



## In This Issue...

Fun In France

Cycling Journeys

Christmas

Harvest Lunch &  
Harvest Supper

And Much More....



*Photo by Barry Williams Larkrise Community Farm*

**Donald The Pygmy Goat Decked Out In His Christmas Finery**

***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.

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## West Ashton skyline by Paul Workman

### Editorial

By the time you read this, Christmas will be well on its way with all sorts of activities in the village to get you in the right spirit. Our surrounding wildlife seems to have taken a front seat in this magazine, along with a van that was dug up in a back garden and two young champions who

excel at their sport. Read all about it inside. A huge thank you to our publisher Tim, and to Richard for dealing with the printers and distribution, our contributors and of course the delivery team. A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

Jo

### Trowbridge Area Community Link Scheme

This scheme provides transport mainly for elderly and disabled people in the Trowbridge and surrounding villages. TACLS is a charity run by local volunteers who use their own cars and time to take the clients to local GP surgeries, dentists, community hospitals, social clubs, etc., and to the larger hospitals including RUH, Bath Circle, Bristol Southmead, BRI, Salisbury and Great Western (Swindon). We provide a door-to-door service and the driver will wait for the client, or return later if the medical visit is for a

long time. As we reimburse our drivers with their fuel expenses, we request that the clients contribute towards covering these costs. Please note that we very much need volunteers to help us to continue to provide this service, including drivers and the coordinators to operate the phone and laptop (full training is given). For details of the service we provide or for how you can help us, please phone the Link number: 07969 347042

## POTTERING IN THE GARDEN

Oh Deer! Well one at least, has been visiting my garden on a regular basis, elegantly leaping the barbed wire, the walkway gap and the hedge in one majestic stride, as if it were a superstar from the Royal Ballet. What an absolute delight, and after eating most of the leaf tops from my prize beetroot, settled down beneath the hedge and stayed motionless for longer than half an hour. Not wanting to startle her into jumping and injuring herself, I abandoned all thoughts of weeding until I next looked to find her gone! In the same roofless enclosure was a row of asparagus, grown from a packet of seeds. Someone told me I would have to wait five years before they would mature into a size for making a meal, and yet sown in the spring, in my greenhouse, I planted them outdoors May/June and now October has given me 8-10 tips five inches tall. I'm not cutting them yet as the stems are rather like matchsticks - next year maybe? I will give them a feed of a regular fertiliser and form mounds around the base of them in the spring. The normal harvest time for asparagus is around June.

I have gathered seeds from marigolds, as they keep the greenfly out of the greenhouse, and although I don't like the smell of them, they are amazing colours. I have taken cuttings from trailing ivy leaf geraniums, so free

plants for next year's garden pots and hanging baskets. I am still cutting my own little gem lettuce grown in raised beds as I have seen four litters of different sized baby rabbits this season. Gardening is certainly a challenge, and each year is always different and unpredictable. The weather this summer, was dry for too long, and followed by wet fog too long. We gardeners are a difficult lot to please.

If you love your garlic, now until Nov/Dec is the last opportunity to plant, elephant garlic being the mildest one, and you don't want it exuding from every pore in your body! I found I could only buy sprout plants in multiples of twenty, and four was all I had room for, so again I bought a packet of seeds, rather too late I have to admit. Alas I kept them in the greenhouse for that much longer, and now they are establishing in my raised bed away from the rabbits. I may have to buy them until after Christmas, but other gardeners tell me they are at their best after the frost has done its job? As yet, it's late October as I write, and so far Jack Frost has not shown up at all. Which leads me to best tip for this time of year which is to put any tender plants and pots into a protected area. By the time you read this, we are likely to have put some fleece over them.

Holly Westlake.

## Nature Watch on the A350

Deer have been seen in the fields at the side and rear of our garden at 56 Yarnbrook Road on and off over the years. In the past, before the track to Lively Farm was created, they visited the fields to graze and then returned to Flowers Wood; Kettle Lane via what is now the Sunnyside travellers' site. This summer a deer was grazing in the field by the side of our house with only a hawthorn hedge between her and the A350. Sadly a few days later the body of a deer was lying at the side of the A350 by 77/79 Yarnbrook Road. In early October a similar deer was grazing each evening in the field behind our house. After feeding, she retreated to the undergrowth at the top of the field. In the early hours of the morning we could hear them screaming and barking. By the second week of October she had been joined by two fawns. We think they are roe deer, but could be Reeve's muntjac – perhaps a reader can tell from the photos.

Wikipedia says that the **roe deer** occurs in most European countries. At the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century they were almost extinct from southern England, but since then have hugely expanded their range. The deer is relatively small with a body length of 95-135 cm and lives in woods, but may venture into grasslands and sparse forests. Females

usually give birth in June, typically to two spotted fawns. The fawns remain hidden in long grass and are suckled for three months.

**Muntjac deer**, known as barking deer, are native to Asia and were introduced to the UK. The wild deer are descended from escapees from the Woburn Abbey estate around 1925 and are spread across most English counties and Wales. Mating takes place at any time of the year.

