

# MUSBURY PARISH NEWS



Spring 2021

# Holyford Mission Community

[www.holyford.org](http://www.holyford.org)

Rector Fr Steven Martin [rector@holyford.org](mailto:rector@holyford.org) 01297 553180  
M C Administrator Mrs Emma Laughton [office@holyford.org](mailto:office@holyford.org) 01297 551400  
Ms Linda Joy (Families Worker) 07796 063208

## Readers

Dr Charles Hill 01297 552141  
Mrs Sue McCoulough 01297 552446

## Hon.Assistant Priests

The Reverend Canon Colin Preece 01297 552154  
The Reverend Nigel Freathy 01297 22303  
The Reverend Canon Karen Curnock 07460 244475  
The Reverend Prebendary John Lees 01297 551351

## St Michael's Church, Musbury

### *Church wardens*

Mrs Sue Irving, Cherry Tree House, Church Hill 01297 552440  
Mr Michael Pritchard, Knap Orchard, Combpyne Rd 01297 552297

### *Treasurer*

Mr Robin Collis, Monmouth House 01297 551105

## MUSBURY PARISH NEWS

Village Website: [www.musburyvillage.co.uk](http://www.musburyvillage.co.uk)

This magazine is published quarterly by the Parochial Church Council of St. Michael's, and is distributed free of charge to all households in the Parish. The cost is borne by the PCC but is offset by advertising revenue and by a grant from the Parish Council. The Treasurer will always welcome donations by readers.

The services provided by our advertisers are commended: when using them please mention the *Musbury Parish News*.

### ***Editor***

Jolly Sargent, Ruffles, Doatshayne Lane 01297 552470  
[jolly.images@mac.com](mailto:jolly.images@mac.com)

### ***Distribution:***

David Antell 01297 553454

### ***Advertising:***

Rod Powell 01297 552681

# From The Vicarage Steven Writes

## *St. David*

March 1<sup>st</sup> is St David's Day. St David is the patron saint of Wales and was born in Mynyw (now called St David's) in c. 544. He founded a monastery there and gained a reputation as a holy and wise man. When he became Archbishop of Wales he remained at St David's, close to the site of today's fine cathedral. After his death it became a great pilgrimage site. Setting up the monastery was no mean feat, and the monks struggled for many years to settle and establish a Christian community.

The Bishop of Crediton told me recently that, when he was dying, St David is said to have given his monks three very useful pieces of advice—useful for us too. 'Remain joyful. Keep the faith. Do the little things'.

I have found that useful these past few weeks. The expectations we place on others and ourselves can be overwhelming at times. St David's words are very apposite: 'Remain joyful. Keep the faith. Do the little things'.

## *St Michael's update*

As you may know, sections of plaster fell from the ceiling of St Michael's, Musbury last summer. At the moment, we are not sure if these falls are a presenting symptom of a bigger problem so before the sections are repaired, scaffolding has been erected across the whole of the south side of the church in order that all the ceiling panels in that area of the church can be closely inspected to see if they are sound. Some further panels may need to be re-lathed and plastered. The scaffolding is now up and by the time you read this, the crucial investigative work will have begun. It is impossible at this stage to say what the final cost will be, but we know that it will be in the order of at least £10,000 to £15,000 and probably more. Our finances have been hit hard by the pandemic and, at present, we haven't sufficient funds to meet the repairs and our running costs.

My sincere thanks to all those who have sent a donation already; if you would like to send a donation to Musbury PCC, please send it to Mr Robin Collis, Monmouth House, The Street, Musbury, EX13 8AU or by BACs: Lloyds, Axminster Branch, Account name: Musbury PCC Sort Code: 30-90-37 Account number: 00115665. Many thanks indeed for your help.

We will endeavour to keep services going in St Michael's, but this will depend on the extent of the work and if more scaffolding is needed. Unfortunately, the church will probably have to be closed to visitors for a while to enable the builders and plasterers to work safely. I hope that this will not be for long—if you wish to go into church but are unsure if it will be open, please contact a Churchwarden or me.

Always remember that you are very welcome in any of the churches in the Holyford Mission Community to go in to pray alone, or to attend services. Services and events continue to take place every day in one way or another, online, over Zoom, and in our churches. For those without access to the internet (or who would rather not use it!) we also have a weekly Telephone service at 2.30pm on Sundays. All are welcome—in church, online or over the telephone.

Our Lent Course this year focuses on 'Seven Sacred Spaces', taking the areas of a monastery as a model by which we can look at our life and witness as a church. The course is taking place online, via Zoom. All are welcome. The purpose of the course is to gather thoughts and ideas for our new Mission Action Plan, which will enable us to plan for the future.

### ***We are here for you***

You know where I am if you need someone to talk to (01297 553180). We have a weekly prayer list of those who are ill or anxious, and for the departed. It is circulated to a small number of our Ministry Team. If you or someone you know would like our prayers, please let me know.

Our Ministry Team letter this month is from our Children and Families worker, Linda Joy. Linda has been offering support and activities for children and families throughout the pandemic. If you know of a family in need of support, please let Linda or I know.

Along with our Churchwardens, Sue and Michael, all at St Michael's send love and good wishes to all friends, Parishioners and benefactors of our Parish Church.

With every good wish and blessing,

**Fr Steven.**

## **Parish Records**

### **Funeral**

22nd January

Margaret Ruth Snell

26th January

Hazel Joyce Rowswell

# Parochial Church Council Report

Usually at this time of the year, I am telling you about a successful Christmas Craft Fayre and encouraging you to come to our Table Top Sale but of course during the Pandemic, neither of these are happening. PCC funds, therefore, are not at all healthy. We are, however, very grateful for the regular giving from people on the Parish giving scheme. These regular donations have been a life line.

We had a successful but different Carol Service this Christmas. Everyone was socially distanced from others. Only a few people in the choir stalls were allowed to sing but the candles created the same atmosphere and the readers read very well. There was no mulled wine or mince pies, of course, which was missed and no chatting afterwards. The Carol Singing round the village was very successful and enjoyed by all who took part and the residents who listened on their doorsteps. We were able to send £150 to the Axminster Food Bank. Thank you everyone for your support. A big thank you, too, to all those who decorated their windows during Advent. The designs were wonderful and helped light up the lives of the many villagers who went round admiring them.

The church building has been closed for services since Christmas. We had managed several services before that, but the one problem we had was after the service has finished!! It is so natural for villagers to step into our narrow aisle and start chatting as we always have done!! This of course is not allowed at present and we look forward to normal times as soon as possible. There will be one service at the end of February at 11.15am and hopefully another at the end of March. Do watch the notice boards.

The ministry team at Holyford Mission Community have been wonderful in providing Sunday worship, prayer meetings, bible studies and weekday services on line which has been such a help to so many. If you haven't experienced them yet and would like to, please go to the Holyford Mission Community Website where details of everything will be found.

Another problem we have at present concerns the ceiling inside the church. Experts are looking at it and deciding on what needs doing. By the time you read this, the work will have started. Obviously, it is all going to cost money which of course we are short of. We are grateful for the donations very generous villagers and others further afield have given. Our treasurer is applying for grants but a lot more is needed. If anyone reading this feels they would like to help, bank details are given elsewhere.

Our Annual Church Meeting has been fixed for April 21st. This will possibly be on Zoom but could be in Church at 7pm. The meeting gives us an opportunity to thank everyone, especially the Church Wardens Sue Irving and Michael Pritchard, for all they do for St Michael's Church and its people. They have both had unusual and different responsibilities due to Coronavirus and we are grateful to them both. We also look at the yearly accounts which are extremely well kept by our treasurer Robin Collis.

We look forward to welcoming everyone back into the building every Sunday and with a new ceiling as soon as we are able and it is safe to do so. Much of the work of the Church goes on in the village despite the closure of the building. It is regrettable that we can't hold the monthly coffee mornings which have been appreciated by so many for a number of years now.

Of course, as well as an end to Lockdown, the joy of the coming Spring and warmer weather, we also look forward to the great season of Easter when we celebrate Jesus' resurrection after his death to set us all free. There is a lot of hope and light at the end of a long and dark tunnel for us all.

**Kay Short** (*secretary*) 552711 [kayshort43@gmail.com](mailto:kayshort43@gmail.com)

## **Axminster Food Bank**

Once again we would like to thank all of you who have supported the Food Bank, particularly over the Christmas period. Your generosity was amazing and so many people were thankful for the help that we were able to give them. We were overwhelmed with donations from the community but as numbers increase again our supplies are diminishing and so we are reinstating the basket in our Spar Shop. Thank you to Julian for this.

