

West Ashton Magazine



Blackbird Chicks

Photo by John Taylor

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And Much More....

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

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

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

Front page photo of Blackbird Chicks by John Taylor

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EDITORIAL

After the excesses of Christmas, New Year resolutions made and broken followed possibly by 'Dry January' it's a pleasure to look forward to the lighter evenings. Looking back over last year, the speed of traffic along Bratton Road is still a problem despite the best efforts of our parish council. Working alongside Trowbridge Area Board and Wiltshire Council, both provided grants for the speed bumps and the

police, training for our traffic calming stalwarts. Hopefully by the time you read this Brexit will have been sorted, but who knows. Anyway, as ever, the village hall committee provided a plethora of entertainment over the winter for village and friends, and the poppy display in the church was an outstanding success, with knitters from far and wide answering the call. Read all about it inside. Jo

Bratton Rd in the snow March 2018 - There's time yet if not here already!

And here we are in Feb and the snow HAS arrived, hey ho *pub*.

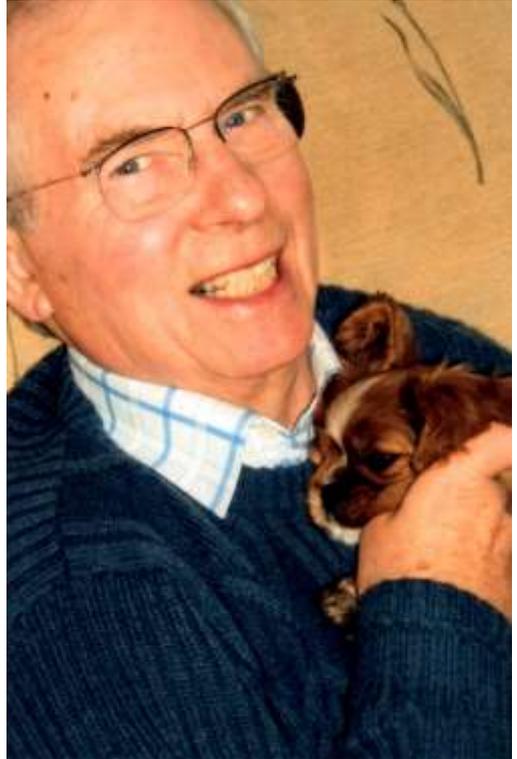


Photo Jean Covington

BOB WHITE

Bob was born in Trowbridge on June 8th 1937, the younger son of Reginald and Hilda White. He had a happy childhood with his brother John and was educated at Margaret Stancomb, Parochial and then Trowbridge Boys' High School. At the age of 18 he was excited to be called up for National Service in the RAF and his life-long love of flying took off with Bob later becoming an accomplished glider pilot. Throughout life he had a wealth of interests including dinghy sailing, rugby, motorcycling, gardening, birds, nature and music. Bob had a wonderful singing voice and belonged to various choirs in the area, starting as a choir boy in St James' Parish Church and later singing in West Ashton Church with the Irwin Singers and Westbury Choral.

Bob and Mary married in 1962 and moved from Bromham to West Ashton in 1964, the year he joined his father at RD White Opticians, Roundstone Street, Trowbridge where he loved working as a dispensing optician until his retirement. In 1965 their daughter Kathe-



rine was born and their time in West Ashton was filled with very happy memories. Bob enjoyed many years serving the village on the Parish Council and was chairman for a while. He always loved the events of village life, especially enjoying harvest suppers and walking the footpaths annually (in his younger years!). He also attended dance classes, history groups and school events.

Bob and Mary lived so happily together in the village until Bob sadly passed away peacefully at home on 25th October surrounded by his family.

Bob was a warm-hearted, kind and gentle man who always took a great interest in others and was loved by all. His family was the centre of his life and he loved his three

grandchildren dearly. He was and will forever remain a beloved husband, father and grandfather (Dobby). Bob was always friendly, generous and had a great sense of humour! He treasured his friends in the village and all that village life could offer. His family will miss him more than words can express, however, love never ends.