**Pauline Hume**



## NATURE NOTES

Hazel Berry, Bratton Road, sent in photos of a dragonfly larva climbing a bulrush in her garden pond on its final act as an adult and one showing full emergence. She had several of these emerge when the weather was really hot back in June, but unfortunately soon after had lots of rain and heavy gales so hasn't seen that many dragonflies this year. Peter Hughes, Kettle Lane, sent in these photos of a painted lady settled on his daughter's dog Freddie.



### Armchair Bird watching

Christmas will soon be upon us; the time seems to fly by. The birds seem to sense that winter will soon be here, and continue to visit the feeders. This year there are more goldfinches than I have ever seen. Fat balls are popular, especially with the long tailed tits – I counted twelve at one feeder. Among the less frequent visitors have been a pair of chaffinches and two woodpeckers. The pyracantha are filled with berries, and this usually attracts blackbirds, but I haven't seen many so far. I'm not sure where they have gone, perhaps they will be back when the frosts set in. I have noticed a pair of jackdaws investigating one of

my chimney pots, and a real surprise when looking out of the kitchen window, not birds but a deer eating the flowers.

Two of my girls took me to butterfly world near Swindon recently. We saw tropical butterflies, an assortment of animals, and a large aviary, which you can go inside – wonderful. Then into the café for a nice cup of tea before heading home, many thanks to my girls.

**Evelyn Sweetman**



*Picture*

*Holly Westlake*

## West Ashton goes bats

Having recovered from his ordeal, thanks to Liz Eley and Peter Gulliver (his Carers), it was time for West Ashton's release. After eating rather a lot of meal worms for his size, it was time for him to find some friends. It took a while for him to raise his head because he was waiting for his body temperature to raise slightly, then quite quickly he turned 90 degrees, raised himself a little, opened his wings then took off. We all thought he was going to fly over the fields to the trees .... but instead he flew in a half circle towards my back garden trees, therefore, didn't catch this on the video. We wish West Ashton a happy, long life with the partner of his dreams!

Evelyn Sweetman



*Photo Veronica Payne*

Hearing of the decline in our bat population, Charles Payne went about building a semi detached bat 'des res' complete with all mod



A rescue bat being fed when Frome Bat Care gave a talk to the WI.



*Photo Jo Watkins*

cons. He added mats at the entrance to grip while climbing in, with the entrance to each box comprising of a narrow slit to deter potential predators. He attached the finished product high up on his south facing garden shed in his Bratton Road garden and sat back and waited for any takers. One little fellow completely ignored his creation and ended up roosting in the shed itself. Charles now has to keep the shed door open to allow it to flit in and out, and to add insult to injury, there's still no sign of anyone moving in! There's no pleasing some folks!

Jo Watkins

## Ladies At Leisure - West Ashton W.I.

**WI** - We have had some very enjoyable and interesting meetings in the last few months. Firstly in August we met author Jeremy Dix who has lived and worked all his life in Wiltshire, so based his WW2 thriller, Operation Wansdyke there. He recollected his early years growing up in a village near Devizes during the war. Whilst the freedom and simple pleasures the children enjoyed appealed to us all we weren't so keen on some of the lifestyle especially the trip down the garden path to the privy!! Our September speaker David Birks told us of the history of Trowbridge Museum and brought us up to date on its current redevelopment. In October, the owner of the Cheddar Gorge Cheese Company John Spencer, gave us several theories of how cheese was discovered, and its production spread around the world. Apparently the Romans brought it to England sometime around 300A.D. He told us how his company now produce their cheddar, and how some is matured in caves. We enjoyed tasting samples of the various flavoured cheeses; though

I wasn't too sure about the chilli variety it, packed quite a punch! Meanwhile, members enjoyed an afternoon tea party in Jenny Woodall's spectacular garden in Kettle Lane, invitations to North Bradley's harvest festival supper, Trowbridge's birthday party, and Steeple Ashton's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations.

We now look forward to the months ahead.

**November** - On a Wing and a Prayer by local lady Linda Dowsett

**December** - Our members only Christmas Party

**January** - Louise Hull will offer advice and information about Arthritis and aging, Osteopathy, Joint pain and Headaches

**February** - Karen Johnson will be demonstrating and assisting us in making a Venetian Carnival Mask

Lots to look forward to and if anything appeals to you please come and join us on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the Village Hall. Hope to see you soon.

Jackie Bradley

## West Ashton Wives

We began our new season in September with a very interesting and colourful slide show with music, from Gaynor Bevan and her husband Tony, of their recent holiday memories from abroad. In October, we had

a fun evening with a beetle drive. We look forward in November to making something to take home for Christmas from our craft evening. Everyone is welcome to join us.