Some of the basics we need fairly regularly are long life semi-skimmed milk, pasta sauce, baked beans, soup, tinned fruit, tinned custard and rice pudding, tinned tomatoes, jams or marmalades, tinned ham or corned beef and tinned vegetables.



We continue to have a hardship fund for those particularly in fuel poverty – it is not unusual to meet people who have to choose between food or heat in these times. Also, as shocking as it may seem, we have had three referred clients recently who had no microwave, cooker or fridge. One person with a family had no washing machine. We can only give limited help in these situations but it is good to be aware that there are people with such difficulties in our wider community.

Many thanks for all your support.

**Sheila**

# CHURCH FLOWERS AND CLEANING

I am pleased to report that the Christmas season in Church was as always - beautiful. Less worshippers than normal due to restrictions in place, but flower wise the Church was adorned as normal. Every windowsill was decorated and of course the Christmas Tree took pride of place.

Thank you to all flower arrangers who rallied round in these difficult times.

Of course since New Year things have been un-normal again - Church has been closed during the week with no Sunday Services, just a Sunday opening and therefore no flowers again. We will shortly be entering Lent where traditionally there are no flowers anyway. Coupled with this event, our ceiling works have commenced with scaffolding being erected as I write, so dusty flowers would not have been ideal !

In this respect I think that my Spring Cleaning date planned for Saturday 27 March, will not go ahead but will be delayed until after the works are completed. I will advise at a later date.

Following on from that, I hope that Easter celebrations in Church will be possible and that flower arrangements can be done on Saturday 3 April, when daffodils and all things Spring will renew our spirits and bring us new hope for Easter and onwards.

**Sue Irving**  
552440

## **John Daly**

To all of you who may remember us, John and Nesta Daly who lived for many happy years in Musbury joining in many of the activities and also helping Nigel and Jill in the Post Office now and then. I am very sad to say that John passed away early October having been very poorly for the last 2-3 months.

My thanks to all who have sent messages of sympathy to myself and our girls who are helping me such a great deal. We are all sad, he was a wonderful husband, father, and grandfather and we will all miss him such a lot, but realise he is at peace now.

Regards to all of you  
**Nesta Daly**

# Weather Watch

November began mild and wet but soon cooled, with early morning white frosts that killed off the Dahlia foliage. After a few days the weather warmed but stayed changeable until 14<sup>th</sup> when it rained almost all day. Much of rest of the month was showery but with a few quiet day of misty mornings at the end of the month. The month's rainfall total was 83 mm (just over 3 inches) of rain, slightly less than the 16-year average of 105 mm (4 inches).

December was a pretty wet month with 22 wet days out of 31, giving 161 mm (6½ ins) of rain against the average of 96 mm (4 ins), and leaving the ground saturated, springs seeping onto the roads and standing water in low points. The month ended with a sharp frost. The total for the year was 1,109 mm (44 ins), slightly above the 16-year average of 957 mm (38 ins). January began cold and dry with frosts, but from the 12<sup>th</sup> turned increasingly wet. There was overnight rain and snow on 23<sup>rd</sup>, leaving the roads slushy with more snow visible on the Castle and on the hills around, and, further inland, 2 cm of snow blanketing Stockland. The month's rain totalled 123.5 mm (5 ins) – slightly above the average of 104 mm (4 ins). This heralded the start of a spell of weather when cold air from the north east battled against warmer and moister air from the south west – as I write the cold air has very much won and we are shivering in a blast from the east with the temperature barely rising above freezing all day. The boundary between the two air masses, across Scotland and central and northern England, has produced snow in quantity but we have been spared so far.

## Mike Lock

### **Christine Hobbs**

Christine Hobbs passed away on the 9th February after spending 2 years in a care home in Weston Super Mare. Christine lived for many years with husband Reg at Bishops Farm, and later in a bungalow in Musbury. She is sadly missed by her family.

### **Rob Archer (Brother)**





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# School Report

The last few months have been a very difficult time for everybody and it has been brilliant to see how everyone has risen to the challenge both in school and within the wider community. On 4th January 2021, school closed to all children except those classed as vulnerable or whose parents are critical workers and since this time, we have been operating with a third of pupils in school, with the remainder working remotely from home. This has been a considerable challenge for parents, children and staff, but I can honestly say that the way that everyone has responded has been fantastic. Unlike the March lockdown, our curriculum has continued as normal with children logging into online live lessons, delivered by teachers either in school or at their own homes. The manner and speed with which everyone has adapted has been incredibly impressive.

Obviously, this reliance on computers has put a considerable strain on our IT resources, but I have been humbled by several kind donations of computers from the community and also the Seaton Computer Consultant. These devices are supporting pupils learning whether they are in school or working from home.

Looking ahead, we are very much looking forward to welcoming back all pupils - hopefully before the Easter Holidays. I am sure that much will change before then, but I feel confident that the children, staff and parents can overcome any challenges that are thrown at them.

One change will see the departure of Mrs Firth (class 2 teacher) and the arrival of Mrs Coe. Mrs Firth has been at Musbury since September 2018 but is moving on to a full time position. Mrs Coe is joining us from Willowbank Primary School until the end of the summer term and I am sure she will have a very positive impact.

Looking further ahead, expected numbers for Reception intake in September 2021 are looking good with a slight increase on last year.

We look forward to welcoming everyone back into school in the (hopefully) near future.

**Mr T Nield**

Head of School

## Nature Watch

In spite of the cold, some hedgerows are white with Snowdrops, there are a few Primroses and Celandines along the lanes, and garden daffodils are starting to show in some sheltered gardens. However, one plant always flowers at this time, albeit rather inconspicuously. This is Winter Heliotrope *Petasites pyrenaicus*. Its broad kidney-shaped leaves form dense patches along roadsides – there is a large patch by Marlborough Road near the junction with Axminster Road – and it produces spikes of rather inconspicuous pale mauve flowers in mid-winter. These have quite a strong sweet scent – the books describe it as ‘almond-scented’ – and this can be strong enough to be smelled as you walk past a clump. Not all patches have many flowers, though. All the plants in this country are male, so it sets no seed, but its underground stems spread far and wide and its dense foliage excludes other species. It came here from the Mediterranean as a garden plant in 1806 and has spread from thrown-out fragments. A close relative, Butterbur *P. hybridus*, is a native plant, not uncommon in Devon, with much larger leaves which, as the name suggests, were used for wrapping butter.



Hazel catkins (lambs' tails) are starting to lengthen. Tap them on a warm still day and you may see clouds of pollen falling from them. Each catkin consists of lots of male flowers. The female flowers grow on the same bush but look very different. You have to look carefully on a warm day for buds that are a bit larger than the leaf buds. Look for the dark red stigmas of the female flowers that project from the ends of these buds, waiting to catch the wind-blown pollen from the catkins. If fertilised, they will later develop into clusters of nuts.

A few Siskins have been visiting my sunflower heart feeder with Goldfinches. They are small finches, grey-green overall with darker streaks, two pale wing bars and a yellow rump. The males have a dark cap. Siskins are mainly migratory; the birds we see in winter come mainly from Scotland and Norway, as shown by ringing recoveries of birds marked in Honiton and Offwell. A few breed here and they have probably bred in the grounds of Mountfield House in recent years. They are birds of conifers in the breeding season. In winter they wander a good deal; the ringers in Honiton and Offwell regularly caught each other's birds.

The cold weather has brought in the winter thrushes – mainly Redwings – but these will soon be moving back to Scandinavia to breed. The first Sand Martins are usually seen in late February or early March, the first Chiffchaff song usually comes in mid-March, and early Swallows should appear in late March or early April. Some Chiffchaffs winter here, particularly around sewage treatment works where the filter beds remain warm and unfrozen and generate plenty of small insects. The Cattle Egrets that I mentioned in the last Parish Magazine are still around but are now to be found in the Waterford Farm area, often, confusingly, with Little Egrets. Look for the yellow beak of the Cattle Egrets. The yellow feet of the Little Egrets are often conspicuous as they fly up.

### Seaton Wetlands

I have not visited the Wetlands for several weeks but they should now hold plenty of Teal and Wigeon. Shelduck will have returned from their moulting grounds, and Canada Geese have been flying up and down the valley. There has been a wintering Marsh Harrier hunting over the reed beds, there have been several sightings of Otters, and an Avocet appears to be wintering on the estuary. To keep up with sightings on the Wetlands and the estuary, see Steve Waite's website: [www.stevesbirdingblog.blogspot.com](http://www.stevesbirdingblog.blogspot.com). At the Wetlands, the hides are closed but all paths are open, as are the toilets.

