

Corton Denham News



FEBRUARY/MARCH 2024

ISSUE 261

Parish Letter

from Alan Hoskins

This is the first parish letter of 2024, so happy New Year to everybody. We all have our hopes and wishes for the New Year and for me two lines from the Christmas carol "It came upon the midnight clear" seem to sum it up.

"Hush your noise, you men of strife,
and hear the angels sing".

It was obviously appropriate to Edmund Sears in 1849 when he wrote the poem, which was set to the familiar tune by Richard Storrs Willis the next year. Edmund Sears probably had in mind the recently ended Mexican-American war and revolution in Europe. Of course, there has been war and strife ever since, but this past year seems to have been particularly bad.

We have had the war in Ukraine for nearly two years now and it is still going on, and now the awful conflict in the Middle East which seems to be overflowing into neighbouring countries and looks to get more and more dangerous to world peace as each day passes. The television news is often distressing to watch, and it is difficult to see any hope of peace and stability in the world of today.

And yet I believe that the angels are still singing, bringing the good news of the incarnation to the world of our day. Now and again the sound of the angels singing breaks through the noise of war and strife. In the laughter of children, and in the songs of the birds, I hear the angels sing. Sometimes in our church services, particularly over Christmas time, with the shepherds I have heard the angels sing to bring the story of the Christ child born in a manger to ordinary people like you and me.

Jesus was born at a time of conflict and war, similar to today. He had to become a refugee in Egypt to escape the brutality of Herod. Yet the story of Jesus is still told to countless people throughout the world, changing the lives of people in so many ways.

I think that I am becoming more and more aware of what a noisy world we live in. It is not just where there is war, but everywhere. Advertisers and celebrities on television seem to think they can only communicate by shouting their messages.

So my wish for the New Year is for a quieter and more peaceful world. Jesus came into a world of conflict and declared that he had come to bring peace. Perhaps, if we listen carefully, we will hear the angels sing, and follow the shepherds and the wise men to worship the child born to be King.

Fundamental Fitness Part 2

from Neil Holden

LOWER BACK PAIN

The worrying trend that's becoming an everyday norm... how can you prevent it?

In the UK approximately 31 million working days are lost each year to lower back pain. It is a worrying trend that is becoming the norm in modern society.

Acute lower back pain is an all too familiar reality for a huge number of people, affecting almost one in ten people with that number ever increasing with age. It can disrupt all areas of everyday life from performing manual tasks such as carrying shopping and housework, to working life and physical activity.

Unfortunately, the main causes of lower back pain are down to modern lifestyle with weight, posture, stress and sedentary jobs being the most prolific culprits. If left untreated, back pain will take over your life, things you take for granted now will become impossibilities, sitting down at a desk will turn to agony and productivity will tumble.

You can leave it and hope it goes away like most people or you can take it into your own hands to fix the issue. I have trained clients to combat and defeat lower back pain and weakness using the following techniques:

- Low impact exercise – It is so important to keep moving despite the pain, becoming sedentary will exacerbate the condition. Completing low impact exercise aimed at strengthening your core and posterior chain will improve your body's stability and posture which will reduce your likelihood of experiencing lower back pain.
- Increase mobility – Performing mobility exercises daily will loosen your joints, improve your range of movement, improve your posture and strengthen your core. All you need to perform mobility exercises is your body and a few feet of room.
- Stretching – Performing daily stretches before, during and after experiencing lower back pain will loosen tight muscles which will adjust hip alignment and reduce abnormal loads going through your back which can lead to pain. Concentrate on hamstrings, hip flexors and lower back to release the whole posterior chain.

Charity Quiz Night.

from Julia Bunker

Eat your heart out Master Mind, Only Connect and University Challenge! Preston House is the place to be for a winter Friday evening quiz night, in aid of charity – the most recent event being for the benefit of a very worthwhile local appeal, namely the Yeovil Hospital Breast Cancer Unit. Ten contestants, in teams of two, battled it out for points and prizes, in a range of challenging and entertaining rounds. One concerned horticultural knowledge; one engaged the olfactory sense to detect the aroma of herbs and spices; another required identifying destinations to avoid or embrace the winter cold; and the music round caused a few furrowed brows! There was also a Puzzle Page, in varying degrees of difficulty. Have a go at two of the questions below. Refreshments are served at these events to help stimulate the brains and memories. There was also a raffle with numerous prizes and everyone seemed to go home with something.

Over the course of many Charity Quizzes money has been raised for a variety of causes, including hospices, children's homes, disaster relief and on this occasion a very satisfying £160 was collected for the Breast Cancer Unit. I thank everyone who came and supported this cause. Do look out for more Preston House Charity Quizzes next winter.

What sequence of 3 letters can you put both before and after ERGRO to form an existing English word?

What do these 4 things have in common? BELLINI 1831 OPERA; GLORIA SWANSON IN SUNSET BOULEVARD; LADY MAJOR; MARILYN MONROE?