Bird watching

There is not much new to tell about the birds this time, but they are still coming to the feeders often, in between storms and strong winds. The usual tit families, more sparrows than I have seen for a while, plus woodpeckers and goldfinches. Blackbirds have been busy on the pyracantha berries, and the redwings enjoy them as well, they come every year. The only birds I haven't seen for quite a while are the chaffinches and the grey wagtails.

I have my own bird indoors for company too. When he sees me eating, he usually decides its time

for him to eat too. Here is a picture of Monty, the budgie.

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas, and are looking forward to the spring.



Evelyn Sweetman

HORROR STALKED THE VILLAGE



Party
Time
In
West
Ashton

LETTERS

That Rubbish feeling... recycling?

Having tried to keep active, as the weather turns colder, I decided to stop sitting on my backside (I was exam marking) and go for a walk down East Town Road. Instead of going to the farm I took a right, down the road that cuts back to Bratton Road, and was saddened to find three different piles of fly tipping.

If you talk to people living in and around the area of this site, as well as many nearby, this seems to be used by a person/persons unknown to dump people's waste. Often there are people who offer to cheaply clear houses but dump on unofficial sites to avoid paying the landfill charge thus creating environmental impact on us, our children, the wildlife and our countryside. The charge for collection from your house by the council is £23.50. I posted on West Ashton Facebook page and contacted Richard Covington. I am pleased to report that

the rubbish was cleared.

Rubbish is becoming an ever-increasing concern, and frankly it is only in recent years that I have really started taking it seriously (I know, sorry). This year, I have made a concerted effort to not use Christmas paper, unless it is recyclable, most gifts I have placed in bags that can be re-used. Think about it, your mess x 67 million people and then you can start realising the scheme of things.

If you're interested in reading more, this is an interesting article:

<https://www.ukwsl.co.uk/protecting-environment-landfill-tax-extension-comes-force/>

Hope you had a good Christmas...

Leya Walker



Pets cornered

It seems Firework night goes on a long time in this village. I don't mind around Nov 5th but the last late ones were really loud and my

poor old dog nearly died. Also there are other animals big and small that don't like them. Please can you be a bit more thoughtful.

Name and address supplied.

Jubilee Wood Scout Campsite

John has seen kingfishers on the campsite pond this summer. We have just finished planting a deep hedge with 200 trees and shrubs as a barrier between our site and the new development to the north, which is to mark the end of the First World War. We are now embarking on the task of inspecting all of our 10,000 trees to see that they are securely anchored, in need of pruning or shaping, or, as is satisfyingly the case for many of our trees, are mature enough to have their tubes removed.

Amongst them are six disease resistant elm trees. These were grown on a Petri dish from samples taken from trees near Madrid and kindly supplied to us as part of an experiment to see if it will be possible to repopulate at least some of our countryside with this once prolific species of trees and so help the white hairstreak butterfly as elm is its sole food source. Let's hope that someone can do the same for the ash trees. We had high hopes that at least a few of our self sown ones would do well but, sadly, they all seem to suc-

cumb when about six foot tall.

Our young members have continued to help in Biss Wood, coppicing some areas to let in light and so encourage wildflowers and wildlife, and we have fenced off some hazel stools that were providing dinner and tea for Bambi and his mates in the hope that this will encourage regrowth.



Larkrise Community Farm

As always it's a busy time down on the Farm over the Christmas period. Animals need to be fed and mucked out, usually over the holidays, so we try and leave the horses, ponies and donkeys out on the track with the field shelters for cover.

When our students break up for Christmas, we always put on a bit of a Christmas party! This also includes holding a special lesson for all our RDA riders; they are able to win rosettes by playing some games, either on or off the ponies. Eros wears his new sparkly head collar with bells on whilst giving the children carriage rides around the farm, the children walk the pygmy goats, which they all enjoy doing whatever the time of year!

Hopefully in the New Year we will be using the newly purchased chain harrow. To add to the 'Working Horse' implements we found an old Ransome Horse plough, which a couple of the older lads are really looking forward to renovating. I'm sure there will be some new adventures and animals to look forward to in 2019.

Merry Christmas to you all, and a Happy New Year!!

From Wendy and all the staff and animals at Larkrise Community Farm.