### Mike Lock

## Musbury Moles



We have welcomed back the majority of Mole to preschool during Lockdown 3. Preschool has remained fully open during the latest lockdown and we are pleased so many families have returned with confidence. The children have been enjoying the wet weather, mainly because of the puddle jumping and splashing. The children have enjoyed seeing some new faces since Christmas and we continue to welcome new children in over the next few weeks. The children have been enjoying weekly baking sessions, yoga and bird watching. Our topics have included Dinosaurs, Doctors/Nurses, Animals and Sea Creatures.

We have started the transition for our older ones with 9 leaving us this year, and have been working on skills that will help them in their school journey. Putting coats and shoes on, lining up, listening and working in small groups. We have been delighted with the response to Covid from all our families and community members.

**Claire Brookes** - Early Years Manager

# Read Easy

Just in reading this you are using a skill which will be second nature to you. But did you know that 5% of adults in England struggle with everyday reading and 16% (according to the National Literacy Trust) have very poor overall literacy skills. Some people may just know a few letters of the alphabet, others may recognise some everyday words but not be able to read simple instructions or longer texts. Life, if you can't flick through a newspaper, send a text, apply for a job or read a computer screen is hugely limited nowadays. Adults who struggle with reading are often embarrassed to join a group or class of learners, being happier in a 1:1 situation.



Fortunately, free help is available locally for anyone in need. The charity Read Easy's local branch covers Axminster, Seaton and surrounding areas which include Chard, Lyme Regis and Sidmouth. It has a bank of trained coaches who are personally matched with readers, and it sets up neutral meeting places where they can work together comfortably and with confidence. (During lockdown coaches and readers are unable to meet face to face but many reading pairs are continuing remotely either on the phone or remotely online. Hopefully this will change again very soon!)

The evidence tells us that there are more adults in our communities who would like, and would benefit from, 1:1 coaching but they may be unable to access information about Read Easy. You may know someone who needs help with reading. It could be a friend, an acquaintance or someone you come into contact with through your work. If you know someone who needs help you or they can contact us either by phone on 01297 552847 or by email - [sheila@readeasy.org.uk](mailto:sheila@readeasy.org.uk)

(Read Easy UK is a registered charity - number 1151288)

**Sheila**



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# Musbury Show and Plant Sale

To begin on a happy note, even after the cancellation of both our events in 2020, we are very glad to say that the Musbury Show Committee has been able to donate £1,000 to the Parish Council for the Devon Air Ambulance Trust's Night Landing Site in the Village.

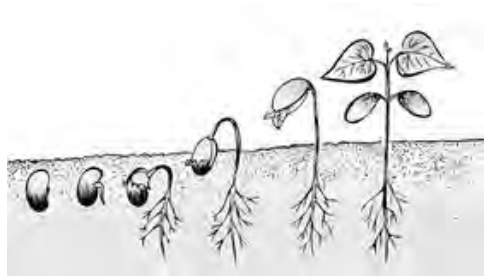
This still leaves us in the financial position of being able to hold both the Musbury Show and the Plant Sale should they become possible this year. **This is due to the enormous support given to the events by the Village in the past.**

We have not booked any definite dates this year but normally we would be saving May 8<sup>th</sup> for the Plant Sale and August 14<sup>th</sup> for the Show and arranging for the judging of the Garden Charm and Veg.

Plot Competitions in June and July. It may be that the Plant Sale could be *al fresco* and the Show could be held later in the year e.g. Sept/Oct to enable them to take place; we can only ask you to 'watch this space'!

The Show Committee are also hoping to return to a more formal timetable and to be able to hold an Annual Meeting in the Village Hall to report on our activities when we hope to recruit more members and ideas for future events.

Needless to say, plants don't wait for viruses and writing this in February we gardeners will be starting sowing seeds and, I hope, you will have some extra seedlings etc. to donate to the Sale.



Once again, we wish to thank all our supporters of Show and Plant Sale.

**LML**

Musbury Show Committee  
David Antell  
Lesley McGowan Lock

# Village Hall

It is probably fair to focus our report not on what has happened (because not much has!) but on a much brighter post Covid-19 future!

The trustees are intending to restart the '100 Club' and this would be relaunched at a proposed Village Hall open morning or evening as soon as we are able to safely do so. It would also be an ideal opportunity for groups to promote and attract new members to their activities or to find out the interest/potential for any new activity.

Jackie, our treasurer, has managed to access some grant money to help the hall through the period where it has not had any bookings, this will safeguard its immediate future.

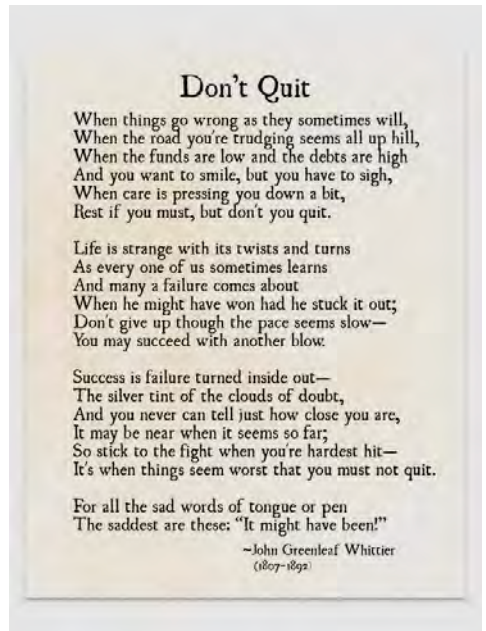
Due to the current closure we held our virtual AGM on Monday 1 March. As this was prior to the publication of the newsletter any significant updates will be reported in the next edition.

As ever we thank everyone for their continued support and look forward to seeing you all again very soon.

In the meantime please spend a few moments enjoying the following poem, although the words were written many years ago they seem very appropriate at this time.

Best wishes

**Musbury Village Hall Trustees**



# Musbury Garage and Spar

Although the last eleven months have been incredibly demanding in each area of the business, Theresa and her team have risen to the challenge. I believe that your Spar store is in a stronger position now than 12 months ago, with an improved range of local products that have been very well received by you, our customers. Many people have shared their thoughts on the importance of supporting your local shop; this pandemic has made lots of people realise how important it is to shop local, for so many reasons. Since March 2020 we have been offering home delivery to help people stay safe. We will be happy to continue offering this service beyond the current situation; whether it's just for the heavy or bulky items or you're not able to visit the store, we're happy to help.

Unfortunately, I have been made aware of complaints regarding parking around the Garage. Few people are brave enough to speak to me directly, which is a shame. We see ourselves as an important part of the local community, employing 20 people and offering an unrivalled range of services to the local population and visitors alike. We are incredibly busy, with limited space on site. Adrian and Emma at The Hind have been very kind in letting us use their car park whilst the pub is closed, but inevitably there are vehicles parked on the road. These are a mixture of staff and customers' vehicles, but we endeavour to park responsibly and safely. This is one of the downsides of a vibrant local business, but I believe that most people appreciate what they've got within walking distance of their home and understand the difficulties that we have.

The clerk of Musbury Parish Council wrote to me in January regarding the installation of a Community Night Landing Site for Devon Air Ambulance in the village. Devon Air Ambulance does a fantastic job in the county and has been one of our nominated charities for many years. I was only too happy to pledge my support to enable the project to be completed. Hopefully, there is more news on this elsewhere in the magazine.

I would like to close by thanking you for your custom if you use us. If you don't, can I ask you to spare five minutes to e-mail me and let me know why? I am always willing to listen to comments and suggestions. For the reasons detailed above, your community is stronger if you support us. Best wishes

**Julian Rinaldi**

01297 552292

[info@musburygarage.co.uk](mailto:info@musburygarage.co.uk)

# Nicholas Blake

Nicholas Blake was the pseudonym of Poet Laureate Cecil Day-Lewis who lived in Musbury from 1938 until 1950 at Brimclose, the thatched cottage we all know half way up Mounthill. To supplement his income from his poetry writing, he published his first Nigel Strangeways novel, *A Question of Proof*, in 1935. Blake went on to write a further 19 crime novels, all but four of which featured Nigel Strangeways.