Sylvia Preston

## The Wiltshire Guild of Spinners Weavers and Dyers and Textile Studios.

As a Guild we continue to show case and preserve the historic crafts of spinning weaving and dyeing and other crafts in our textile studios. We recently increased the number of sessions for our Sewing Bee, Handicrafts and Felting groups. The Handicraft group is thriving and our projects when appropriate include recycling items such as beer cans, making silver clay jewelry, silk painting and dyeing

fibres for some of our projects etc. This year our Christmas Sale is on Friday 29th November and Saturday 30th November, 10.30am to 4.00 pm both days. We will have many hand made items for sale, so do come and join us. Our studios are above the village shop, 3 St Mary's Building, High Street, Steeple Ashton, BA 14 6EU , with a stairlift to improve accessibility.

## Village Hall 50 Club Winners

MONTH	1 <sup>ST</sup> PRIZE	2 <sup>ND</sup> PRIZE	3 <sup>RD</sup> PRIZE
<i>AUGUST</i>	Ann Stride	Simon Alford	Neil Heard
<i>SEPTEMBER</i>	Robert Coles	Daphne Petrie	David Bradley
<i>OCTOBER</i>	Jean Covington	Tom Hill	Ann Loverock

## A Local Spa continued

Ken further received additional information as follows:-

The site of the well is not known. The house of the Beach family was the one which came to be called much later Manor Farm (though curiously it never belonged to either of the manors in West Ashton). Apart from that house, the family only owned two or three smaller houses in the village. It must have been at either the big house or a cottage that the well was being dug when the discovery was made. The idea of developing West Ashton as a rival to the Holt Spa evidently came to

nothing. There is no mention of it when the Beach property was advertised for sale in 1746. Geologist Gilbert Green of Edington states that the description of the water, with its oaker (ochre, iron oxide) and stones that produce much steel, suggests that the well diggers reached the ironstone beds which extend from Westbury north eastwards towards Steeple Ashton. The position of the well at the southern end of West Ashton is plausible.

Ken Rogers

## News from Larkrise Community Farm

I do hope everybody had a good summer, we were certainly busy here on the Farm. At the end of last year we applied to 'Wooden Spoon' for a grant to purchase a mounting ramp for our Riding for Disabled group, this will help our riders who use wheelchairs to access their horses for riding. A local company took on the challenge of manufacturing the ramp after measuring up where it would be situated, which is just outside the indoor school. Not only did the company manufacture the mounting ramp but also one for wheelchair access into our portacabin, as a couple of the schools that ride with us during term time have riders that are also in wheelchairs. These riders had previously been unable to use the portacabin where all the riding hats are kept and the children wait for their rides, so were still using the original classroom in the main building making it difficult, as with our daily students in the classroom. Also it became slightly crowded.

Livestock new to the farm are two 12 week old Saddleback female piglets, also known as 'Gilts'. They have taken up residence in the pigsty next to the calves. We asked all the students to choose a name and put them into a hat, the names that were chosen were: Perky and Apple.

We are desperate for a carpenter to do some jobs on the Farm; if anyone knows someone who would be interested to help, please point them in our direction.

Wendy Self, Farm Manager



## WEST ASHTON SCHOOL

My name is Sarah Ponsford. I teach Discoverers class (Year 3 and 4) at West Ashton School. I joined the school in September 2017 and have been part of a team working tirelessly to help the school go from strength to strength. I am the English leader and have a passion for reading. I have worked in different primary schools over my 23 year career. I live in Bradford on Avon with my husband, two sons and two cats.

On Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October Discoverers class from West Ashton Primary School entertained the Friday coffee morning members with a selection of songs and actions. The children enthusiastically performed songs they'd learnt for Harvest and also some tunes they've been practicing in school in readiness for their trip to Young Voices in Birmingham- the biggest children's choir in the world!

Discoverers loved the opportunity to share their enthusiasm and love of singing with their village neighbours.

They stayed for a much appreciated biscuit and a chat with the club members. West Ashton School are very much looking forward to returning to the Friday coffee morning in the village hall soon.

You are warmly invited to attend our Christmas Nativity in the school hall on; Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> or Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December at 2pm. We hope you are able to join us.

Sarah Ponsford



**To our West Ashton village neighbours;**

You are warmly invited to attend our Christmas Nativity in the school hall on;

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> or Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December at 2pm

We hope you are able to join us.

**From the children and staff of  
West Ashton Primary School**

## Fun in France

We're back in residence after a 2½ month break at our house in south west France, having had a very sociable stay, albeit a tad dramatic and horrendously expensive.

We set off on 14th July, Bastille Day, a fantastic crossing with sun all the way, and on arrival at St Malo, were greeted with temperatures in the mid 30's. On leaving St Malo we set off on the first leg of our journey to St Sebastien-sur-Loire for our overnight stay, and sat outside watching the amazing fireworks for their Bastille Day celebrations. On arrival at the hotel, we were horrified to find there was no air conditioning. With two dogs with heart problems and temperatures of over 30 degrees, the room resembled something from the film 'Bridge on the River Kwai'!. Thankfully the hotel next door had a room available with air conditioning so in the small hours we decamped up the road.