Photo Ashley Wicks

Despite rebuffs from Wiltshire Planning, we are looking seriously at the possibility of laying a new track to provide us and Wiltshire Wildlife with a safe access to the north and out onto the West Ashton Road once the new route of the A350 has been opened and our young visitors face real dangers from a much fast-

er and continuous flow of traffic . As always, we welcome visitors to see round our site and what we have been up to. We are there most Tuesdays, so please pop in if you see the gates open.

John Cox, Wiltshire West District Scout Association

West Ashton W.I.

We finished 2018 with two very seasonal meetings. In November Margaret, from the Wiltshire Scrap Store, brought masses of materials, from which, under her guidance, we created Christmas decorations. She certainly worked hard helping us all. We had a great evening and some of the results were quite impressive too! In December our numbers were swelled to about fifty when we welcomed visitors from Trowbridge, Staverton, North Bradley, Southwick and Hilperton W.I.s to our Christmas Party. Our entertainers were Chester House Productions who presented Dickens at Christmas appropriately dressed in full Victorian costume. As Dickens is seen to be responsible for 'inventing' Christmas as we know it, we were treated to readings from 'A Christmas Carol' and 'Oliver Twist' which certainly brought home how lucky we are today compared to life in the Workhouse all those years ago. A deli-

icious meal, supplied mainly by our members, quizzes and a raffle completed a marvellous evening. Our members are still shocked by the removal of our representative from the Village Hall Committee and have requested a meeting with their representatives. We are hoping they will answer the following questions: 1. Why they felt the need to remove our representative? 2. How they feel this benefits the village hall? Hopefully by the time you read this these issues will have been resolved to our member's satisfaction. Our New Year programme includes speakers on A World without Wildlife and Dirty History. We belong to a group of seven W.I.s called the Spinners and are looking forward to hosting a meeting for them in March, when Jan McNeil will be telling us all about Her Life at Sea. We aim to foster fun and friendship and promise you a warm welcome if you fancy joining us.

Jackie Bradley

The WI had a tremendous response not only from members but also from friends of West Ashton when the call went out for knitted (or crocheted) poppies for the Armistice Day service. Poppies arrived from villagers, friends of the church and some came from as far away as Cornwall. Ed



Photos Gaynor Bevan

THANKS

Many, many thanks to everyone who contributed to the collection of £309 for the British Legion Poppy Appeal.

Jackie Bradley

West Ashton Wives

Our season started in September with a very interesting talk of how to stay healthy. In October, one of our members Sarah Bond, gave a demonstration on fabric design for costumes for schools. We look forward to our November skittle evening with hotdogs on what promises to be a fun and enjoyable evening.

Sylvia Preston



Photo Jo Watkins

Village Hall 50 Club Winners

MONTH	1 ST PRIZE	2 ND PRIZE	3 RD PRIZE
NOVEMBER	West Ashton WI	Peter Holland	Joanne Hillborne
DECEMBER	Eileen Trigger	Sharon Shiles	Andy Morse
NYE	Jean Robertson	Kay Taylor	Margaret Coles
JANUARY	Graham Cowdrey	Robert Coles	Catherine Holland

A Personal 'Passage to India!'

I recently spent 8 days on a visit to India, a 'passage' that really began in 2004! I was there as a guest of the Venkatraman Memorial Trust, of which I have been a supporter for 15 years. In December of that year I read an article in *You* magazine which told the story of a young Indian boy, Venkatraman, one of six children of a poor fisherman, all of whom lived in a one room shack in Kovalam, south of Madras, now renamed Chennai. A British tourist, named Sylvia Holder from Brighton met Venkat on the beach and the youngster was cheeky enough to ask if she would pay his school fees so that he could continue his schooling. This she did and the Venkat story began. He worked hard through school and eventually graduated from Madras University with a degree in Business Studies and he began a lucrative career with an Italian leather importer as a translator. Unfortunately, things then took a turn for the worse as Venkat was killed in a road crash. Unfortunately, these events mirrored almost exactly the circumstances in my own family, having suffered the same story with my own younger brother.

