bunny Chase will be open until 10th April, for those unable to make the launch event



News from the Ashwick & Oakhill Village Hall Committee

Here comes Spring!

Spring is in the air, there are buds on the newly planted trees, and the wildflowers planted over winter are starting to appear. You may have noticed the ongoing work to tidy up and make repairs to the children's play area, which will continue as we address any areas that need attention ahead of the busier times of the year and as the weather improves.

The Committee are planning for when we can re-open the Village Hall building as well, and looking forward to being able to welcome you back through the doors. If the current roadmap for easing restrictions remains on track, we can start taking bookings for events held from May 19th onwards. We have a new online booking system and calendar which will make dealing with us easier than ever. The booking system is open now and can be found via either our Facebook page (Ashwick and Oakhill Village Hall) or from our page on the ashwickparish.org website, so if you too are looking to the future and planning an event, please do look us up!

Easter Bunny Chase

On Saturday 3rd April we will be launching our "Easter Bunny Chase" event. Come up to the Rec between 10am and Midday - there will be a pop-up café where you can buy delicious refreshments to take with you on the family-friendly route around the village.

To buy your map in advance, please email aandovillagehall@gmail.com or text 07974 311 465, or you can pick one up from the pop-up café with your coffee and cake. Maps cost £3.50 per child (or 2 for £6), including a prize for every child.

If you can't make it to the launch event, don't worry, the trail will stay open all week so you can do it later in your own time!

Plants, Plants, Plants!

If your thoughts are turning towards the garden this spring-time, you may be interested to know that one of our committee members, Tim Ambrose, is raising money for the VHC this year through the sale of plants & shrubs from his home here in Oakhill. He is stocking a wide range of fruit plants/bushes, shrubs and perennial plants to brighten up your garden at very reasonable prices. He is offering free delivery within Oakhill and Ashwick with no minimum spend and also within 5 miles of Ashwick (subject to a minimum order of £25). So please help support him with his fund raising activities by requesting a mini brochure (in PDF format) from him. Just e-mail him at tambrose1@sky.com

Thank you to all of our friends and volunteers who continue to support the Village Hall throughout lockdown. Special thanks to the team of gate-keepers opening and locking the car park gates each night, and ensuring the grounds stay safe and welcoming for us all! We look forward to seeing you all again soon!!

Kim Hare

Ashwick & Oakhill Village Hall Committee



Binegar and Gurney Slade Parish Council News



Textile Bank

The Textile Bank has arrived and is situated at the back of the Village Hall car park. All we need to do now is to keep feeding it with textiles which will in turn create funds for the community. All the textiles are recycled. Please bag up and drop in any unwanted clothing, paired shoes, bags, belts, bedding, towels, curtains and soft toys. Please ensure they are in a good and re-useable

condition. Items that cannot be accepted are as follows – Wet, damaged, stained or washed out, pillows and duvets, cushions, books, bric-a-brac and electrical items.



Annual Parish Meeting

The Parish Council awaits further government guidance prior to setting a date for the Annual Parish Meeting. If you do have any ideas and questions for the Parish Council, please let the Parish Clerk know.

Binegar Bottom

The trees planted last December have survived the flooding the village experienced last month. Sadly, though damage has been done by vehicles driving across the young saplings. Thank you to the kind unknown person who stood up the young trees and made good the low railing.

Signs of Spring

The days are getting longer, and it is good to see that the daffodils planted by the Parish Council are starting to bloom giving a real lift after many months of lock down. We hope you enjoy them on your walks around the villages.



Wishing all our parishioners a Happy Easter

Diane Abbott Parish Clerk: binegarpc@hotmail.co.uk
www.binegar-pc.org.uk

Your councillors - Jon Abbott, Philip Blatchford, John Bridges,
Cath Law, Phill Roberts, John Scadding and David Stone



Binegar & Gurney Slade Village Hall Volunteers Needed

**Before it can re-open
the Village Hall needs new
committee members**

**Do you have some
time to spare to
keep the hall
running?**



For more details, please call 01749 841182



Ashwick Parish Council

March 2021 Update – David Barlow & Kate Egan
(ashwickparish@hotmail.co.uk)

Julia Barrett

Sadly we have to note Julia's death on March 3rd. Julia had recently joined the Parish Council and in her time with us showed a great willingness to listen to parishioners' concerns and to participate in our debates. Our condolences go to her husband Paul and her family. Thank you, Julia - RIP.