The following morning, we took the dogs to the usual park alongside the Loire for their morning constitution before setting off to our house, some six hours drive. Due to the high temperatures, the windows were down in the car - what a faux pas! Whilst going around a roundabout, Harley, our youngest, decided to jump out of the rear window. Fortunately he landed parachutist style and was caught by a passing motorist until I arrived, having

run 200 metres in a time I would have been proud of at the age of 16, not 68! Surprisingly he was fine but my legs and feet still hurt to this day. Off we set with the car not feeling quite right. As we left the motorways and stopped for petrol only 50 minutes from our house, the orange warning light came on to cries of 'mon dieu'!. We decided to keep calm and carry on regardless, to see how near we could get before calling for help. Luck was on our side and we arrived at the house, car and dogs intact and settled in for our stay. Following a diagnosis, off to Tarbes we went to have it fixed. Simple you may think - not when we managed to lose the V5 document!

As well as the expense on the car, we had problems with our drainage which we thought we had successfully resolved last year with the help of Pete (Wills). Sadly not, we found the drains had six metres of roots inside them. With the assistance of Pete and his mini pelle, we exposed the drains, removed the roots and repairs will be underway very soon. We did have one success story, having arrived to find our tractor mower had broken down again, with the help of one of our neighbours we successfully mended it and were finally able to mow our meadow!

We were then able to start enjoying 'la vie en France' with several visits to the Jazz Festival at Marciac including Roe seeing Jamie Cullum, George Benson and The Jacksons in concert, and a book launch of our friend's book about his walk along the whole of the GR10 in 2013.

At the end of September we shut the shutters, locked the door and set off for our return. Just when we thought nothing else could happen BANG, 20 Km north of Avranches a blow out - not much fun when loaded with good-

ies for Christmas and three dogs! After an hour or so we were rescued by a breakdown lorry. With new tyres fitted (sadly two) the race began to get to Caen for the ferry which was departing at 16.30. We arrived with only 10 minutes to spare, but fortunately we were waved through, and with a sign of relief were the last but one car to embark.

Despite the diversions at Westbury we arrived home safe and sound with a vastly depleted bank account. One could say 'c'est la vie!' Neil Heard

## ***Texas Here We Come !***

Brothers Will and Charlie Ludwell, who live in Shepherds Drove, are hard to beat when it comes to BMX riding. Both are veterans on the riding circuits at the tender ages of 13 and 10, and have been riding and competing in BMX championships for the last five years. In fact Charlie, who came first in this year's BMX South championships will be representing the Great Britain team, and travelling to Huston accompanied by his family, to compete in the world championships next May. Will is the Deep South and South West champion and has plans to take up mountain biking later on. The brothers are members of the Andover BMX club, practicing there every Wednesday. Both are in the national team and are going to Italy next year to compete in

the European BMX championships. A cabinet is packed full of cups and awards with their ever expanding collection of trophies. We wish them every success.

Jo Watkins



## Parish Council Matters

The Parish Clerk, Mr. Steven F. King JP Tel: 07872183295

email: [westashtonpc@outlook.com](mailto:westashtonpc@outlook.com)

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

**Conservation** - At the West Ashton PC meeting on the 16th October it was resolved to set up a “tree fund” of £300 to encourage residents to plant trees in their gardens. Countryside Events are holding another firework display and have asked what they could contribute to from their profits? Councillors agreed that any donation should go towards the “tree fund”. Funds are limited but if any resident plants a fruit tree and provide a receipt of purchase then the parish council will contribute a maximum of £15 towards the cost of the tree. This offer will be limited to one tree per household.

**Neighbourhood Plan** – The plan has been submitted to Wiltshire Council for scrutiny and their comments should be available before the end of October. The grant application to Locality has also been approved and the money received.

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

[parkingtransportandstreets/roadshighwaysstreetcare/mywiltshirereport.htm](#)

**Community Speed Watch** – The team who administers this for the police has been contacted and progress is being made to restart the speed watch. But as always we would like more volunteers to help, it’s usually only a couple of hours a week and since we will be sharing the device it’s unlikely to be more than once every two or three weeks.

**School Footpath** – This has not been resolved because not all the landowners have been identified who are affected by the proposed diversion. They have to be contacted for their approval/agreement to change. It appears that one of the landowners has not been identified. One assumes that during the various land transactions in the past a “parcel of land” is not accounted for by the land registry (HMLR).

**Cont.**

West Ashton website <http://www.westashton.org.uk/>  
please send any comments to Stephen at  
[westashtonpc@outlook.com](mailto:westashtonpc@outlook.com)

**Village Signs** – Hopefully there are now two new signs for West Ashton, one by the roundabout on the road into Trowbridge and the other near the entrance to Rood Ashton Lake.

**Boundary Review** – Also, I’m sure you are aware that Trowbridge Town Council has embarked on another “Land Grab”. Their proposed boundary changes affect the parishes of: West

Ashton, North Bradley, Southwick and Hilperton. As far as I am aware, counter applications are being made by the first three parishes mentioned. It was unusual when the last boundary changes were made because Wiltshire Council went against the advice/conclusion of the working group at the time.