Village Hall review for 2023

from David Morgan

Our first entertainments in February and April this year were Somerset Take Art live performances from blind comedian, David Eagle, and storyteller, Debs Newbold. Both were pretty amazing and very entertaining in their different ways and raised modest profits of approximately £120 each.

In May, we had the Coronation weekend and helped to organise and pay for a Grand [Bring your own] Village Picnic with games in the Wyndham Barns field.

In July, we had our annual Brunch raising a sum of £253, and in August, our annual Dog Show, Scruffs, raising a further sum of £275 for Village Hall funds.

September to November was taken up with the revival of the Corton Denham Players and their performance of a Murder Mystery Musical, Strictly Disco, featuring dancing, music, mystery, murder and some outstanding performances by many newcomers to performing in public. All written, directed and held together by Julie Bunker. Two sold out performances raised over £900 for Village Hall funds and much fun was had by everyone involved.

Hire of the hall raised a healthy £942 and coffee mornings raised £146. Yoga classes continued twice a week and the end of the year saw the welcome return of our Post Office van on a Tuesday morning. The 50/50 Club again raised a magnificent £605, whilst giving out a similar amount in prizes thanks again to the efforts of Ben and John.

This year, we did invest a further £965 in some additional necessary staging and lighting for the play which will come in useful for future events. We also had some additional capital expenditure of £531 for the new curtains across the storage area thanks to the efforts of Pene and a new fridge costing £229 totalling capital expenditure of £1725. This has to be shown as expenditure against our income under our accounting system so that our expenditure this year of £6092 exceeded our income of £5137. So, although we had a deficit of £954 for the year, if we exclude the capital expenditure, we actually made a modest profit of £771.

Special thanks, as ever, to Chris Chapman, for kindly continuing to audit our accounts and to the rest of the Committee for helping to run our Village Hall so smoothly.

Fundamental Fitness Part 3

from Neil Holden

MIDDLE AGE SPREAD TO MIDDLE AGE SHRED

It happens to us all, when we reach a certain age (usually between 35 and 55 years old). Without you knowing or feeling a thing, big changes begin to happen in your body. Hormone levels begin to fall which in turn slows your metabolism. This means that your body will burn fewer calories whilst completing everyday tasks, left unchecked you will begin to add the pounds on. It can be as much as 1-2 lbs sitting around the middle of your body every year!

Eat fewer carbs and more protein

Carbohydrates give us energy as they are basically types of sugar. Some release their sugars faster than others but all will pile on the pounds if eaten in excess. Replace some of the carbs you eat with an increase in lean sources of protein. Protein will leave you feeling full but will also help you maintain muscle mass. At all costs, avoid refined carbs such as white bread and rice. These contain fast release sugars which greatly increase body fat storage.

Train for size and strength

As we get older, our muscle naturally waste away. This means that we will burn less calories as there are less muscles to move. To combat the middle aged spread we must do everything we can to keep our muscles lean and strong. Train with weights 2-3 times a week and try to work the whole body in as few exercises as possible (compound moves such as bench press, squats and deadlifts are your friends here). If you do this, you will increase your metabolism and begin to fight the spread.

Reduce stress

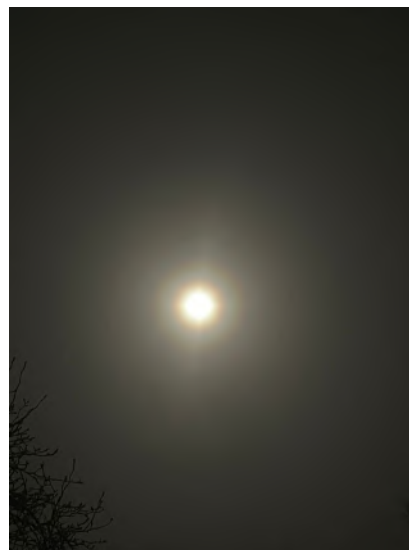
Difficult I know but essential if you don't want to gain those pounds. When you become stressed your body releases a 'fight or flight' hormone known as Cortisol.

Cortisol is linked with increasing body fat storage around the waist. Try some mindfulness techniques (see my blog on this topic) and take some time for you to try to combat the effects of stress on your body.

Get active

The more active you are the more calories you burn. To maintain weight you must burn as many calories each day as you consume. Make time for exercise, going for a bike ride with the family, going for a walk or even parking further away from the shops will all go towards winning the fight against the spread.

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Two more beautiful photos from our village. We have some talented photographers around us.

Thank you, Susanna Thatcher for the red sky and Tanya Forster for the halo moon.

The Radiating Light of One

Small Painting

from Bruce Sylvester

During my adolescent years, which were spent between Chicago and New York, I began to haunt the great museums. I went back and forth between the Art Institute of Chicago and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, my paradigms of what any adequate art museum should be.

As time passed and I lived in or near smaller cities like Berkeley, Calif., and New Haven, Conn., I visited smaller museums that did not have three or four masterpieces in each room. I learned to change my expectations, to focus on finding just one piece that would make the visit worthwhile - one painting, sculpture, print, or photograph that had some challenging or comforting resonance, or that provided an opening into a new or renewed appreciation for a particular artist.

