

The Beacon

Ashwick, Oakhill & Binegar News

JANUARY 2023

Cover photo: © Rene Rauschenberger



BEACON
TRINITY



Church Services – January 2023

Sunday, 1st January	10am	Communion	St. James, Ashwick
Sunday, 8th January	10am	Communion	All Saints, Oakhill
Sunday, 15th January	10am	Communion	St. James, Ashwick
Sunday, 22nd January	10am	Communion	Holy Trinity, Binegar
Sunday, 29th January	10am	Breakfast@	All Saints, Oakhill <i>Bacon rolls, muffins, good coffee or tea. A café style of church with space to reflect and pray. For all ages.</i>

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Thank you.





A Final View from the Hill

Happy New Year! What's new for you in 2023?

In summer 2013, I arrived in the Mendips to lead the church parishes of Ashwick, Oakhill and Binegar. When interviewed I was given a copy of the parish magazine which gave me a flavour of the community and church. At the time John Rayment was the editor, and he asked me for an article each month. John had a computer on his desk and used MS Publisher to put together the magazine. People then paid 35p for a copy to be delivered.

After a couple of years, I suggested we could increase circulation and deliver free to every house if we had a little more sponsorship. The suggestion was taken up by Peter and Pam Dennis and we recruited a larger team of people to deliver everywhere. It was a challenge and we didn't always manage to get them to some of the remoter areas of the parish.

In 2016 we changed the name of the group of parishes (Benefice) from AOB to Beacon Trinity. The new Editorial Team then looked to update the magazine with a colour front cover and in 2018 switched to a cheaper online print service and were able to print the whole thing in colour, which meant more interesting pictures. The Beacon Photography group had been set up and this also gave a place for them to share some of their work.

When John Rayment, and subsequently Henry Hoddinott, stepped down as editors, Peter and Pam took over and a number of people have voluntarily assisted them over the years - Peter Greenlees, Will Wilmott and, latterly, Lee Linford. However, costs have increased greatly, finding people to deliver has become hard as people have retired from the role. Recently, Graham Crane, who was the local postie in Oakhill/Ashwick, has been sorting over 850 copies each month and dropping them off to every deliverer (approximately thirty individuals), which is a mammoth task.

As a result of these difficulties, we have reluctantly decided that this January 2023 edition will be the last. I am extremely thankful to all those who have contributed over the years, some mentioned above, but there are many more. I have often had positive comments especially, after we went full colour, and know that for some it will be missed. Sharing what goes on in the community is important and we must think of different ways to do this.

If you think there is a need for a community magazine of this nature and want to get a team together to produce one, we will share our experience and contact our contributors and advertisers to see if they want to be a part. For now, I thank God for the blessing of so many over the years and I thank you for reading it.

I have tried not to preach through what I have written and do not wish to now. However, I do want to say that I believe you are very special, made in the image of the creator God. You are an important part of this community and are important to God. If you don't feel loved or valued and need to talk then please get in touch.

There are tough times ahead so let us be a community that cares for each other. May God bless you today and in the year ahead.



Community corner



The Beacon magazine

It is with very great regret that this issue for January 2023 will be the last one. For the past year we have been hit by a 50% increase in printing costs as well as the increasing costs of consumables. We also struggle to find enough volunteers to cover the whole production/delivery processes. We have enjoyed keeping you informed and hope that, for some of you at least, **The Beacon** has been of interest, as well as useful. We are particularly grateful for the help and expertise we have received from Lee Linford as well as the invaluable support of our current distributor, Graham Crane, and all the individual deliverers in our villages, both past and present. Thank you too to all our advertisers, sponsors and contributors – without you we would not have been able to produce a community magazine to be proud of!

Best wishes for a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

Pam and Peter

Dorothy House Christmas Sale

A big thank you to everyone who supported the sale in November. We raised a wonderful £430.09. I am also very grateful to all the helpers, stall holders and suppliers of refreshments.

Pauline West

FLOWERS ARRANGERS WANTED

Would you like to add to the beauty of our lovely church at Holy Trinity, Binegar, by being a member of a group of enthusiastic flower arrangers? If so, please contact Sue Stone on 840300.

Local clubs

Oakhill and Ashwick Local History Group:

The History Group is experiencing a crisis: numbers have declined since Covid (not yet unsustainable); financial reserves are OK for the moment (though decreasing). What we do not have are people willing to join the Committee and help with running the Group. Unless we can sort that out we will have to disband. Consequently, **we will cancel the Speaker for the February meeting and run the AGM instead** to discuss the situation and see if there is any way to save it.