Thanks to Charlotte

Our appointed Clerk, Charlotte Stott, who has been on maternity leave has decided to hand in her notice and focus on family life. Our thanks to Charlotte for the brief time she spent with us and introducing us to Zoom! Good luck.

Street Lighting

The Council proposes to look at levels of lighting in the village. We have been advised additional lights could cost upwards of £3500! Obviously, we would need to draw up priorities and perhaps have a rolling programme.

Bus Shelters

A request has also been made to the Council to provide bus shelters on the A367 opposite school and adjacent to the Oakhill Inn. The shelter opposite the school is now obsolete as the stop has been moved to the Methodist Chapel. This will be debated and costed out.

Highways

Following the appearance of a 6-foot hole and a collapsed culvert in the High Street, Somerset Highways have been on site carrying out exploratory work and repairs. We still await news on the Hump.

Local Government Reform

The public consultation has now started and Somerset district councils, including Mendip, are encouraging residents to take a 'once in a generation chance' to transform lives across Somerset. The consultation is on Stronger Somerset's plan to deliver better jobs, affordable homes, stronger communities, and a carbon zero county. The consultation runs for 8 weeks until Monday, 19th April.

For more information on the Stronger proposals go to www.strongersomerset.co.uk.

To respond to the Government's consultation go to:

<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/governance-reform-and-democracy/somerset/>

Your Councillors are: Roy Bailey, David Barlow (Chair), Phil Briscoe, Sarah Emery, David Gilson, David Hine, Lizzie Lewis (Vice Chair), David Thorley, Bryan Wells.

All agendas and minutes can be found on the Parish Council website:

www.ashwickparish.org

April Message

*Ruth Worsley,
Bishop of Taunton*



Hope for a better future

This month of April begins on Maundy Thursday, the day when we remember the last meal Jesus shared together with his friends before he was arrested and crucified. It was the meal that has become so significant in the life of the Church, where bread was broken and a cup of wine passed round, coming to symbolise for us the brokenness of the body of Christ. The sacrifice he made for love of us.

Many of us will hopefully celebrate something of the Easter feast this weekend although restrictions continue for a while longer. We may not yet be able to gather in larger groups of family and friends but perhaps we can glimpse what is to come?

This has always been the story of the Church, to point to what 'is' but which may not yet be fully realised. During this pandemic there has been a need for hope amongst such bleakness and now as the vaccine is shared and the signs of life appear in the world around us, we begin to see what might again be possible. To hope for a better future.

And yet in the bleakness of this first weekend of April, which takes us into the darkness of the tomb on Holy Saturday, we remember that hope is not cheaply bought. It is not mere optimism, but rather something, though fragile, that is stronger than death.

As some of us break our fast this Easter and share the bread and wine of the Eucharistic feast, may we know both the cost of such love and the hope that it offers.

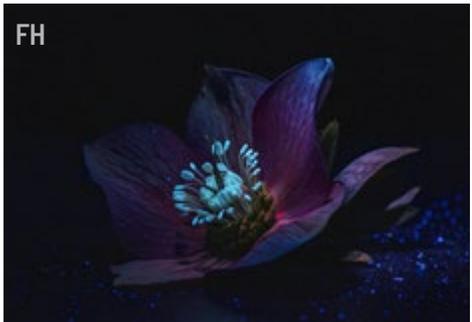
Easter blessings!

Ruth



The world through a lens

images by the Beacon Photography Group



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RS



JM



DB



JL



JD



DW



BV



AL

The Beacon Photography Group meets online, every Wednesday evening at 7.30pm. We welcome new members - contact Jon Durrant on 01761 232520 to find out more.

Duffins

Recipe found on FaceBook – tried, tested and enjoyed by the Editors!