Strangeways was shaped in the image of Day-Lewis's fellow poet and friend W H Auden, and the author drew inspiration from other areas of his life for characters, setting, and plot as well. One of his books "*The Smiler with The Knife*" starts out in a village near the sea which could be Musbury with the following description of a cottage based on Brimstone

*"The lane ran from the village past their cottage over the brow of the hill; you could get to the sea that way, after five miles of rough going; but motorists usually gave one look at its fearful gradients and - if they succeeded in turning their car- scurried back to the main road. Where she stood, on the high bank above the lane, Georgia could see the thatched, white-washed cottage that seemed to have dug itself out a niche in the hillside, the silver coils of the river in the valley below, and beyond the tumble of green and brown hills ranging up towards the horizon. Everything was peaceful. There was no sound or movement but the distant rattle of an express that hurried westward on the far side of the valley, white smoke laid along its back like an ostrich feather."*

The pub is named the Green Lion (in the 1930s one of Musbury's pubs was the Red Lion) and the nearby town, Folyton.

By the third chapter the plot moves away from Musbury, but if you like a good read, a thriller in the style of "*The Saint*" or "*The Avengers*" give it a try. The following is an edited version of a review of the book I found on the internet

***The Smiler with the Knife**, published in 1939, is the fifth novel, in the series of novels about the invented character Nigel Strangeways. He is an amateur investigator and gentleman detective, in the same mould as Lord Peter Wimsey. Because of his position as the nephew of an Assistant Commissioner at Scotland Yard, he has unusually privileged access to official crime investigations. However in this particular mystery he is actually only on the periphery. The main character in **The Smiler With the Knife** is his wife Georgia Strangeways, a strong female character who is an adventurer and explorer, a personality which contrasts nicely with her husband's slightly dilettante tendencies, and could be a model for Emma Peel*

*The Story involves conspiracies, governments, the secret service, secret political organisations, quasi-political groups, Nazis, Fascists and threats to, "all the decent, ordinary, hardworking people, the people who make England." The reader has to remember that this novel is set in upper-middle class, and sometimes aristocratic, England between the two World Wars.*

*Day-Lewis wrote these detective novels to supplement his income from poetry, and it is not surprising that he would choose themes which were uppermost in the majority of people's minds - the rise of certain political dictators and factions, and the threat to democracy in Great Britain. Presumably he felt that he could describe this best by using characters from the class of people, locations and situations with which he was very familiar.*

*Cecil Day-Lewis was actually a member of the Communist Party from 1935-1938. After the late 1930's however, he changed his views considerably. It is interesting to speculate on how much at the time of writing this book his views were expressed through the viewpoint of his characters.*

*The novel is a cut above many detective stories of the time. Not only does it feature a bold, believable female hero, a satisfying plot which increases in tension during the second half of the book, but the writing is witty and extremely mischievous in places. Chapter 16, "The Episode of The Father Christmases" will stay with me for a long while. And in chapter 18 "The Episode of the Radiance Girls" he really pokes fun at some current fashionable outlandish beliefs. Performing in front of a village audience, they would "prance in all the glory of magenta knickers and [Euthymol] toothpaste pink flesh, [when] psychophysical irradiation really seemed to set in on the audience", who suddenly became very enthusiastic.*

*All in all this is a cleverly plotted book, and great fun to read, providing the reader remembers it is very much of its time and place.*

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So no excuses; plenty of time for reading  
The paperback is available from the Archway Bookshop  
The shop may be closed, during the current lockdown, but they are still working behind the scenes to keep you supplied with books. By using the online shop you will help to keep the bricks and mortar version going long term. You can order and pay online or give them a call if you prefer and arrange safe collection by appointment. Support your local independent bookshop.

**Jolly**

# Musbury Garden Club

At this time of year lots of gardeners are planning what they are going to plant in their veg or fruit patch this year. It is a time of excitement for many newcomers, and not so new, to growing their own. But a few, including yours truly, start off as eager beavers, buying seeds and plug plants then sowing them on. And come the warmer months, when you would expect green shoots, there is little to show, or worse there are plenty of green shoots but nothing growing in the soil below.

So to help us, we asked some of our more experienced (and modest) village gardeners if they could share a few tips. Many thanks to them.

Carrots can be difficult in Devon clay, so de-stone the soil and work in silver sand, along with organic material, but avoid fresh manure. A low fence of netting (c.15") helps prevent carrot fly.

When growing leeks, spring onions, broad beans and runner beans, it is a good idea to use 'root trainers', such as toilet or kitchen roll cardboard middles. You can transplant the young vegetables straight into the soil without disturbing their roots. And planting broad beans out in November to 'overwinter' produces good results.

To get parsnips off to a good start, put fresh seeds and a handful of damp compost in a polythene bag. Secure the bag and put it in the airing cupboard. Check after about four days and either pot on or plant out. In fact, for most veg it is best to start seeds off in a greenhouse rather than sow direct into a vegetable patch.

Tomatoes do best with even moisture levels to avoid 'blossom end rot' and a tomato feed. When the flowers start to open mist the plants lightly around mid-day to help the fruit set.

Stagger the sowing of sweet peas, runner beans and lettuce. This way you can be picking flowers or veg as late as October and your freezer is not full of one type of veg or you won't run out of vases.

I was thinking of growing cauliflowers; one of our local experts swears by chicken manure.

Fine netting over Brassicas projects against Pigeons, Deer and most importantly cabbage white butterflies .

Start onion sets off in 3" pots. This stops them being pulled out of the ground by birds

It is also very important to remember your soil. Add lots of compost and manure to it. And always rotate your crops and try to water evenly.

By the way, anyone trying to grow a Cornus Kousa Chinesis, I have the following to report after three years of no flowers and little growth. Do not surround it with mushroom compost. They like acidic soil, so use a camellia/rhododendron granular feed. If that fails move it to a sheltered spot or to the east of England where they do better, apparently!!

Finally, we should like to thank everyone who entered the Christmas quiz. We raised nearly £200 and donated £75 to the Axminster Foodbank and £123 to ARC, the Axminster Counselling service.

We have also recently contributed £200 from Garden Club funds to the village community landing site for the Devon Air Ambulance.



Happy Gardening.

**Sue, Karen & Val.**

## **The Children's Society**

For as long as I can remember, St Michael's Church, and the generous people of Musbury and the school have supported The Children's Society, mostly through the Christingle service in December. Last year we were not able to hold a Christingle service because of "the virus" so the church was not able to make a donation. However it is possible to donate individually. One in four children have felt unable to cope during the pandemic. This is just one area that the society helps. If you feel you would like to donate , here is the link [childrenssociety.org.uk/lockdown](https://childrenssociety.org.uk/lockdown)

Or call 0300303 7000

The Children's Society  
Whitecross Studios  
50 Banner Street  
London EC1Y 8ST

## **Cherry**

## Musbury People - The known and unknowns

Many of us have heard of some of the more remarkable and interesting names from Musbury's past. John Churchill, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Marlborough, Cecil Day-Lewis, the Drake Family will immediately come to mind. Some may think of Harry Dutfield, M.B.E., Dinsdale Landen the actor and, more recently, Brigadier Maurice Sutcliffe.

Who would recall the names of John Loveridge, Evelyn & Charles Cheston, Edward Bouverie-Hoyton and Donald Cameron? Not many I would imagine. These are just examples of people unearthed from Musbury Heritage records. There's been little research into these interesting characters, beyond finding out that they lived locally at some time and there is a story to tell about them. The following are only 'teasers' before more research is able to be carried out.

**John Loveridge (1794 to 1864)** grew up in Musbury in a poor family and became an orphan by the age of 10. He appears to have learnt a trade, probably in the village, and took his skills to London. In short, he was very successful, owned property in London, was well known for his philanthropic work and became a London theatre owner. He didn't forget Musbury and returned to retire at Mountfield. Some of you will have seen his plaque in the church. There is much more to be told of John's fascinating story.



**Charles Cheston (1882 to 1960)** designed the art deco-styled "Bowhay" on Combyne Road in the early 1920s. His father was an architect. **Evelyn Cheston (1875 to 1929)**, like Charles, was an artist, though she was initially the more prominent, exhibiting with and then joining the New English Art Club in 1909. Influenced by the impressionist works she saw in Paris and her teacher at the Slade School of Art, London, her landscapes and watercolours were well-received. Charles Cheston was a member of the Royal Society of Etchers and is widely exhibited, including at the Royal Academy. They continued to live at Bowhay. Evelyn died in 1929, but Charles lived on there until at least 1935. Bowhay was destroyed by fire in 1940.



**Edward Bouverie-Hoyton (1900-1988)** lived in Monmouth House in 1929/31. He was a printmaker and engraver. In 1926 he won the Prix de Rome, beating Graham Sutherland to the prize. He was a regular exhibitor at the Royal Academy and his etchings can be found in many public collections including the British Museum. He was elected to the Royal Society of British Artists in 1936. A picture of his was auctioned at a local fete in 1929 to raise funds for Drake's Hall and you will also see his works in the Rev. Cockerton's history of the Drake's family (a copy can be seen on Musbury Heritage website). There is an etching of his in a San Francisco museum entitled "Doatshayne?". More to follow on this!