We will email members in advance; this is a heads-up particularly to anyone not on our member list interested in saving the Group. We are really sorry to have to do this but must address reality – there is still a chance for us to survive if we act now. Meanwhile huge thanks to everyone who has helped with the Group in any way. If you can help or want further info, please contact:

lhg.oakash@btinternet.com
or 01749 840200.

East Mendip Gardening Club:

On Tuesday 23 January the East Mendip Gardening Club will meet in Oakhill Village Hall at 7.30p.m. for their first meeting of 2023 when Julie Haylock will talk about Container gardening with a demonstration and raffle of the planted containers. New members are always welcome. Further details from our Chair Mark Manley: markamanley81@googlemail.com or see <https://www.ashwickparish.org/clubs-and-societies/east-mendip-gardening-club/>

Oakhill Short Mat Bowls Club:

Meets in Ashwick & Oakhill Village Hall on Tuesdays from 2 – 4 pm. Details from Kate Baker 01749 343589.



Ashwick stained-glass window

It was lovely to see the Ashwick stained-glass window on the front of the December magazine. I wonder if many people know that it is in memory of Olive Padfield who sang in Ashwick Choir for many years and who loved and looked after a variety of animals with gentleness and care.

Jill Townend

This month's cover...

This month's cover photograph of the Northern Lights is by Rene Rauschenberger from Pixabay.



Ashwick & Oakhill Village Hall – Community Café and Christmas Market

The photos below were taken at the Grand Opening of the Community Café and the Christmas Market, at Ashwick & Oakhill Village Hall. Read all about it on page 10.



WEATHER REPORT: NOVEMBER 2022

From Roemead Farm.
Written by
Gerald Esain.

November for most of the month was very mild, with temperatures above average. Highest reading was 16.5°C on the 13th. Lowest 1.7°C on the 19th. Rainfall for the month was above average, 159.5mm, the highest recorded month's rainfall at this site for 2 years.

January Message

*Rt Revd Michael Beasley,
Bishop of Bath and Wells*



Are you looking out for Jesus?

In January, our churches enter the season of Epiphany which my dictionary defines as 'a moment of sudden and great revelation or realization.' I wonder what your epiphanies have been? When have you seen things for the first time? Experienced the penny dropping? Understood things in a new way?

In our churches, the readings for the Sundays of January are all about moments that revealed who Jesus is. The arrival of the wise men showed that Jesus is for everyone, not just the people of Israel. Jesus's baptism revealed his relationship with his Father and the Holy Spirit. The production at Cana of enough top-quality red plonk to take several baths in made clear the abundance of God's love for us. The end of the Epiphany season, the feast of Candlemas (actually 2nd February), marks the moment when Jesus was seen as 'God's salvation for all peoples' (Luke 2: 31).

The challenge with epiphanies is whether we're looking out for them. If our eyes are wide shut, we don't see an awful lot. Sometimes we need to stand in a different place to spot things we haven't perceived before. So, the question I'd like to ask you as our new year begins is 'Where and when are you looking out for the Jesus who has been revealed to us?'

A practical step you might take to help you on your way is to sign up to be part of the 'Everyday Faith' events that will be happening around our diocese from 29th January until 4th February. The aim of these events is to help us look at our faith afresh and see things anew from some different perspectives.

I'm going to be taking part in the Everyday Faith events and they're going to be great. As we enter a new year, why not come and join me? After all, an invitation to an epiphany isn't something that comes your way every day!

A very Happy New Year to you all,

Bishop Michael



Oakhill Church School & Nursery

Everywhere at Oakhill is starting to look very Christmassy. We are grateful to Ryan from The Christmas Tree farm in Dean for our beautiful tree in the hall. The children have been making decorations ready for the Christmas Tree Festival in Shepton Mallet Baptist Church as well as learning the songs for plays and carol services.

All our children have been extremely busy, with Chestnut class winning first prize for the largest wall hanging decoration at The Bishop's Palace in Wells. Our year 5 pupils have attended a Primary School Dance Show and our Year 6 pupils have attended a Language Day at Downside School. We are now looking forward to a Movie Night provided by our PTA, our Christmas Fair and a visit from a Panto on the last day of term.

We hope everybody had a Merry Christmas and wish you all a Happy New Year - from all at Oakhill School.

Dee Bulmer

Gurney Slade and Binegar Memorial Hall

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Carole 07980 979365.



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enquiries@oakhill.bwmat.org to book a
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'Roots Nursery at Oakhill School' www.oakhillchurchschool.co.uk/nursery

Tales of old

What a journey we have had with our 86 *Tales* that, sadly, must end.