Richard Covington  
Parish Council Chairman

## THE MAGAZINE 10 YEARS AGO

**PARISH COUNCIL – Planning applications.** New applications were thin on the ground with residents improving their homes rather searching for new ones. It did appear that the opportunity for further development in the village was very limited. It was optimistic that the development of the recreational area to the side and rear of the Charles Church Development would be completed the following year. Around the same time the road improvements which would include the movement of the speed limit further up the road towards Bratton and traffic measures would be in place as well.

**Neighbourhood policing.** It was good to see a greater police presence in the village. If you saw one of the officers sitting in their car outside the village hall, please do not be reluctant to speak to him or her for they were keen to be known in the village by the people who live there.

**Winter, Christmas, New Year and all that.** With the dark nights, villagers were asked to keep their eye out for neighbours to make sure they were safe and sound. Check if you had any shrubs overhanging

the footpaths that need a haircut, for walking into bushes when it was dark could easily cause someone to stumble.

**THE SCHOOL** – Harvest Festival was a triumph, children and their families donating produce that helped raise around £400. The new office block was nearly completed. The head teacher offered a ‘club’ to the village by opening up a computer suite for general use. He would be more than happy to teach the basics of producing Microsoft Office documents, web browsing and emailing. Two new initiatives were introduced, one was to run a school orchestra for any child that was interested and the other to take children down to Trowbridge Library so they could experience how a real library worked.

**VILLAGE HALL** – Proposed to locate a series of photovoltaic panels on the roof to produce energy for the hall’s use and to sell excess back to the National Grid. It offered to be the first village hall in the county to be assessed for the Hallmark scheme. The WI bought a hot cupboard for the kitchen at a cost of some £600.

## Village Hall News...

Bookings for the village hall were quiet during the summer months but are picking up again. The village hall committee continues to organise events throughout the year:

15<sup>th</sup> December Xmas Lunch

31<sup>st</sup> December NYE

18<sup>th</sup> January 2020 – Skittles, Church verses the Village Hall

14<sup>th</sup> February 2020 – Themed Valentines Dance....

The pub night in October organised by Paul was well supported, more are planned.

There's the annual Murder Mystery to look forward to in the New Year with more about what went on at the Family Fun Day and the Halloween party in the next edition. The fence has been replaced on the left side when facing the hall. The pillar on left side when facing hall was knocked over by a "careless motorist". Simon Alford has removed it and laid tarmac instead, the gap/entrance is now that little bit wider. Geoff Watkins brought to the last meeting the original brass plaque commemorating its donation when the original heating system was installed in 1922. This will be placed on the wall in the bar area.

Finally - a Village Children's' Christmas Party, if anyone would like to take up the offer to organise a party this year, please contact a committee member. We are keen to provide entertainment to the growing number of children in the village as well as adults.

The Friday coffee morning is as popular as ever. The school choir paid a visit and sang several songs with actions, enjoying the biscuits after and a chat with their appreciative 'audience'.

If anyone has suggestions about future events, please get in touch with me or a member of the committee. After all, it's your village hall.

Thank you to all.

Richard Covington, Chairman VH committee.

### Prize winners for the best Halloween costumes

1<sup>st</sup> Clown Ava and 2<sup>nd</sup> Pumpkin Elijah



Photo Margaret Workman

1<sup>st</sup> Terrie Hanson as Morticia and 2<sup>nd</sup> Andrew Curry as Edward Scissor Hands



Photo Paul Workman

Thanks to Paul and Margaret Workman for the difficult job of judging the costumes.

## THE ANNUAL CYCLING TOUR

The Annual cycling tour was in September this year and took the five of us to Dorchester, Milford on Sea, Harnham (Salisbury) and home, 205 miles. This was achieved over four days, unfortunately days 1 and 3 were either wet or very windy as you may all recall. Days 2 and 4 were much better. Day 1 we rendezvoused at the Fairfield Farm Shop Dilton before heading off to Dorchester, taking us through Longleat, Stourhead for lunch and Stalbridge where we stopped for coffee at the delightful old independent William Dike supermarket. On then to Dorchester via Piddletrenthide for the overnight stop. From Dorchester on through Wool, stopping at the Black Bear Inn, again for coffee, which was free to cyclists and provided by a convivial landlady. On to Poole around Holes Bay and stopping for lunch at the RNLI. A very good lunch and I'd recommend a visit, they do pre-booked tours around their factory. The afternoon took us along the sea front from Canford Cliffs to Boscombe then inland around Christchurch and on to the overnight stop at the South Lawn hotel, Milford on Sea, a hotel to be recommended if you're in the area. Day 3, through the New Forest via Beaulieu, Lyndhurst, Red Shoot Inn at Linwood for lunch, a time to shelter from the rain. Stopped in Downton for coffee where we shared a few stories with a couple of expats from Zambia/ Zimbabwe, then on to Harnham for our overnight stop. The last day was through Salisbury, along the

Woodford Valley into Amesbury, Figheldean, and Upavon. Woodbridge Inn for lunch before heading on to Urchfont, turning off at the old jam factory in Easterton, heading up the lane before rejoining the road to Worton and home.