**Donald Cameron (1898-1981)** is an intriguing Musbury character. In 1937 he bought part of an orchard at the top of Church Hill and commissioned an architect to design Rumah Kita (Cherry Tree House). From a young age Donald was a banker, specialising in the Far East (hence the name Rumah Kita – Malaysian for "Our House"), but later was to turn his hand to invention. In 1946/47 he registered patents that he described as "Original, and Ornamental Design for a Combined Electric Lampstand and Clock", one of which he named "The Musbury Clock". You wouldn't consider them cutting edge today! We know they were manufactured by Ferranti and that one appeared at an auction in 2017. If another comes up for sale, perhaps we should try to acquire it to put on display. Donald's wife Barbara was a particularly good friend of Mary Day-Lewis. The Camerons sold Rumah Kita in 1947.



As ever we would love to hear any updates (or corrections) to the above. In due course full biographies will appear on [www.musburyheritage.co.uk](http://www.musburyheritage.co.uk).

**Martin Minter** / Musbury Heritage / [martin@musburyheritage.co.uk](mailto:martin@musburyheritage.co.uk)

You can now also follow us on Facebook – just search for "Musbury Heritage"

# Musbury Parish Council News

## Devon Air Ambulance Community Night Landing Site

A short while ago, Councillor Craker was preparing a very different entry for the Parish Newsletter, asking for donations to a Just Giving page for the Landing Site. However, thanks to the wonderful generosity of the village community here in Musbury, this is no longer needed as, pending the transfer of the final pledge, we have raised our target of £3,400!

The Parish Council are so grateful to all those individuals, groups and businesses who have been so giving to this great cause. The next step is to apply for planning permission to erect the light...

## Dog waste

A renewed plea to all dog owners to please pick up your dog mess. The vast majority of dog owners act responsibly and clear up after their dog but there are still a few who allow their dog to foul the roads, pavements, fields and verges around our beautiful village. This is unsightly, anti-social, a danger to health and safety and against the law. Fines can be issued by EDDC.

## Parking

Please can we ask all road users to drive and park with respect and care for others. We have all been in a hurry, or only stopping for a moment, but our roads are narrow, our village full of pedestrians, cyclists, horse-riders and especially during the pandemic – delivery vehicles. Inconsiderate parking can lead to access issues, especially around the tight corners – if it was an emergency vehicle trying to get through, lives could be at risk. Thank you.

## Playground

The Council are looking into funding for the Playing Field in order to update and improve the existing equipment. If you are a user of the area and have ideas on what is needed or wanted, please contact the clerk with your wish-list!



## Parish Lengthsman

Many of you will be aware that the Council have been trying to engage a Lengthsman for the village to undertake tasks such as weeding the roads, clearing the leaves and drains etc as funding is so tight at District and County level, the councils can no longer be relied upon to undertake these tasks.

If you, or someone you know, might be interested in filling this position, please contact the clerk for more details.

Duties:

- Roadside weed clearance & removal (non-chemical), spraying of re-growth (relevant licence required)
- Clearance of debris from drain gratings and hand digging of drain sumps as required
- General minor grounds maintenance of open spaces and amenity areas as advised by PC
- Any other minor works/repairs as necessary and as advised by PC

COSHH, Health and Safety and Chapter 8 training would be an advantage but local knowledge is more important.

Hours would work out at about one day a month across the year with certain seasons requiring more time than others.



## Parish Council Matters

I thought it would be useful to lay out the things that a Parish Council is responsible for and what powers they can exercise. Jurisdictions of Parish, District and County Councils are often confusing and it may be helpful to know who to go to in some of the most common situations.



Local Councils have both 'powers' and 'duties'. A 'power' is something you **can** do whereas a 'duty' is something you **must** do. Local Councils actually have very few duties and most of these are procedural i.e. the appointment of a proper officer and responsible financial officer, the election of the chairman, the support of parochial charities etc.

Musbury Parish Council has the '**power**' to provide and maintain:

- **Allotments, including the supply of water**
- **Bus Shelters**
- **Grants to voluntary bodies**
- **Litter bins (provision of) and anti-litter campaigns**
- **Planning Applications – to be notified and consulted only**
- **Public Seats**
- **Footpaths maintenance – with other organisations**
- **Recreation areas**
- **War Memorials**

For issues such as - Planning decisions, Housing, Refuse Collection, Recycling, Dog and Pest Control, Noise Abatement, Electoral issues, Licensing and Anti-social behaviour – contact **East Devon District Council**.

For issues such as – Education, Social Services, Planning, Public Transport, Highways and Parking, Trading Standards, Registrations, Library Services, Community Planning and Emergency Planning – contact **Devon County Council**.

These are not exhaustive lists, but an attempt to cover the issues most pertinent to our village and those the clerk is most frequently asked about.

### **The Parish Clerk**

Musburyparishclerk@gmail.com

# Footpaths

The parish footpath co-ordinators (Janet Albano and Paul Smith) have completed the annual survey, as required under our P3 agreement with Public Rights of Way (PROW), and submitted bids for 2021-2022 repairs. In addition to the hard bit of walking the paths and noting defects, Paul has carried out many minor repairs which are much appreciated by the Parish Council and the Public Paths Liaison Officer at Devon County Council.

A friend in Hampshire emailed to say that in his parish the paths look like 'a brigade of Hussars have crossed them.' Musbury's footpaths have also taken quite a pounding this past weird year and it has not been easy arranging maintenance. During lockdown 1, there was a shortage of materials at the DCC depot and contractors were required to obtain an essential workers certificate from PROW and sadly for us, our trusted contractor decided to leave Devon and return to his northern roots.



PROW require a contractor to have full £5 million public liability insurance and this is essential even for minor jobs. For example it costs in the region of £75 to install a new finger post and we should expect to pay £20-£30/hr depending on the nature and complexity of the job. So to those in charge of a hedge cutter please take care, a careless swipe and it's a new finger post!

Hopefully we have now found a new contractor and he has made a start on our backlog.

If you find a problem, please contact the clerk who will pass this to Janet or Paul or if you see either of us please tell us –it helps us to plan repairs. It is also helpful if you could note the path number which can be found on the ceramic discs attached to the finger posts or look at the list on the Village website.

So, happy wandering and if you take secateurs with you to cut back stray vegetation, thank you.

**Janet Albano**

# Cycling and other matters

In the autumn of 2015 a very good friend of mine approached me and asked if I'd like to join him for a bicycle ride. Having quickly established he hadn't had a blow to the head I realised he was serious and reluctantly agreed. At this point I had no idea his inspiration came from some friends of friends who had just passed through Colyton on a John o Groats to Lands End personal challenge.

At this point, I didn't own a bike and borrowed my wife's much to her disgust! If my memory serves me correctly we did a couple of Sunday morning rides which much to my surprise was quite enjoyable. On any warm autumnal Sunday morning being out in the glorious East Devon countryside is no chore. He had hatched a plan though and after a few weeks of gentle meandering he broached the subject of an End to End adventure.

Naturally, it would eventually be in a pub after several beers that he would formally declare his intention to take this challenge up and like all good chums, I dutifully agreed! The following weeks would see more serious training unfold but inevitably the weather began to make it less appealing!

In the meantime I'd invested in a second-hand road bike, the likes of which I'd not ridden since I was 16, it took some getting used to, a plethora of gears and ridiculously narrow tyres made for initially an uncomfortable few hundred miles. What became more apparent as time passed was that this cycling lark was addictive, not only was it becoming obvious that the physical benefits were huge but the effect on my mental health also a massive bonus. I've always been determined and driven, but I found something incredibly mentally stimulating the more I put into cycling, it sharpened me up in a way I'd not experienced before.

It became clear that if we were to take this challenge of John o Groats to Lands End seriously, we'd need another couple of members. We quickly recruited two other suspects and by December of 2015 we had a plan, a route and lots of enthusiastic helpers. It became apparent if four very unlikely cyclists were to complete this journey it would be foolish not to have a charity cause to support. A mutual friend and popular local character Nigel Broom had been diagnosed with cancer and at he and his familie's request the chosen charity would be Force Cancer Support in Exeter.