We discovered an ancient land, 5-6,000 years ago when people settled these hills. Our Celtic ancestors built sacred sites nearby. Those burial mounds still survive. The Romans mined our hills, leaving evidence of their lives at Dalleston and a Roman road through the village.

We followed fighting Saxons. In AD705, King Ine brought us Christ and a church at Wells. In AD845, King Æthelwulf sent his son, Alfred the Great, to meet Pope Leo in Rome. We also met Eanwulf, *Ealdorman of Somerset*, who fought the Vikings and was granted *Beagenhangran*, taking its earliest mention back to AD855. If the word is Brittonic, it probably means "Hill of Love." Nice, eh?

200 years later, on the eve of the Norman invasion, King Edward the Confessor granted the manors of Binegar and Whitchurch to Giso, Bishop of Wells and so began our parish and its modern history.

What is striking about that history is what hard times people endured. Our forebears suffered plague, depopulation, starvation, discontent, violence and revolt. Henry VIII tested their faith. The Great and Greedy grabbed their commons, enclosing land and getting rich on wool.

Despite this, great men graced our Prebend of Whitchurch like the lawyer, de Bracton. Now carved on Harvard University's Library is his principle "Not under man but under God and law." de Bracton lived here from 1250, holding court in Ashwick and Binegar. Remember the powerful de Gournays too, who gave their name to Gurney Slade.

Among us were priests, who tended their flocks diligently, albeit with "help" from prodding Archdeacons. Along the way, we found a forgotten rector, Thomas Waryn who, forced by Sir Thomas Hungerford, quit his claim to land around Farleigh Castle in 1377.

Through history like a stream from 1348 ran Binegar Fair. A rowdy horse fair, big enough to be in *Far from the Madding Crowd*. It attracted rich and poor for courtship and fun but there was theft, brawling, drunkenness, gambling, violence and licentious behaviour – a heady mix and sore temptation for any youth.

Hope you enjoyed our trip. For more, ask binegarrichard@gmail.com.

Richard Higgins

Grenville's Ramblin's...



In recent years for one reason or another, I've been inclined to make the statement that it ain't much fun getting old!

Having said this, the pigeons, so to speak, came home to roost one day last year, when we contacted the local insurance agent that I've used since my motorcycling days, to renew the insurance on our car. His reply was that, although they could insure it for Molly's use, I was now too old to be accepted by the various insurance companies. As I said it ain't much fun. They've been taking our money all these years, but apparently that don't count.

Then again, I later heard that if I was prepared to take and pass a driving test I would once again be able to be insured. Not being, so to speak, the brightest kid on the block, I decided to give that one a miss.

So, we decided that as long as Molly is able or allowed to drive (she's younger than me) I would be, if somewhat reluctantly a front seat passenger! Of course, I've still got a driving licence - would that I wondered allow me to use one of those little electric buggies or perhaps an electric scooter that are being used to save the planet these days? On the other hand, being too old for insurance, it would probably be unwise to take a chance of using them in Binegar Lane with the speed of those Bath to Wells and Wells to Bath great double-decker buses that thunder up and down the road!

I suppose I could use my bus pass if I could find it. There is, of course, a bus stop just down the road, but their timing seems to be somewhat erratic. Then again it ain't much help to wait for a bus to get to see the doctor or nurse at Oakhill surgery.

It may not be much fun, but at least I'm allowed to drive the car out and into the garage and put the fuel in when we get to the pumps and of course offer a bit of unwelcome advice from the front passenger's seat for the year ahead.

So having rambled this far, as an old man finding that it ain't much fun getting old.

I wish you a Happy New Year!.

Grenville Reakes



News from the Ashwick & Oakhill Village Hall Committee

A massive thank you to everyone who came to support the Village Hall for the Christmas Market and Community Café grand opening. The event raised an incredible £1,323. Congratulations to all the Raffle Prize winners, especially Di Marshall for winning the First Prize Hamper!

It was lovely to see so many people at the Café launch event and to hear your comments about the space. Special thanks to author Cath Weeks for cutting the ribbon to officially open the Café, and to the volunteer team who worked so hard to help it succeed – fundraising, promoting, helping on the day, baking or setting/clearing up. We really appreciate it.

Community Café Opening Times – January

Now we are officially open, we can let you know the next times you can visit us:

Saturday 7 January	9.00am – midday
Wednesday 11 January	10.00am – midday (*warm spaces)
Saturday 14 January	9.00am – midday
Saturday 21 January	9.00am – midday
Wednesday 25 January	10.00am – midday (*warm spaces)
Saturday 28 January	9.00am – midday



You will see we are starting slowly, but over time we aim to have more regular and frequent opening times. Please come and support us and treat yourself to a delicious coffee and a slice of cake!