Ingredients:

125ml vegetable (or Sunflower) oil

2 eggs

185ml milk

Splash of vanilla

300g self-raising flour

150g caster sugar

Method:

- 1) Mix all wet ingredients together well.
- 2) Add flour and sugar – mix well.
- 3) Half fill muffin cases and put a blob of jam, chocolate spread or lemon curd on top.
- 4) Fill cases with the rest of the mixture.
- 5) Bake for 25 mins at Fan 160oC
- 6) When done, brush tops with melted butter and sprinkle with caster sugar.



BINGEAR SCOUTS

APRIL 2021



1st North Mendip is a thriving Scout Group that meets in Binegar Memorial Hall weekly during term time. We currently have Beavers (6-8yrs), Cubs (8-10yrs) and Scouts (10-14yrs).

Our Beaver colony has doubled this term with loads of new members joining us and completing badges. Our Cub section has also had new members join and some members move up from Beavers too. We have been meeting virtually this term so far but are returning face to face for one final week before the Easter break, following the issued guidance. Both sections have covered various Challenge, Cook and Chef badges; we are just starting our Space and Astronomer badges for the next couple of weeks before moving onto our Sports and Athletics badges, when we meet face-to-face to work off some much-gained energy. We are looking forward to returning after Easter when we will be back outside learning new skills and doing what we do best - life skills!

Scouts have also continued their weekly Zoom meetings. Our first night back after half term we held a virtual challenge evening, encouraging Scouts to work together online in small teams to achieve a large number of quick challenges. All teams completed most of the challenges and amazed us with their teamwork, especially as some of our new members have never met their teammates face-to-face! This last week, we used chocolate, condensed milk and food colouring to make marbled fudge. There were definitely some interesting colours and we know that everyone and their kitchens got a bit sticky! We look forward to a talk from our chosen charity for this year (the RSPCA) this week and finalising our programme plans for returning to face-to-face after Easter.

Do you have a young person aged 5, 6 or 7 who may be interested in joining our Scout adventure? We're looking for young people who want to make new friends, have fun and learn some new skills in our Beaver section. Why not give it a try?

If you are interested in joining us please sign up via our Online Waiting List:
<https://tinyurl.com/v7kz5kp> or contact a member of the team:

Beavers/Cubs - Gemma (Raksha) - 01749 938321

Scouts - Natalie (Gunner) - gunnerexplore@gmail.com

You can also sign up and see what we're up to on our Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/northmendipscouts

APRIL SHOWERS



April showers bring May flowers, that's what they always say
But April showers drown out sunlight and turn the whole sky grey
Will April showers truly bring the leaves and all the buds?
Or will they drown in solitude, beneath the dirt and mud.
If flowers are the thing we seek, then let those dark clouds go,
And bring back the bright sunlight, that melted all the snow.

Arianna6

APRIL



Golden dust of the moon sifts musical notes,
I'm once again on my knees grateful,
Praying with thanksgiving words in a poem that floats,
Waiting patiently for the beautiful month of April.

White snowdrops kiss the red sun's rays,
Colourful birds and purple butterflies dance in the breeze,
The stars sing endless, joyful praise,
You can feel the new life in the murmur of the trees.

Happy tears turned into dew on the new grass beneath my feet,
God is always good God is always faithful,
Every Spring, the earth grows perfumed sweet,
I always loved the beautiful month of April.



Cherry blossom waltzing as the angels sing the violin,
And the Spring sunny days anew begin.

Marius Alexandru



Taken from 'All Poetry' - the best poetry on the web

St. George's Day | April 23rd



St George's Day in England remembers St George, England's patron saint. The anniversary of his death, which is on April 23, is seen as England's national day.

St George was born sometime around the year 280 in what is now Turkey. He was a soldier and rose up through the ranks of the Roman army, eventually becoming a personal guard to the Emperor Diocletian. He was executed for being a Christian on April 23, 303, and is buried in the town of Lod in Israel.