That might have been the end of the story but Sylvia then formed the Venkatraman Memorial Trust to offer the same chances to other unfortunate children in Kovalam, which is about 40km south of Chennai. So moved was I by this article that I decided to sponsor a student seeking a better, brighter future. Thus for the last 15 years I have supported several youngsters with their school fees and currently have three at various stages in their education. The youngest, a girl called Nitheeshwar, is coming to the end of her school career and about to embark on further studies. My middle student, Shalaudeen has left school and is studying Motor Vehicle Engineering at Technical College whilst Bhareth Kumar is in the second year of a Business Studies degree. This visit was a chance for me to meet my, and many other, sponsored children, an invitation I accepted with alacrity. So it was that a large group of disparate bleary eyed strangers from across the globe disembarked at Chennai airport 05:30 a.m. We really were a well-travelled group with sponsors from GB and from as far afield as Australia and New Zealand!



Then began a whirlwind tour of visits, school fete days and concerts as well as meeting the families of all sponsored children in their homes. Was I ever worried that the monies I supplied might be 'put to other uses'? Yes, initially, as one hears of much 'graft' in these circumstances. However, the trust has gone from strength to strength with many extras supplied to local schools, ranging from complete buildings to staff fees, a community building and, of course a well-stocked library.

The trust has made amazing progress in the fifteen years it has been in operation and every penny contributed has been put to the very good use for which it was intended. Several hundred grossly disadvan-

tagged children now have a much brighter future and the gratitude of their families for all that has been achieved was very obvious during my visit.

The trust has had about 500 sponsored children in all and there are now 49 graduates, none of whom could have progressed to university without the Trust's help. A copy of a power point presentation on the trust's work can be seen by anyone interested. Contact Sylvia via these links to see the video and learn more of the trust's work: www.venkatrust.org.uk * info@venkatrust.org.uk
Horace Prickett

Parish Council Matters

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

Ashton Park (15/04736/OUT) – The developers have started ground evaluation in preparations to start building. The first tranche of houses are planned for late 2019 and will be built on the left side of the road after the roundabout on the way into Trowbridge i.e. just before “Old Farm”. Similarly the A350 re-routing should commence this year; it’s worth noting that the funds accrued for the new road have to be spent by 2021.

Parish Council budget 2019/20 - The parish council has reviewed this year’s precept. The new Band ‘D’ equivalent will rise from £29.28 to £31 for 2019/20. This is about 3p to 9p a week depending the housing “Band”. This is a modest increase enabling the parish council to continue to budget for investment in the recreation area, traffic calming, continue development of the neighbourhood plan and discharge its statutory requirements.

Neighbourhood Plan – Unfortunately there is nothing to report as we have not received any reply from Wiltshire Council.

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

Bus Shelter – Has been repaired and the ditch to the right of it has been excavated to try and prevent it flooding. The partly blocked surface water drains have also been cleaned.

Footpath through the school – The issue of diverting the footpath through the school has arisen again the initial proposal is to divert it along the edge of the playing field next to the hedge on the left side to a new kissing-gate into the field that leads to the church. I’m sure there will be more information available in due course.

Richard Covington Parish Council Chairman

West Ashton website: www.westashton.org.uk
please send any comments to Nikki at westashtonpc@outlook.com

Community Speed Watch

Speeding motorists continue to be a concern for many villagers despite the traffic calming measures put in place along Bratton Road. As a result, the community speed watch team of volunteers are still operating in the village, and try to be out every month, despite the increasingly cold temperatures! Because we have to follow guidelines put in place by Wiltshire Police, who train and authorise the volunteers, we are restricted in terms of our location, times of operation and visibility. It has been mentioned several times that we are too obvious in our hi-vis jackets, which can be seen from some distance away, and this often means that no speeding motorists are detected. However, this is also serving to moderate the speed of vehicles through the vil-

lage, which is after all the intention of the scheme. We could be out more frequently, keeping the village safer, but sadly, as a team of just four, this proves to be a challenge. We are hoping to be joined in the not too distant future by new village resident Darren, who spent some time observing the team in action and is applying to join us. So, if like Darren, pictured below with Jo and Margaret, you feel you could boost our numbers, please contact westashtonpc@outlook.com.

We're a friendly group and you only need to give 1 or 2 hours of your time each month to help out. By the way, we don't take any pictures. The hand-held device merely shows the speed at which a vehicle is travelling – it's not a camera! Unfortunately Margaret (picture centre) has decided to resign for personal reasons; more volunteers are very much needed.