Richard Covington



## Well, well – van found buried in West Ashton garden

In early autumn I was weeding the gravel path at the side of the house, when the trowel hit a large lump of Bath stone. I levered it with the crowbar and revealed a small corner of a void under the embankment. Curiosity got the better of me, and I started to clear the soil and three mature hawthorns. 70+ rubble sacks of top soil later, the clay sub-soil and a five foot diameter circle of bricks protruding from under a circular slab of Bath stone was exposed. The void was a brick lined well with a lead pipe reaching up out of the water and exiting the brick lining about a foot from the top. We knew there was a well somewhere nearby. In 1994 a hand pump connected to lead piping had to be removed to build our back extension. This pump was by the external door of the 1960s kitchen extension and several feet from the well. Our well at no.56 is in a direct line to the well at no.73 outside what was the blacksmith's workshop.

Historically, wells were excavated by hand shovel to below the water table until incoming water exceeded the digger's bailing rate. The well was lined with stone, brick or tile to prevent collapse and was covered with a cap of wood, stone or concrete. Apparently wells had to be

cleaned or scoured periodically and historically children were employed to do this.

As I worked my way through the layers of top soil I knew that anything under the old carpet I'd put down as a weed suppressant when I planted the hedge 20+ plus years ago was before my time.

My finds included:

- a Commer 19 Walk Through Van complete with the driver, red sliding doors and roof light made between 1965-1969 by Husky. Husky model vehicles sold in Woolworths and were a lower-priced alternative to Corgi models;
- pottery shards galore (transfer-printed blue and white, pink and white, green and white; sponge ware; terracotta sanitary ware);
- glass (a broken pressed glass jug; broken bottles; and mystery items);
- metal ware (parts of a Burmos blow torch, broken spanners and blades, barbed wire and huge nails);
- bones (vertebrae, limbs and a partial jaw complete with teeth);
- an empty metal tube of 'Curly Top – natural hair curler for toddlers' – manufactured near my home town of Bury in Greater Manchester. In 1939 was 1s 3d for a tube that lasted a month;

- a ‘Kolynos Super-White Toothpaste’ tube – apparently popular in the USA from the 1930s and “accepted for advertising by the American Dental Association”
- lumps of lime mortar and broken bricks and handmade clay roof tiles (one stamped “Sealy’s Patent”). Sealy’s operated in Bridgwater

from the 1770s. Their handmade tiles were patented in 1842 and were exhibited at the Great Exhibition in London in 1851. The Yarnbrook Road cottages were built around 1854. I wonder why tiles came from Bridgwater when there were nearby brick and tile works in Trowbridge and Devizes?



**Well covered with original stone as it looks now**



**The handmade clay roof tile stamped “Sealy’s Patent**



**Some of the finds including jaw bone with teeth**



**During removal of top soil – large part of the stone exposed**



**Commer Walk Through van**

I’d be interested to hear from anybody who has knowledge of other wells and

well diggers in West Ashton and round about.

Pauline Hume

## Wide Loads on the A350

On 30 August two lorries with exceptionally wide loads travelled along the A350 causing havoc on roundabouts and traffic lights. Here we see them travelling from Yarnbrook to West Ashton.

Jean Robertson



## A fond farewell to Revd. Reuben Dunnings (HP) as he retires

On Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> October, Reuben ministered Holy Communion for the last time to the congregation of St John's, West Ashton. Reuben was not only moving to a new home in Trowbridge, but had decided not to re-register as a minister and retire, hanging up his "frock" in early October. His ministry at St John's started at Easter time – April 2002.

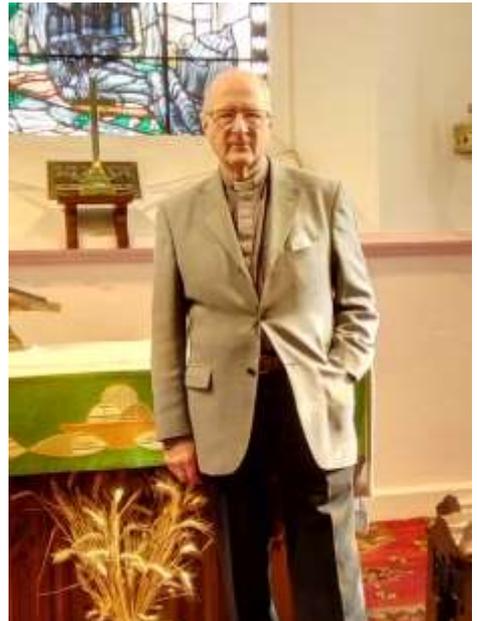
During his time with us (April 2002 – October 2019), he had covered 142 services, preaching at Holy Communion Services; Morning Prayer; Christenings; Christmas Eve and even Christmas Day. Not forgetting four special musical services arranged and lead by him on his keyboard.

St John's will miss Reuben (for his wisdom and his merry quips) and sincerely thank him for his ministry, time and effort. We trust that he will pop up and see St John's on occasion and perhaps even provide a musical service sometime in the future.

St John's presented him with an album with pictures of our rural church; (just to remind him who and where we are) and a voucher to purchase something for his new home.