A date was set for May bank holiday 2016 and much logistical organisation took place over the coming weeks. The generosity of the community quickly unfolded with a vehicle, vehicle livery, fuel, cycling attire and bike parts all donated for the upcoming journey. By the time March came around we were training three times a week and covering between 150 – 200 miles per week. The only thing lacking was the ability to cycle consecutive days and none of us had ever done more than 3 days on the trot. This challenge would mean we'd need to do an average of 80 miles a day for 12 consecutive days! Prior to the start none of us ever broke the 3 day record.

What followed over the next 2 weeks was truly incredible. It was the barmiest 2 weeks of the year, the wind was behind us all the way home and we met some amazing people and made outstanding memories. We told our story on social media as it happened and our fund raising quickly broke all expectations, with a final total of £19,500.00 The story of those 2 weeks is something when I have time, I intend to attempt a book over.

The real moral of the story was the incredible generosity of the local community who were touched by the tragedy of cancer and how it can deeply affect the lives of those amongst us. We have since ridden as a team through France and Ireland and were due to cycle home from Santander in southern Spain in 2020 before Covid struck. We hope to return to that challenge in 2022 when hopefully 'normal' will have returned.

Whilst we are on the subject of fundraising, we have a local cause here in Musbury currently under way. The importance of the Air Ambulance service in our community has been realised several times in my short time living here and the ability to night fly is so very important. In order for the Devon Air Ambulance to be able to effectively operate at night they need dedicated landing sites. The primary school playing field has been identified as suitable and we have already been granted funds from DAAT themselves. This left us with a shortfall however, and we as a community needed to raise approx £3500.00 to complete the project. Our County Councillor generously contributed through a local funding scheme and numerous parishioners have been quick out of the blocks with hugely generous donations. We were about to launch an online funding portal when the target was soon met and surpassed! What another fantastic example of how communities come together; this will be a real asset and a true life saver for Musbury.

**Matt Craker**

## Musbury's Rarest Bat.

Grey long-eared bats are one of our rarest bats with an estimated UK population of just 1000 bats and just 8 known maternity roosts, these are where the female bats come together to give birth to their young. As such these roosts and the feeding habitat around them are vital for their conservation. The good news is that we have 2 of these in East Devon, one in Musbury and one at Colyford. These two roosts are particularly important as they are the link between the maternity roosts in Southern England and the 2 in South Devon. This link is vital as there are so few maternity roosts it ensures that the various populations do not become genetically isolated.

Often called a whispering bat because of the very quiet echolocation that they use for finding insects in the dark, these insects are mostly found on meadows which are full of wildflowers with their nectar sources. The key then to caring for this bat is to maintain as many wildflower meadows as possible around their roosts and to enhance the wildflower interest of other fields. Wildflower meadows are not just good for wildlife they are also a real lift for humans, there is nothing that can beat a walk through one in early summer a riot of colour and alive with the buzz of insects. Over 92 % of wildflower meadows have disappeared since the 1960's so they are very rare as well.





The East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Team and the Bat Conservation Trust are working together to help enhance wildflower meadows in this area to benefit both bats and people. We have a Land Advisor, Craig Dunton, who will work with landowners to help enhance their meadows and we will soon have an Engagement Officer who will organise a variety of events and activities for local people so they can get to know more about our local wildlife.

The Engagement Officer will be working with a wide range of groups and individuals from Schools, Youth Groups, all kinds of Adults, they will also be organising surveys that you can carry out as a family so hopefully something for everyone.

So if you are a landowner and would like to increase the wildflower interest of a meadow, or would like to find out more about meadows and grey -long eared bats then please get in touch with Pete Youngman the AONB Project Officer [pete.youngman@eastdevonaonb.org.uk](mailto:pete.youngman@eastdevonaonb.org.uk) or phone him on 01404 46663 Ext 2.

This project is funded through the Government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund.

The Fund is part of a 10 Point Plan to kick-start nature recovery and tackle climate change.

Environment Minister, Rebecca Pow, said: "These projects will drive forward work across England to restore and transform our landscapes, boost nature and create green jobs, and will be a vital part of helping us to build back greener from coronavirus."

**Pete Youngman**

## **More about Bats**

All UK bat species use echolocation to navigate and hunt for insects in the dark.

A tiny pipistrelle can eat up to 3,000 insects in a night.

Bats are more closely related to humans than they are to mice.

Bats are a sign of a green and healthy environment, so creating a garden that's good for bats will also be good for people.

Want to learn more about Bats? Join a local bat group

<https://devonbatgroup.org>

<https://www.bats.org.uk>

# Memories from the Hind

Ernest Clarke was an occasional visitor. He appeared in many classic British Films such as *The Dambusters*, but is most famous for playing the dean in *All Gas And Gaiters*, and who will ever forget him as Professor Loftus in the long running TV series *Doctor In The House*. His wife, Julia, was the daughter of film star Margaret Leighton, but sadly, she never accompanied them.

Sometimes I have been known to let the odd celebrity slip through my fingers. One afternoon a very pleasant elderly gentleman popped in for a half of shandy and a ham sandwich. Nothing unusual there you may think, but a few minutes after he had left several local lads rushed in clutching photographs poised for signature. They were crestfallen when I told them he had already gone. Apparently he was some footballing chappy who went by the name of Sir Alf Ramsey. Well, how was I supposed to know? Now if it had been David Beckham it would have been a completely different story!!

Of course it's not all film stars and sporting legends. Our lovely locals provide many tales waiting to be told (some, I may add, quite unprintable)! I remember one Halloween party night when we had an apple bobbing competition. A huge barrel of water took centre position in the bar and the fastest customer to get an apple out with no hands won a pint. However, the landlord at the time got a little enthusiastic with his stopwatch. As a consequence some of the competitors decided it would be a great lark to dump him, watch and all, headfirst into the barrel. And there he stayed, little legs flailing around in the air while more pints were ordered. After a while, with much laughter and amusement he was unceremoniously hauled out coughing and spluttering. In one hand he clutched an apple, in the other the dentures that one of the bobbers had earlier lost. Alas, the watch remained at the bottom of the barrel. Needless to say that game was finished with there and then. But, to be fair, the landlord took it all in good humour, even though the watch unfortunately never worked again! For some unknown reason there was never another Halloween party!



**Ralph**

# Musbury & Whitford Women's Institute

Needless to say, our WI activities have been severely curtailed by lockdowns and continue to be so in 2021. We are kept very well informed of WI news countrywide by the National Federation of WIs and by our Devon County Federation based in Exeter. The WI has always been involved in the current concerns of its members and the wider community. This year we have individually been voting to select the subjects for its National Campaign from a list of proposed resolutions.



These include: action to increase awareness of early ovarian cancer; the care of spaces for wildlife friendly communities; to stamp out racism and discrimination; to stop the destruction of peat bogs; to promote the early detection of coronary heart disease in women.

We keep in touch with each other and members from other WIs by email and phone and are hoping to come to grips with the process of holding our own Zoom Meetings.

One sad piece of news for us has been the closure of the WI Denman College in Oxfordshire where, in great comfort, members could experience the aims of the WI to educate, form friendships and have fun. However, every cloud has a silver lining and, in its place, “Denman At Home” has been formed and has become available to everyone with internet connections. It is offering classes in on-line learning at the remarkably low price of £5 in a very wide range of topics from cookery, crafts, history, exercise and much more. These are open to all with access to the internet including non-members, women and men, as well as our own members. You can find out more, and perhaps lighten your long days, by visiting [www.denman.org.uk](http://www.denman.org.uk).  
Meanwhile if you would like to know more of what we in the WI get up to please contact,

**Lesley McGowan Lock** - 01297 551556  
**Valerie Nichols** - 01297 552131

# In Praise of Jigsaw puzzles

Artist, writer and activist (and former Somerset House Studios resident) Season Butler ruminates on the restorative potential of the humble jigsaw puzzle.

“When I embark on a jigsaw puzzle, I am taking on a problem with a single, achievable solution. This is what I want a puzzle to do for me, to be for me. I accept that I live in a world of complexity, nuance, greyscale, a quantum universe in constant flux. But a puzzle is not my life and it is not the world; it’s something static and eventually quite obedient. Jigsaw puzzles provide me a temporary reprieve, an escape. A place of simplicity dressed as complexity. The opposite of life.