St George is most widely known for slaying a dragon. According to legend, the only well in the town of Silene, Libya, was guarded by a dragon. In order to

get water, the inhabitants of the town had to offer a human sacrifice every day to the dragon. The person to be sacrificed was chosen by lots. On the day that St George was visiting, a princess had been selected to be sacrificed. However, he killed the dragon, saved the princess and gave the people of Silene access to water. In gratitude, they converted to Christianity. It is thought that the dragon represents a certain type of pagan belief that included the sacrifice of human beings. Legend has it that, after saving the princess from the infamous dragon, St. George handed her a red rose, now the national flower of England.



The most widely recognized symbol of St George's Day is St George's cross. This is a red cross on a white background, which is often displayed as a flag. During the crusades in the 1100s and 1200s, English knights used St George's cross as part of their uniform. It has been the official flag of England for centuries, but the Union Flag, a combination of St George's cross, St Andrew's cross and St Patrick's cross, is the national flag of the United Kingdom.

In 1940 King George VI created a new award for acts of the greatest heroism or courage in circumstance of extreme danger. The George Cross, named after the king, bears the image of St George vanquishing the dragon. The image of St George also adorns many of the memorials built to honour those killed during World War One.



Colour me in!

Village Agent News

April 2021



Staying Warm and Well

Being home more over the past couple of months will have bumped up fuel bills - please get in touch if you are struggling with fuel costs. We help distribute the Surviving Winter grants which are available for older people in Somerset, who are unable to adequately heat their homes <https://www.somersetcf.org.uk/winter>

Alternatively, you can contact the Centre for Sustainable Energy and their Home Energy team, who deal with fuel debt, help find cheaper fuel, aid in switching suppliers and much more - just watch this Talking Café they co-hosted with our Village Agent Wendy Rudd to see why it is so important to stay warm & how they help: <https://youtu.be/Xjmw10nk9C0>. You can also complete the online referral form on: <https://www.cse.org.uk/advice>

Don't forget you can also join our Community Oil Scheme and save in bulk orders of oil! www.ccslovesomerset.org/oil. 50% of the small annual fee goes into our Crisis fund to help people in need in Somerset.

Crisis Fund

The Crisis Fund is distributed by our Village and Community Agents to help people for whom a small grant can make a huge difference - at this time of crisis and hardship for many in our communities the need is greater than ever.

We help when others can't, won't, or don't.

We have never actively fundraised for the Crisis Fund, but this has been an unprecedented year, and our 'pot' of funds is depleted due to the unprecedented demand of Coronavirus. We would love to raise **£20,021 in 2021** and are asking **YOU** to get involved anyway you can with sponsored runs, bake sales (after lockdown!) - setting yourself any kind of #CrisisFundChallenge - or by simply and very kindly donating! Follow us on social media @RuralSomerset for updates and how to get involved!

Please visit www.ccslovesomerset.org/somerset-crisis-fund/ to find out more. You can donate to a county wide 'pot' <https://localgiving.org/charity/somersetcrisisfund/> or directly to the district you live in:

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Somerset Food Resilience Taskforce

We are proud to be part of the county-wide initiative, and we organise, co-ordinate and deliver food boxes and precooked meals to those in need via our Agents, community groups/kitchens - over 20,000 items of food a WEEK are delivered.

Would you benefit from a free food box?

No one should go hungry in Somerset, and our boxes are not means tested, simply for people in need whether you're struggling to cook or obtain food. If you are an unpaid Carer and would benefit from respite from cooking, we can provide some meal packs for you and the person you care for. If you need help with any of this, contact your local Village Agent on 01823 331 222 or visit: <https://somersetagents.org/help-with-food/>

Want to get involved? Our Smart Communities team can help get your community set up with equipment such as fridges & freezers, and food to stock them! Visit <https://ccslovesomerset.org/food-resilience/> for details.

Julie Brown, Village Agent, **07985 680262** julieb@somersetccc.org.uk

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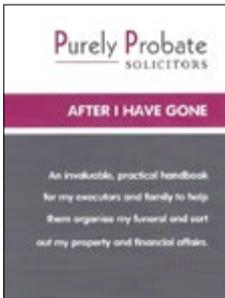


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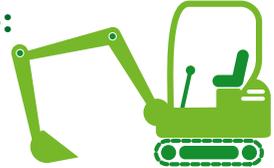
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