Future opening hours will be advertised in advance on Facebook, and on Village Notice Boards so do look out for those.

*warm spaces opening times are fully funded by the Warm Spaces Grant – **free** tea, coffee and biscuits available – come and meet friends in a warm and friendly place. Chat, relax, work, read or just get out of the cold for a few hours.

Volunteers Needed!

Thank you to everyone who signed up to volunteer at the Café during the launch event. We really appreciate your support – with such a fantastic, and willing group of helpers we are certain this can be a success.

If you are yet to sign up and have some time available to help, please do contact us. We will need a team with a variety of skills to make this work – so whether it's baking, serving coffee, washing up, or helping on the admin/back-office side of the café – we would love to hear from you. It's a great way to meet lots of new people and give a little back to the Village Community.

You can email us on aandovillagehall@gmail.com, contact us via Facebook, or telephone Kim on 07974 311 465.



Ashwick Parish Update

December 2022 – David Barlow & Kate Egan
(clerk@ashwickparish.org)

For over 50 years Bryan Wells has served his community as a Parish Councillor. He is deserving of our gratitude. During those years he served as Chair of the Parish Council, contributed to planning decisions, took a keen interest in Highways, and was, of course, instrumental in the building of the Village Hall. 50 years of giving!

In 2018 Bryan was selected to attend a royal garden party at Buckingham Palace as a representative from Somerset – definitely an event to remember! Bryan has now retired as a councillor. Thank you, Bryan.

The parish council is looking to update the Parish Plan and in time will form a steering group. If anyone is interested in joining, please contact the Parish Clerk!

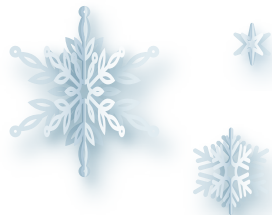
It was sad indeed to hear that this edition of The Beacon will be the last! Through the years the magazine has provided the community with valuable news items, been a record of village events in the form of news reports and photographs and has promoted up coming events. The magazine has provided the community with excellent channels of communication for local groups and has always been the 'go-to' for trade contacts. This has been achieved over the years through many editorial teams, the most recent of which has been Peter and Pam Dennis together with Lee Linford. Their creative minds ensured The Beacon continued but now, sadly, printing and consumable costs have risen considerably and the lack of willing volunteers to help has led to the decision to end its illustrious history.

YOUR COMMUNITY NEEDS YOU!

Were you there! Congratulations to the Village Hall on the official opening of the Community Cafe and the successful Christmas Market. Events like this can only be achieved through the hard work of the committee and willing volunteers who give their time.

There are numerous clubs/associations in the village that are dependent on support from parishioners. These clubs provide leisure activities, opportunities to meet other parishioners and chat. All very worthwhile. However, numbers are proving difficult to maintain and some are on the brink.

Please give some thought to playing your part in village life. The Parish Council is certainly down on members and may find it difficult to form a quorum. Other groups in the village such as the Village Hall, the Oakhill and Ashwick Local History Group, the East Mendip Gardening Club and Oakhill Short Mat Bowls Club all need members or volunteers to help them thrive!



January Garden

EAST MENDIP GARDENING CLUB – JANE EVANS

A new gardening year with the opportunity to do all those things you intended to do in 2022 but didn't quite manage! So, no staying in the warm but get out there on the first dry day and work up an appetite for everything you will grow in 2023.

Cut the side branches off your Christmas tree and use to cover tender plants in the garden. This will keep the worst of the frost off and yet allow the plant to breathe.

If you didn't sow in autumn, sweet peas can be sown now for the earliest blooms.

There is still time to take root cuttings of Phlox, Verbascum and Oriental Poppies.

Hardwood cuttings of Forsythia, Escallonia, Ribes, Cornus and Salix too.

Check tree ties and stakes. Adjust those that are too tight and tighten those that are not! Make sure the top tie is near to the top of the stake so that it prevents the tree rubbing. Make certain the stake is still sound and that it isn't the tree holding the stake up!

Hardy plants to brighten your garden in January – Hellebores, Cyclamen Coum, Camellias, Viburnum Tinus Eve Price, Mahonias, Snowdrops, Lonicera Winter Beauty, Algerian Iris, Chimonanthus [Winter Sweet], Witch Hazels, Winter Heathers, Christmas Box.

Buy pots of snowdrops that are now coming into flower. They establish much easier when transplanted in active growth. Winter Aconites too.

Established bulb shoots will be showing above ground now and are very tough so will not need protecting. Daffodils in pots outside will suffer if the pot is not protected from wind driven frosts so move to more shelter.