Puzzles, for me, are not a macho flex. I don’t want mine to be forty thousand pieces or monochromatic or an image of a million buttons. I believe that a jigsaw puzzle’s healing powers are at their height when they adhere to what James Clear calls the Goldilocks Rule:

*“The human brain loves a challenge, but only if it is within an optimal zone of difficulty. If you love tennis and try to play a serious match against a four-year-old, you will quickly become bored. It’s too easy. You’ll win every point. In contrast, if you play a professional tennis player like Roger Federer or Serena Williams, you will quickly lose motivation because the match is too difficult.*

*Now consider playing tennis against someone who is your equal. As the game progresses, you win a few points and you lose a few. You have a good chance of winning, but only if you really try. Your focus narrows, distractions fade away, and you find yourself fully invested in the task at hand. This is a challenge of just manageable difficulty...*

*The Goldilocks Rule states that humans experience peak motivation when working on tasks that are right on the edge of their current abilities. Not too hard. Not too easy. Just right.”*

For a solo puzzle venture, one thousand pieces is my sweet spot. It will take time, so I can dip in and out of it, lose myself in it for five minutes or several hours. But I will get there. I will be able to smooth the surface with my palm, feeling the joins across a kitsch picture I like well enough but that I’m not attached to. Then I leave it for a couple of days, no more than that, break the pieces carefully into the box. I do not glue them and frame them to keep them forever. This is not an event, not even a milestone. I never aspired to climb Everest. When the puzzle is complete, I’m ready to return it to the charity shop and move on.”

The above is taken from an article found on the internet

The full read is at

<https://www.somerset-house.org.uk/blog/praise-jigsaw-puzzles>

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# Alistair Sutherland

*An edited version of the obituary from The Times Newspaper*

When Alistair Sutherland embarked on a second career as a rural vicar at the age of 50 in 1981, he quickly worked out that the average farmer started to feel uncomfortable in his pew just as the average preacher was getting into his stride. Sutherland, who had a record of finding new ways to tackle problems, changed his approach and came up with the “soundbite sermon”, an address lasting no more than ten minutes. Beyond that, he felt he risked “casting seed on stony ground”.

Needless to say, he became a popular and effective clergyman in the farming communities that he served in Devon and south Nottinghamshire for more than 20 years, which he described as the happiest of his life.

He had probably had a more telling impact on the lives of people, however, during his first career, as an electrical engineer, having led a pioneering team developing pacemakers and kidney dialysis machines in the 1960s and 1970s.

As part of his National Service in 1954, Sutherland had worked for GEC on the Blue Streak ballistic missile project. He later joined Lucas Aerospace, which also made weapons, but was simultaneously involved in the development of medical equipment. Collaborating with surgeons from the United Birmingham Hospital's Research Team, Sutherland and his team developed inductively coupled pacemakers, which were highly efficient, artificial cardiac valves, and dialysis machines that could be used in the home. In 1969 he became managing director of Lucas's medical manufacturing subsidiary, GE Bradley, and his work was later recognised by The Queen's Award for Industry.

A modest and kind man, he felt the call of his Christian faith and decided to study theology at the University of Exeter, driving there in a battered old BMW, but his career almost came to a halt before it had even begun. One member of the Church's admissions board, Robert Runcie, then Bishop of St Albans and later Archbishop of Canterbury, questioned Sutherland's suitability for the work. Sutherland pressed on, however. A year later he became a curate at St Michael's Church in the village of Musbury near Axminster and completed his training at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford.

After working as a vicar in the southwest, Sutherland moved to south Nottinghamshire, where he lived in Barton in Fabis, serving three farming villages, and six more as rural dean. In 1996 he returned to Musbury, where he served the parish until 2003. He was particularly delighted when his son-in-law, Ian Coutts, was enthroned as the Anglican Bishop of Bunbury in Western Australia in 2018.

At the age of 79 he was fitted with a pacemaker, which weighed one-tenth of the models he had pioneered as an electrical engineer, but was a poignant reminder of his earlier contributions to the welfare of his fellow man.

**The Rev Alistair Sutherland, clergyman and electrical engineer, was born on January 19, 1931. He died of a stroke on November 4, 2020, aged 89**

# Keeping Fit, Healthy and Happy.

You may have noticed more articles recently suggesting ways of keeping fit, beating boredom and looking after your mental health during the pandemic. The advice remains the same as in 'normal' times: even if you've never exercised before, it's important to do something every day no matter what your age.

Exercise, a healthy diet and getting enough sleep can stave off many illnesses leading to a happier, and hopefully, longer life. It's also important to stay in touch with family and friends, even if Lockdown prevents a face-to-face meeting.

As we age the risk of falling increases but a combination of strength and balance exercises can help. Getting up out of a chair every 30 minutes or less, doing seated or standing (preferable) exercises are beneficial. You don't need fancy gym equipment: try holding a tin of beans in each hand and punching the air 10 times to help improve your muscles, heart, brain and immune system.

Daily exercise in some form will also boost your wellbeing, improve sleep and energise you. Gardening and housework in addition to a brisk daily walk of at least 10 minutes will make such a difference both physically and mentally. Have a chat to people you meet and smile to trigger those mood bursting hormones. You'll not only feel better yourself but may have made someone else's day and will have used seventeen facial muscles too, so putting a smile on your face does start to make you feel more positive.

There's no time like the present!

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Musbury Movers enjoying refreshments after exercising in December

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# The Sky at Night

With March, April and May we see the movement of the winter constellations to the horizon and have a new set of constellation to find. Like Orion, Leo is one of those constellations where I can see the figure it is named after. There is a distinct pattern to the lower stars with “the sickle” at the front forming his head.

Between Leo and Gemini there is the faint constellation of Cancer, if you focus on the centre you may see a misty patch. This is the Bee Hive cluster or Praesepe. It is nearly 600 light years away and contains over 1000 stars which were all born around 600 million years ago.

Venus and Neptune are lost in the sun’s glare in March, while Jupiter shines brightly with Saturn to its right. Both planets are rising around 5am in the constellation of Capricorn. Mars sets around 1.00am and lies to the right of Alderbaran in Taurus.

By April, due south the main constellations in the sky around 10pm are Leo, Virgo, with Bootes overhead, binoculars and small telescopes show more now than the naked eye. There is a wonderful collection of galaxies between Leo and Virgo, called the Virgo cluster. In amongst this you will find M87 which is a giant elliptical galaxy that emits a 5000 light-year long jet of gas travelling at one tenth the speed of light. It is quite an impressive view if you have the equipment to see them, look for the bowl shape which is formed by Virgo’s Y shape and you will see a load of fuzzy blobs. The Virgo cluster is our closest giant cluster, some 54 million light years away. There are around 2000 galaxies and many of them are a spiral shape the same as our Milky Way.

As May dawns we find Leo heading off to the western horizon and Virgo, Bootes, Corona Borealis and Hercules in the south. Bootes, the herdsman, is shaped rather like a kite. The name of the brightest star is Arcturus which means “bear driver”. It apparently ‘drives’ the two bears (Ursa Major and Ursa Minor) around the sky. The lowest star in Virgo is Spica. It is ten times heavier than the Sun; it’s also more than 12,000 times more luminous, and its surface temperature ranges 25,000 degrees C, compared to the Sun’s 5,500 degrees C.

At present, due to Covid – 19 the Norman Lockyer Observatory is closed as we have limited space in domes and planetarium to allow people to be spaced 2 metres apart. Hopefully this may change later in the year.

**Keep looking Up!**  
**The Norman Lockyer Observatory**

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# The League Of Friends

As with most organisations the League of Friends of Axminster Hospital Funding Hospiscare at Home in the Axminster District, are finding fund raising efforts very restricted.

Currently the staff at the Axminster Surgery are working flat out supporting the Covid 19 vaccination program. Vaccinations are being given, in the main, at either the Axminster Surgery or Seaton Hospital. At both locations they are highly organised and the flow through is in good and safe order. I had my jab on the 29<sup>th</sup> of December at Seaton. My appointment was 3.20, I arrived at 3.18 and went straight in. Had my jab and then sat in the conservatory for 15 minutes before coming home. One of the nurses administering the vaccines was the lovely Emma, respiratory nurse at the AMP. Good to see a friendly face. A relief to have my jab and luckily no side effects, The doctors, nurses, paramedics and volunteers are doing incredible work and working long, long hours to keep us safe. We are so very fortunate, they are worth their weight in gold.

Please do not turn up early for appointments as you will have to wait outside until your due time and this does make social distancing difficult as well as being quite chilly.

If you are invited to have your jab please do say yes. It is the only way to control this horrible virus.

I wish you all well and ask you to keep safe during this difficult time.

**Ann Veit** Hon. Sec.

## A Special Note to Musbury.

Musbury is still giving marvellous support to the LOF. During August and October £377 was raised from the Jam Sales on the carport at Lion Cottage. Thank you to everyone who donated fruit and vegetables from their gardens and allotments.