Richard Covington



Photo Jo Watkins

The Bus Shelter

Restored to Former Glory – Before, during and after

Has finally been repaired, it has taken a while but quickly completed once started. Hopefully it will afford shelter for children waiting for the school bus, particularly since winter is approaching. Thanks to the Parish Council and Idverde for carrying out the work.

Richard Covington



Photos Jo Watkins & Richard Covington

Now fully functional, but not exactly a thing of beauty to greet you to the village. It could do with a mural to brighten it up – any volunteers out there? Ed

....TWO BAGS FULL

Litter collection between East Town Road and Sandy Lane link, Sunday 13 January. One bag full of paper/card and one full of plastic. Most of the detritus consisted of drinks cartons and bottles, presumably tossed from passing vehicles. ANOTHER TWO – Saturday 26 January – Same stretch of road - one full of tin cans and the other full of more plastic. Great eh!

Paul Workman – ps would anyone like to occasionally give Paul a hand?



Village Hall News...

Time marched on to Christmas and the Lunch on the 16th December. It was well attended with revellers getting into the spirit of the moment: crackers, squeaky balloons flying around, light hearted banter. The bar was open (thank you Nathan) and the caterer served up an enjoyable meal. Thank you to Jean Robertson for not only organising the event but putting up the annual Christmas decorations, they looked splendid again.

New Year's Eve.... We were entertained by "Us Two"; the catering was served up by willing volunteers, either committee members or friends of the village hall dishing up a variety of main courses or extravagant puddings. Of course the bar was as busy as ever. Thank you to all who contributed, it was as ever a great evening to welcome in 2019. The next event on the 16th March is the final day of the Six Nations Rugby Tournament. Bar and light snacks available. Then we have the annual Murder Mystery on the 30th March.

The village hall committee continues to work hard to keep the hall in good condition , for example the safety lights that come on if the

power fails have all been replaced and the outside halogen lamps replaced with LEDs

The hall is one of the focal points of the village for events, whether they are organised by the committee or regular hirers. The committee has enabled the church, parish council, wives and the WI to continue for a further year to use the village hall without charge, which the committee reviews annually after its AGM. The bottom line is, we all contribute to the well being of users of the hall, thank you to all those who help.

Richard Covington



Who's Who in West Ashton – Helen Barrow, Parish Councillor

Hello, I'm Helen and live in the village with my husband Churnz, Leo (4) and Ted (3). We moved to West Ashton from Weston-Super-Mare 3 years ago. I grew up in Oxfordshire which is where Churnz and I met, and we moved to Somerset with work in 2003. At the time I was working at Hinkley Point A power station and have worked in the nuclear industry throughout my career in decommissioning and new build projects. Churnz is a butcher and mega foodie if you smell a barbecue in December it will be him fuelling his particular passion for wood smoking meat....

Churnz and I married in Thailand in 2009 which was amazing. We chose Thailand as that was where we had "Got together" eight years earlier in 2001. We were very lucky to have plenty of pre-child freedom and love to travel. We have spent quite a lot of time in Asia and Thailand in particular. Churnz cooks very authentic Thai food which keeps us going until we fancy the long flight with the boys!

It was when we had Leo and Ted (two babies in a year!), that we thought it would be best to move a bit closer to London. We love the

countryside, so there is no way we would move to London but that's where I am based for work, where I am the UK power generation lead for a large consulting firm. We set about our search looking anywhere within a 1.5 hour train journey to London whilst staying in the south west. Westbury emerged as our favoured station and we didn't want to be more than a 10 minute drive from there, so the Right Move search began. Our home in Weston was an 18th century cottage called Sea View Cottage, so when choosing our new home a view was very important to us. When we came to look at our house we were captivated with the view and it hasn't disappointed changing week on week with views over the fields and across to the lovely and unusual trees of Rood Ashton House. West Ashton is a lovely village and even though it misses some community features like a shop and pub I think the neighbourly networks and general friendliness more than make up for this. With a few fellow brewers in the village trading homebrew is almost as good as having our own local!