The congregation and friends of St John's wish him well for his new chapter in his life.

Jean Robertson



**Photo** Carol Norris

## Going home for Christmas

The payphone outside the college Porter's Lodge wasn't the ideal place for a difficult conversation, but this was long before mobile phones. My father announced that I would have to make my own way home as he would not be able to come and pick me up. In answer to my anxious enquiries, he simply said "I'll explain when you get back" and quickly ended the call. I secretly guessed the reason, but was not yet ready to admit it. Instead, inappropriately, I felt irritation at the inconvenience this change of plan would cause – having to manage the train journey (including crossing from one London terminus to another) with everything I needed to bring home for the Christmas holidays.

Something had to be very wrong for my father to cancel so abruptly our arrangement that he would drive up to Cambridge and ferry me, and all my belongings, home. The previous summer my mother had undergone surgery for cancer, but our weekly phone calls had given a reassuring picture of gradual improvement, short trips out, and life slowly returning to normal. That overly brief conversation, and something in my father's voice, told me that was no longer the case. Some of my frustration next day, struggling on and off trains juggling a large backpack and various plastic bags, had to do with unacknowledged hopes for that holiday. After the anxiety of the last six months, I had been secretly longing for a bit of comforting normality – to go home and enjoy what was always a magical time of year in our part of rural Kent.

The season had always begun with the daily excitement of opening a door on the Advent Calendar to reveal simple (but somehow wonderful) images of a snowman, a candle, or a wrapped parcel; and then as the festival grew nearer shepherds, wise men, star and finally, the full Nativity scene. Later we would lick the gummed ends of brightly coloured strips of paper to make chains to hang in our bedrooms, and on Christmas Eve, bring in the tree we had dug up from the garden, having carefully planted it after the previous Christmas.

The same decorations came out every year, made more magical by each added layer of memory. Next morning, presents and filled stockings appeared on cue and there were carols in the medieval church, turkey and all the trimmings for lunch, and (in memory at least) an afternoon walk through frost-covered Kentish fields and farms.

When my father met me at the station, he told me what I already secretly knew: the cancer had come back, there was nothing more that could be done, and they both wanted her to stay at home for as long as possible... My memories of that Christmas are sketchy at best as I must have blocked a lot out. It was a poignant mixture of suppressed emotion and inadequately expressed affection. I do have a vivid mental image of the room where my mother was confined to bed, visited daily by nurses who administered increasing doses of morphine, and a vignette of us watching 'The Wizard of Oz' – a precious moment of happy forgetfulness before she died, a few days after Christmas.

Inevitably those memories coloured my seasonal enjoyment for a long time, but after several years, my father surprised us all by remarrying and gradually a new home and new traditions were established. I began to enjoy my post-Christmas visits again, particularly the long, solitary walks through my childhood landscape of the

Weald of Kent. These gave space for prayer and enabled me to process some of the buried emotions of the past and find healing and resolution. Christmas in Kent came to have positive associations once more, still tinged with sadness, but now washed by grace.

Allan Coutts

## St John's Church



## Harvest Festival



Photo Jean Robertson

## Harvest Festival Sunday Lunch – 6 October.

Early October was that time of year when the Harvest Sunday Lunch took place. West Ashton Village Hall was the venue and was suitably decorated to capture the event. Although numbers were slightly down, 34 tickets had been sold for the lunch which was provided by Enyon Catering. Much jolly banter was heard when enjoying the three course roast lunch. The produce for sale was mainly provided from the school children who brought their contribution to their church service on 4 October. Friends and congregation of St John's had also provided produce. This ranged from pots of homemade jam, cakes to avocado pears, water melon, pumpkins, fire wood, vegetables and fruit, even some bottles of cider were spied too! Some children had beautifully made/decorated their own boxes with harvest poems and smiley faces on vegetables and fruit. This year's charity, to which produce auction monies would be donated, was Julia's House Children's Hospice. The nearest centre would be in Devizes and provides end of life care to children and support for their families. John Butler, a volunteer from Marlborough, came to give an insight of this valuable work that this organisation provides and Claudia Hickin from Bath (volunteer) provided a slide

show highlighting the Devizes Hospice. She had also visited the school earlier, to inform the children of the work and care that the charity carried out. With sale of produce; generous donations;



the payment of invoices; the wonderful sum of £323.90 was raised. This will be forwarded on to the charity to help continue their valuable work for the community. Thank you to all those who came to the lunch or helped in any way to make this event a happy and rewarding occasion.

Jean Robertson

*Footnote: Would you believe that it was 10 years ago that Jean organised a combined congregation and friends from the churches of St. John's and St. Thomas' to visit the Albert Hall for The Big Sing for the Songs of Praise programme? Ed*

St John's Church, West Ashton

## *Christmas Carol Concert*

Friday, 6 December, 2019 at 7.30 pm

Celebrate the season of peace and goodwill as the

*White Doves Choir* are joined by

Rob Colquhoun (guitar) and David Moss (fiddle)  
for a feast of winter songs, Christmas carols  
and festive tunes.