From the 1st November £520 was raised towards the cost of repairs to the Church Ceiling. This is done via the Friends of St. Michael's Church who raise funds for the purpose of keeping the church in good repair.

Not only the jams and preserves were on sale but Christmas ornaments were also available.

The jam pan is now in hibernation until the Spring. I am having a rest!

The book exchange is now finished and the books are gone. It provided a useful service but usage went right down before Christmas and I will be glad to get the space on the carport.

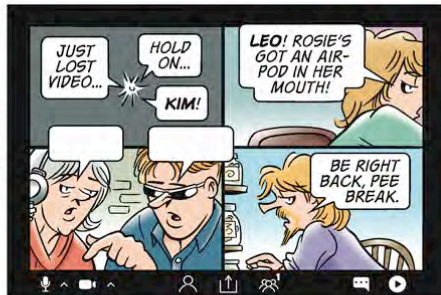
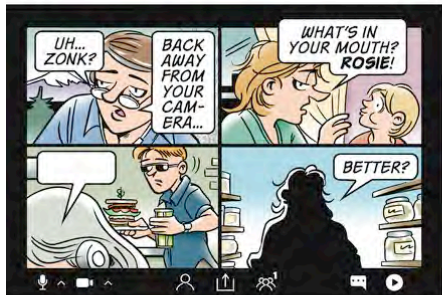
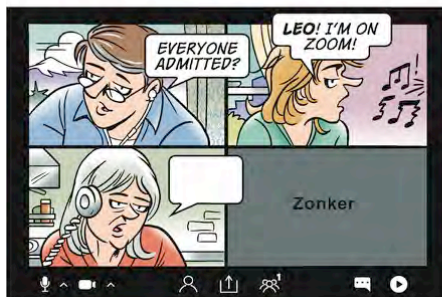
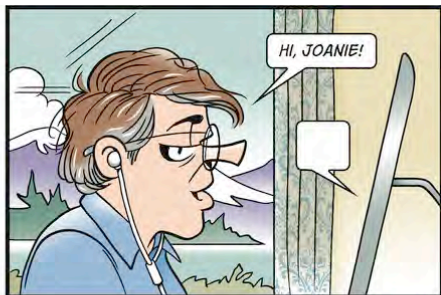
A big thank you to all those who supported the raising of £897 which has gone to good causes.

**Ann V.**



# The Zoom Experience

Doonesbury by Garry Trudeau



# Friends of St Michael's Musbury

Problems with the church roof must bedevil many communities – and I can remember being told years ago that we should be grateful that a Victorian vicar put a sound roof on our church. So maybe the collapse of part of the ceiling is not too major. [Progress on repair work is reported elsewhere in the Magazine.] This is the first time the churchwardens have asked the Friends of St Michael's Musbury to contribute to the cost of a repair on the fabric of the church – the exact purpose for which we were set up.

In addition to the modest funds accumulated so far, three significant contributions have been made to assist with the ceiling repair. Ann Veit raised £580 from her carport sale of jams and toys over the months up to Christmas – an achievement recognised by the torch-lit round-the-village carol singing stopping for several verses outside her house in December. One resident has made a significant donation anonymously and someone who had a wedding in the church some time ago has also made a generous contribution. These all reflect the value of the church building to the village.

There are (at least) two ways people can give money to repair the church ceiling by cheque or bank transfer:

1 Friends of St Michael's Musbury, c/o Beeds Farm, Musbury EX13 8AG or BACS Lloyds Axminster sort code 30-90-37 account 36161468 (please mention gift aid!)

2 Mr Robin Collis, Monmouth House, The Street, Musbury, EX13 8AU or by BACS: Lloyds, Axminster Branch, Account name: Musbury PCC Sort Code: 30-90-37 Account number: 00115665.

In current circumstances, the Committee are limited in organising any fund-raising events but are always open to ideas!

**Andrew Kennon**  
Secretary

**PS** Perhaps the most distinctive feature of our church is the Drake monument – showing three generations of husbands and wives at prayer – erected by John Drake in 1611. You can speculate about the motives for doing this – and what the craftsmen who did the work thought about it.



There is another triple feature of the church in Branscombe – a three-decker pulpit, a rarity in Devon. The lowest level is used for reading the lessons, the middle level for prayers, and the upper level for the sermon. I saw the vicar making his way – cautiously – to the top deck to preach a sermon recently. But again, who commissioned this unusual piece and what thoughts went through the head of the fine carpenter?

## **Annagrams in the absence of Pub Quizzes**

### **The following are Beatles Albums**

broad eBay

maple Pelee seas

meows unreliably

lubber sour

lover rev

### **Some Rolling Stones Albums**

doghouse pasta

frying kc sites

insomnia telex

barge gent squab

Collin knots lorry

### **For our younger readers, some contemporary females**

radian Reagan

dog ravioli rio

a I lad up

### **Some classic musicals**

ouch pacifist

fizz oath rowed

Ginnie tarnishing

*Answers will be posted on the village notice board in April  
or e mail Jolly at [jolly.images@mac.com](mailto:jolly.images@mac.com)*



# Wordsearch

Eighteen counties what links them all together?

Answer; at the bottom of next page

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
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## And Finally

“They say an actor is only as good as his parts. Well, my parts have done me pretty well, darling.” *Barbara Windsor 1937-2020*

“I don't care what the religion is called; as far as I'm concerned, one God, the God I adhere to, is in charge of all of them.” *Charley Pride 1938-2020*

“You'll Never Walk Alone” *Gerry Marsden 1942-2021*

“My today was all right and my tomorrow will certainly be better.”  
*Tom Moore 1920-2021*

So here we are again, another edition of The Parish News produced during lockdown , but hopefully we can be a little more optimistic about the future. The days are getting longer, the weather is warming, and the vaccinations are rolling out. The pub may soon be able to reopen, social events will be able to take place. Village Hall dances! remember them ?

One of the few compliments I have received from our reader is “*you have succeeded in making a silk purse from a sow's ear*” . If this is indeed a compliment it is down to our contributors who once again have succeeded in producing original copy from a difficult situation. Trying to report a club's activities and plans for the future at present is not easy. We have had a few welcome contributions from other sources , and I hope this bodes well for the future . So if there are any other Parishioners who would like to contribute an article step forward do not be shy. How about some of our younger readers recording their experiences of home schooling ( this will make for interesting reading in twenty years time )

Stay safe and mind how you go,

## Jolly

### Contributors please note Deadline for next Issue 14th May

Wordsearch Answer They are all first class cricket teams

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# **Musbury Diary      Spring 2021**

For the moment the diary remains blank but The Church, The Pub ,  
The Village Hall will reopen, organisations will meet again.

## **Normal Service will resume**

Watch the village website <https://musburyvillage.co.uk>

Church website <https://holyford.org/churches/musbury/>

And village notice boards

## **How your Parish News works**

To enable the Parish News to be delivered free of charge to every household in the Parish of Musbury we need advertisers. Rod Powell has taken on the mantle of advertising manager for The News and this year we have several new companies on board. Thank you to all advertisers and I hope that readers will use their services where possible

So visit your local shop and buy some local produce including Trill Farm salads, (remember they will deliver), book your MOT and service at the garage. Its Spring so why put off the garden landscaping project you have wanted to carry out all winter. Do not forget to have the chimney swept and those dodgy electrics sorted. Spring is a good time to have the front room redecorated, and any carpentry projects carried out. Would you like a new carpet? Does the TV reception not seem like it was? Do not forget to re stock with stationery and you might want to try your hand at some art and craft this spring.

The end of the financial year looms, time for some Tax advice. Do you need an accountant? It is possible you might need some financial advice and even decide to down size your home.

The grass has started to grow, need some help, with the lawn and strimming. Has that tree died? Need some tree surgery? After all that you might need a few days staycation and bed and breakfast, with time to visit a local tourist attraction. Now relax in that beautifully manicured garden with a glass of fine wine , a good book from your local independent book shop and some fish and chips ,while the sun glistens on your new paint work . While lying there in the hot sun do not forget to plan your care home and funeral arrangements, including a suitable memorial stone.

### **Thanks to the following**

Peco, Musbury Garage & Spar, WG Potter, Hansfords, Gordon Rumsby, Kate's Farm , Norton Memorials, Plumtree Joinery, Stuarts Sweeping Service , A J Clarke & Son, Aerials & Cables , Fred Hansford, Noel Jacks, Coly Electrical, Abron Electrical, The Lemon Plaice, Axminster Printing, Bright Future Financial, Lentells, Pinhay House, Luke The Tree Guy, Actionline Decorating, Trill Farm Gardens, Archway Bookshop, Just Fine Wines , George Hawkins