Plant shallots. They prefer soil that hasn't been used to grow onions, leeks or shallots for several years and a well-manured plot. Delay planting onion sets until warmer.

Cover a piece of cultivated veg patch to trap the weak winter sun's warmth so that early sowings of carrots, parsnips, peas and other vegetables can be made. Use clear polythene and lay flat on the soil but weight down the edges to stop it blowing away.

Cover established rhubarb crowns with manure and a rhubarb forcing pot (or old chimney) to produce early, tender young stems..

Get growing this year's veg, sow turnips, lettuce, stump rooted carrots, early cabbage, cauliflower and spinach in trays on the windowsill. These could be planted out in February.

Move potted strawberries inside to begin forcing them for really early crops. They should have experienced enough cold outside to break dormancy by now.

Clean and disinfect plant trays and pots to prevent carry over of disease from one year to the next. Bamboo canes can harbour pests inside their hollow centres (especially red spider mites) so



treat these or bin them and buy new.

Buy seed potatoes and set up to shoot ['chitting']. Early varieties like 'Rocket' will benefit but later varieties will yield better too if encouraged into growth before planting out.

Regularly remove dead and dying leaves and flowers from plants in the greenhouse. If you leave them, you may have problems with grey mould. Regular ventilation on warm days will help to avoid this.

Sow Begonia, Lobelia, Salvia and Pelargonium in a heated greenhouse or propagator.

Plant shrubs and trees that will provide food and shelter for wildlife in winter. Rowan, Cotoneaster, Berberis, Amelanchier, Crataegus, Buddlejia, Crab apples, Pyracantha, Ivy and Holly are good examples.

Make sure that there is always fresh water available.

Supply a range of bird food to cater for all types of birds; mixed seed on tables, meal worms for robins, fat balls for the tit family, peanuts for finches, fruit and cheese for thrushes and blackbirds. Regularly clean feeders and tables with a bird-safe disinfectant.

Make a log or rock pile in a quiet corner to act as a wildlife refuge.

Remove any fallen leaves from ponds. Stop the whole surface of ponds freezing over by floating a ball on the surface ~ never smash the ice if there are fish in the water!

If your living room is looking bare now that you have removed the Christmas tree and taken down the decorations, why not liven up the room with a houseplant?

Mist over the tops of houseplants regularly especially if they are in a room with central heating. Water carefully; it is better to let plants dry out between waterings and then give a thorough soak than a small amount regularly. Clean houseplant leaves with leaf shine. Dusty leaves will struggle in low light and polished ones look so much better!

Feed indoor plants monthly; but make sure the root ball is wet first, if not water first!

Central heating can dry out houseplants, so stand the pots in groups on a tray of damp pebbles. This will create a humid atmosphere around the plants but do avoid overwatering and position them where they can make the most of the winter daylight.

Keep deadheading Cyclamen, African Violets, Christmas Cacti and Azaleas to encourage more flowers.

Don't forget to keep Cyclamen and Azaleas cool for prolonged flowering.

When the days and nights are very cold, move plants away from cold windowsills.

And when you have done all that put your feet up and browse all the seed and plant catalogues to plan your best garden ever.





Binegar Parish Council
Wish all Parishioners

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Jon Abbott, John Bridges, Cath Law, Phill
Roberts, John Scadding, David Stone &
David Wilson.

&

Parish Clerk Diane Abbott

www.binegarpc@hotmail.co.uk

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Caroline Stevens Tel: 01749 840170
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Ashwick & Oakhill Village Hall



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Community Café New! Coming soon!

Other Facilities for hire include a football pitch & various sound/lighting equipment.



Amenities include large car park, recreational field, toddler playground, BMX track, Truespeed Ultra wifi and a projector screen in the hall.

Availability and Booking Information:

www.ashwickparish.org (Amenities > Village Hall)
or **Email:** aandovillagehall@gmail.com
or **Phone:** 01749 841 688

The Beacon Photography Group

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.



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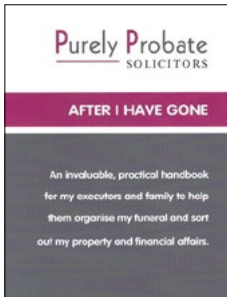
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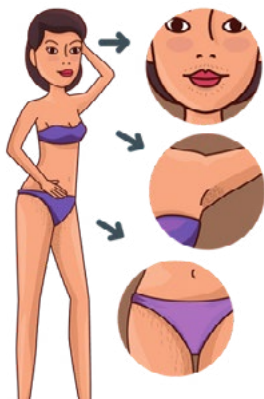


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