Moving to a new area we were keen to get involved and make connections in the village although we are a bit limited with how much we can do. Life is pretty busy with two young boys and I work away most of the week so we have our hands full. When I saw that West Ashton parish council needed new councillors I gave Richard a knock. It's so important that we retain our identity as a village and don't become consumed into Trowbridge town. It's also important we protect our green space, nature and the beautiful trees and woods that surround us.



Photo Jo Watkins

The Hut

Although this is not on any of the group of 10 cottages in Yarnbrook Road, I was fascinated to learn that after 1945 one of the MOD huts on the parkland at Rood Ashton was sold by Fred Corp to Harry West to be re-erected as a house on the plot of land that is now 81 Yarnbrook Road next to 77-79. I wonder if this is the building that is still at the bottom of no 81's garden. In 1954 Elsie and Reginald Alcock lived there. After growing up and living in modern houses in cities, it's such a treat to feel the layers of history in the

fabric of the cottages and to discover the stories of the people who have lived here for over 160 years. I would like to find out more. It would be great to hear from anybody who would like to share their knowledge with me or make any suggestions for future research. I'm looking forward to the West Ashton Relief Road opening and the day when I can cross the road and talk to my neighbours without fear of the traffic.

Pauline Hume. 56 Yarnbrook Road
humehill@sky.com

The Ladies Did St John's Proud

To Commemorate the end WW1, the country as a whole, held special events and church services. West Ashton was no different. The ladies of the village, WI and the friends of St John's were requested to knit or crochet 400 poppies. This was to make 2 poppy falls, one each side of the chancel - in fact nearly 800 poppies were made, and every poppy was used within the church and grounds. 10th November saw a coffee morning in the church to enable all those who took part in this quest to view the end result. Then in the village hall that evening a talk had been arranged on WW1, then a BBC documentary was shown followed by a bread and cheese supper. The Musical Memories came to provide entertainment and songs from that era. Then on the 11th November we had an extremely good service with the sermon by Allen first class. 2 readings were made by David Birks, a "Tommy" in full uni-

form and Wing Commander Criag Walker based at Northwood. Names of fallen men of West Ashton were read out and the laying of a wreath took place.. The service ended with refreshments and much banter. The bell was then rung a hundred times at 12.30.

May St John's thank everyone who had helped in any way for this special weekend - those who made the items , brought photographs/items and attended these events. A truly memorable weekend on many counts.

Jean Robertson



"They shall not grow old as we that are left grow old

We will remember them"

Village Hall Friday coffee morning

biscuits included and not just for adults
children of all ages are welcome.



WI Christmas Party



And all lit up



This old picture postcard of West Ashton vicarage, now Welam House, was lent to us by John Harris of Westbury. Judging by the fashion of the times, this photo was probably taken in the 1920s. If anyone can name the vicar at this time, or even provide us with more photos and history of the vicarage, please get in touch. It would be interesting to know why the vicarage was re-named and by whom. If anyone can provide us with any more information (or photos), please get in touch.

More snippets of information about the village - the design of Doreen Cottages, Bratton Road, is fairly typical of those found in Victorian books of house plans for the landed gentry who wished to rehouse their workers in something better than the damp leaking cottages that were all too common. There was a tenuous link with coffee in 1694 when Thomas King was born in the parish. He gave his name to King's Coffee House in Covent Garden, which became a fashionable meeting place of the 18th century.

Jo Watkins

A Concert At St John's

Not much room at St John's

On the first Friday in December, St John's Church, for the Annual Christmas Concert, welcomed back Steeple Rocks Choir, together with special guests. The church looked magical as ever thanks to the flood-lighting supplied by Pete and Bev Wills (Power Logistics) and Noel's hard work on the day.

As well as the beautiful voices of the choir, the audience was treated to solos by cellist Becky Hockett and singer/guitarist Rob Bowden. All attending were also entertained by Wendy Bartlett's most amusing rendition of the last chapter of A Christmas Carol. The story of Christmas Day 1914 read by Peter Davidson with Silent Night being

gently sung in the background by Steeple Rocks, brought a reminder of the true meaning of Christmas. It really is an evening not to be missed and we would like to thank Jean and Sylvia, plus all there helpers, who worked so tirelessly to make it such a great evening.

Here's to next year.