Tickets **£6** includes welcoming  
mulled wine and mince pie.

Children under 14 free

Available from

Sylvia Preston 765858 or

Jo Watkins 753196

*All proceeds towards Church funds*

## Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust

### Annual Ride & Stride Event - 14 September, 2019 St John's Church, West Ashton Representatives

Our two brave cyclists, Richard Ovens and his son James (St John's Church answer to Geraint Thomas) had an extra member this year, Emma, (James 11 year old daughter). The aim of this event is to cycle (or walk) to as many churches as possible in the allotted time (10 am to 6pm). The intrepid trio stayed in the local area and covered 20 miles visiting 10 churches (as this was Emma's first experience of the event, the route was more relaxed than usual) With sponsorship from friends and congregation of St John's Church, West Ashton, they managed to raise the glorious sum of

£252. This will be shared equally between St John's and the Historic Churches Trust. A total of seven cyclists braved the hill and "reported in" to our rural church and sponsor forms were duly signed and refreshments were provided to help them on their way. A vote of thanks goes to all those who bestowed their time for being stewards for the day. Sincere thanks goes to our cyclists, Richard, James and Emma – it was a sturdy and challenging achievement; the boys kept up with Emma and she hopes to return next year!! Well Done.

Jean Robertson



Photo  
Vicky Ovens

<b><i>Other Useful Numbers</i></b>	<b><i>Contact Information</i></b>	
<b><i>Builder</i></b>	Paul - New build, extensions, renovation specialist, alterations.	01225 753997/07799 563347 19 Bratton Road,
<b><i>All Domestic, Commercial Cleaning</i></b>	Heidi	07514319533
<b><i>Foot Reflexologist</i></b>	Annie Ritchens	01225 752002 Mob 07967630429
<b><i>Garage Services</i></b>	Briken Motors Garage....MOTs, servicing etc,	01225 755203
<b><i>Library</i></b>	The Mobile Library visits Orchard Close 3.30 to 4 pm	<a href="http://www.services.wiltshire.gov.uk/MobileLibrary/Library/Stop/57">www.services.wiltshire.gov.uk/MobileLibrary/Library/Stop/57</a>
<b><i>Logs</i></b>	Logs for sale. Ben Pike	01380 870808
<b><i>Gardener</i></b>	Paul Hobbs	01225 761684
<b><i>Newspapers</i></b>	Seend Post Office deliver	01380 828250
<b><i>Parish Council</i></b>	Chairman: Mr Richard Covington Clerk: Mr Stephen F King JP	01225 761904 07872183295 email westash-tonpc@outlook.com
<b><i>Police Concerns</i></b>	David Bradley Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. Village Co-ordinator Neighbourhood Policing Team PC Mark Hough PC1140	01225 754100 Non-emergency No 101
<b><i>Refuse</i></b>	Community skips in Canal Road, Trowbridge for larger items.	<a href="http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/rubbish-collection-days">http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/rubbish-collection-days</a>
<b><i>Seamstress &amp; Soft Furnishings</i></b>	Clare Humphries, curtains, dress-making and alterations	01225 767703 Mob 07929 122631
<b><i>St. John's Church</i></b>	Services Sundays 10.30am. Rev Allan Coutts	01225 777331
<b><i>West Ashton Boomerang Taxi Service</i></b> <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: <b>0800 371297</b> to book.
<b><i>West Ashton C of E School</i></b>	Debby Huxham Head Teacher	01225 754354
<b><i>West Ashton Ladies Skittles Team</i></b>	Liz Hickerton	01380 870437
<b><i>Beauty Salon</i></b>	Manicure Pedicure Facials etc. Gift tokens Kelly Beavis 31 Bratton Road	07766117813



# What's Coming Up

## Dec

1	Christmas Christingle Service Church 4pm
6	Christmas Concert Church 7.30pm £6
11/12	Christmas Nativity 2pm School Hall
15	* VH Event Christmas Lunch 12.30 for 1pm Village Hall £15 Children £6
18	WI - V. H. 7.30 Songs from the Shows with Ray Dance & Judith Sharp Pot luck supper
20	School Christmas Service Church 9.30am
22	Carol Service Church 10.30am
24	Christmas Eve Communion Church 11.15pm
31	* New Years Eve Party V H live music (Two OF Us) Buffet £15 7.30 for 8pm

## Jan

8	Wives Village Hall 7.30pm Bingo
15	Parish Council Meeting Village Hall 7.15pm
18	* Annual Skittles Village Hall v Church 7 for 7.30pm - £5 ticket incl Ploughmans
22	WI Village Hall 7.30pm Arthritis Joint Pain Headaches with Louise Hull

## Feb

6	Wives Village Hall 7.30pm Memories with Tom Hill
14	* VH Family Valentine's Party FREE watch for details

## Mar

4	Wives Village Hall 7.30pm 21st Century Architecture with John Salbat
14	* Village Hall Murder Mystery - watch for details

*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](mailto:westashtonbookings@btinternet.com)*

For more information on dates go to [www.westshton.org.uk/hall](http://www.westshton.org.uk/hall)