Roe and Neil Heard

Note :

Jean and Sylvia would like to thank all those who helped in any way in making the concert a success. The supply of mince pies, mulled wine (supplied by David Petrie and made by Geoff Watkins), selling of tickets, etc. all added a festive flavour to the evening. The lighting technician, Noel and Peter Davidson are

pictured herewith. After all invoices had been paid, the sum of £198 was given to the church funds. Thank you to everyone.

Jean Robertson

Left photo by Jo Watkins

Right photo by Ruth Barber



An Easter Message

I recently surprised everyone who knows me by getting engaged at the age of 60! What has amazed me is just how happy and delighted everyone seems to be. People have said, 'it brought a tear to my eye' (I think that was good!) or 'that's made my day... or week... (or in one case) year'! But that's the nature of good news: we get excited about it, want to know all the details, and can't wait to pass it on to others.

That's in stark contrast to the current political crisis in the UK, where it feels as if there hasn't been any good news for months, whatever camp you're in. And what about the wider world scene? Is there a message of hope we can offer in the face of global inequality, religious and ethnic conflict, climate change, abuse of the internet, Putin's Russia, Trump's America and Brexit Britain? St John Chapter 1 tells us (v.14),

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Words have become devalued in our information age – in fact, we're drowning in them. And in these days of post-truth, can they be trusted anyway? The genius of God was to wrap up his Word to the world in human flesh. The message became a man, not just a baby in a manger, but the totality of who he grew to be – the life he lived, the words he spoke, the miracles he performed, the death he died, the

fact that death could not hold him and the love that shone through every word and deed. I draw a simple graph of two trends we've witnessed in my lifetime. As faith in God and religious affiliation have declined, a host of social problems (family breakdown, unbridled greed, mental health issues, violent crime and crisis in our prisons) have all increased, with inevitable political and economic knock-ons.

I may be naïve, but I see a relationship between those two trends. As God has been excluded from public life, a raft of problems has come in to fill the vacuum.

My simple thought, at what feels like a serious moment in our national life, is this: maybe it's time we

started listening again to what the Bible calls Good News: God's message to the world wrapped up in human flesh – in the life, words, works, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? May his peace and joy be yours this Easter.

Allan Coutts

The Commonwealth War

Graves Commission was established in 1917 as the sole organisation charged with the care and commemoration of those Commonwealth Armed Forces who died during the two World Wars. They care for graves of 1.7 million men and women worldwide and have war graves at over 12,000 locations in the UK alone. As part of the centenary of the First World War, the CWGC aimed to erect Commission Signs at as many sites as possible that contain war graves.

The project initiative is to increase awareness of war graves in the UK and remind the public that they need not travel abroad to find Commonwealth commemorations. This is also to encourage a greater interest in churchyards and church buildings. A register would be formulated of the graves, so that interested

parties could identify and trace family members. As St John's has two Commonwealth War Graves within its churchyard, the Commission sought permission to fit a sign near the entrance to the churchyard. Permission was given and the sign arrived in late January.

Jean Robertson



The Recipe

Plaice with Thyme and Puy lentils.

'This is a quick and easy 30 minute midweek supper low in fat and high on protein. Lentils make a change from the usual potatoes or pasta.

Ingredients

2 plaice fillets
Zest and juice 1 orange
Good pinch of chilli flakes
1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves
plus a couple of sprigs
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
250gms ready cooked Puy lentils
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

Method

Preheat oven to 180 degrees fan
170 C or gas 4. Place the fish on a
lightly oiled baking sheet. Season

the fish with freshly ground black pepper and top with the orange zest and chilli flakes, half of the thyme leaves and a tablespoon of olive oil. Cook for 5-10 minutes until cooked through (depends on the thickness of the fish). While the fish is cooking put the Puy lentils, orange juice, remains of the olive oil and balsamic vinegar in a saucepan and heat through. Stir in the remaining thyme leaves and season. Serve the fish on top of the lentils garnished with the thyme sprigs.

Jo Walton



**Lightening
over Clanger
Wood by
Huggy**

Other Useful Numbers	Contact Information	
Builder	Paul - New build, extensions, renovation specialist, alterations.	01225 753997/07799 563347 19 Bratton Road,
All Domestic, Commercial Cleaning	Heidi	07514319533
Foot Reflexologist	Annie Ritchens	01225 752002 Mob 07967630429
Garage Services	Briken Motors Garage....MOTs, servicing etc,	01225 755203
Zen Judo Classes	Age 8+ W. Ashton School 7.00-8:30pm Fridays.	Colin Delve colin.delve@danone.com www.zenjudoclub.co.uk
Library	The Mobile Library visits Orchard Close 3.30 to 4 pm	www.services.wiltshire.gov.uk/ MobileLibrary/Library/Stop/57
Logs	Logs for sale. Ben Pike	01380 870808
Milkman	Michael Bullings Dairies	01225 776494
Newspapers	Seend Post Office deliver	01380 828250
Parish Council	Chairman: Mr Richard Covington Clerk: Nicola Duke	01225 761904 01373 864127
Police Concerns	David Bradley Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. Village Co-ordinator Neighbourhood Policing Team PC Mark Hough PC1140	01225 754100 Non-emergency No 101
Refuse	Community skips in Canal Road, Trowbridge for larger items.	http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/ rubbish-collection-days
Seamstress & Soft Furnishings	Clare Humphries, curtains, dress-making and alterations	01225 767703 Mob 07929 122631
St. John's Church	Services Sundays 10.30am. Rev Allan Coutts	01225 754826
West Ashton Boomerang Taxi Service <i>West Ashton to Trowbridge.</i>	Taxi service. Mon-Sat West Ashton to Trowbridge. Price each way: adult £1.60; child 80p; children under 4 free. Bus passes can be used.	Morning pickup 9.30am, return 12 noon Or 2pm. Tel: 0800 371297 to book.
West Ashton C of E School	Head Teacher	01225 754354
West Ashton Ladies Skittles Team	Mrs. Sharon Shiles	01380 870196
Financial Adviser Investment management, protection	Thomas Porter Retirement & Inheritance tax Planning	07738011187 Www.thomasporterwm.co.uk



What's Coming Up

March

3	Whole parish service at the Mead School
6	Wives Fun Quiz Village Hall 7.30pm
16	Six Nations Rugby Final, Free Event, Midday to 8pm, bar available
26	Parish Council Meeting, 7.30pm Village Hall
27	WI AGM, Bring & Buy stall followed by the Birthday Party, 7.30pm Village Hall
30	Village Hall Murder Mystery Evening "Death At The Distillery" by the West Ashton Fun Players. 7.30 for 8, tickets £14.50, including a 3 course meal.
31	Mothering Sunday Service in the Church, 10.30am

April

3	Wives Village Hall 7.30pm Reiki & Massage with Joanne Hilborne
14	Palm Sunday Service, Church 10.30am
19	Good Friday Service, An Hour by the Cross, Church 2pm
21	Easter Day, Church 10.30am
24	WI, Village Hall, 7.30pm Birthstones with Daphne Atkinson

May

1	Wives, end of season party, Village Hall 7.30pm
22	WI, Village Hall, 7.30pm, Topical Issues with fish & chip supper
28	Parish Council Meeting, Village Hall 7.30pm

All Village Hall events are with a licenced bar with a raffle

Tickets From Sylvia Preston 01225 765858 or Jean Robertson 01225 760368

If you wish to book the Village Hall: westashtonbookings@btinternet.com

Regular Activities In The Village Hall

Social Dancing	Most Sundays at 6pm	Mr. Kevin Burge	07933 771205
Dance Class	Tuesdays at 10am	Dee Dee Wilde	01380 871608
Dog Training	Thursday's at 6.30pm	Ken Scott	07867 820497
Pilates	Most Tuesday's at 5pm	Amie Hawkins	07738 449245
Tai Chi	Monday's at 10.30am	Brian Wooding	01985 213474
Wives Group	730pm 1st Wednesday of the month	Marlene Pike Sylvia Preston	01380 870272 01225 765858
WI	Fourth Wednesday of the Month	Holly Westlake	01225 755866
Yoga	6.15pm Most Monday's duration 1.5hrs	Angeline Nicholson	01380 830458
Coffee Mornings	Fridays 10.30 to Noon	Margaret Workman	01225 766998

For more information on dates go to www.westshton.org.uk/hall