It was this new approach to museum-going that I took with me when I went to visit the St. Louis Art Museum.

It was a difficult time in my life when I went there, a "sidewalk phase" as one friend put it, when I was looking down at the sidewalk and into my own broodings rather than upward and outward. I went to the museum to get out of myself, hoping to find just one piece of art that could help me do that.

I don't remember the building, but I did find what I needed.

In among the French Impressionist paintings was one small picture of an arrangement of flowers. It was not exactly of the Impressionistic style; it was there because the artist lived in France in that era. The artist was Henri Fantin-Latour.

I knew his name from one of his huge portraits in Chicago, and I recalled the day when I had gone into the print room at the Art Institute. After a conversation with the curator about my interests, he pulled out a portfolio of prints by Fantin-Latour, among which was a large black-and-white print of an arrangement of flowers.

I liked the prints, just as the curator said I would. But nothing I had seen by this artist had prepared me for the oil painting I saw in St. Louis. Nothing had prepared me for what I can only call the "white light" of that moment.

For among the colorful flowers, most prominently among them, were white flowers - emanations of light, really. It was not so much that there was light shining on the flowers from some outside source. Rather, the flowers were expressions of an inner kind of light that emerged out of the struggle to become, to be, to blossom, to exist. I began to hear again the mysterious words of French poet Gerard de Nerval, "It is a well-known fact that no one ever sees the sun in a dream, although one is often aware of some far brighter light."

In the dream-like reverie that this painting triggered, I became aware of a sunless world of "some far brighter light," the depth of consciousness from which Fantin-Latour's flowers had emerged. I also began to recognize that very same place in myself.

These brilliant white flowers became for me very special invitations to accept and to love into fruition the concerns, the passions, the facts of who I am and what makes me tick.

The picture told me that a person's "self" cannot be the result of any other person's light shining: It doesn't rub off.

A self emerges if it is tended, through the courage to claim an inner photosynthesis, to follow out and test the light of one's most compelling inner directives, perhaps especially the uncanny, unexpected ones.

I have not been back to St. Louis in many years. But I return my mind's eye to look again at that luminous picture which tells me, simply, to believe in myself and whatever light I carry – and to risk, again and again, sharing it.

A Massive Thank You!

from Ann Skeates

A big thank you to all kind and generous villagers who donated to my no chocolate challenge . Along with my lovely dear friends and amazing family. I managed to raise £1233.80, a massive amount going to a great cause.

I was truly astonished by the support I got .

I delivered the money to the Hospice of the Valleys in Wales on 22nd January. The attached picture was taken during the hand over.



Neighbourhood Watch

from Richard Goldsmith

In my last CD News report, I stressed the importance of reporting attempted scams via Action Fraud. That remains important, particularly after all the buying online and in shops, leading up to Christmas. All the information you need can be found on the website of Action Fraud at:- www.actionfraud.police.uk/report-phishing . It is only by providing these reports, that we can give the Police the information of the scams and fraud being attempted and an opportunity to do something to stop them.

My email bulletins continue to deal with the steps we should take to protect ourselves against fraud when buying and selling online. Also we must not become complacent about other attempts to obtain personal information which enables criminals to part us from our money. I personally suffered such an attempt, dressed up as a legitimate telephone call from my electricity provider, complete with my Customer Number. It was worrying that I began by being satisfied that the call was genuine and was close to providing the scammer with information they were seeking. It demonstrated how easy it is to be caught! The message is to NEVER provide personal information to someone who calls you!

The new Village Website is now up and running at www.cortondendenham.org.uk. The latest three neighbourhood watch bulletins are available under :-About us/organisations and services/recent neighbourhood watch alert.

Farming News

from Brian Green

We've had an awful lot of rain since my last article. The short dry spell has helped dry the lighter land, but there is still floodwater covering thousands of acres of flood prone land. The main reason that it's still there is because of the lack of maintenance done on our rivers and also the building of houses on flood plains. If you half fill a three gallon bucket with mud and then put three gallons of water in as well, one and a half gallons will spill. This is what is happening to our rivers. Before the mid 1990's drainage was done by local river boards and farmer groups and then the Environmental Agency took over. Since then the whole drainage system has been almost completely neglected. The cost to the taxpayer and farmers is huge, not to mention the cost of repairing thousands of uninsured houses and the anxiety this causes.

I think that the Agency should be disbanded or better still round up all the managers that are responsible and send them to Rwanda. Two things they won't find there are flood water or any illegal immigrants. Come to think of it, we could send Smiler Gove out there with them to take charge.

It's be estimated the 30% of our winter wheat hasn't been planted or has been flooded. A lot more is patchy. Normally we are more than self sufficient in wheat production. However, this year we will be short.

Europe has had similar weather to us and Russia is experiencing its hardest winter for decades. Lets hope that the price, come harvest time, reflects these problems.

The shoot has gone well this year. We have been lucky with the weather. Wind direction and strength play quite a part when shooting birds off this escarpment. On the two windy days that we had the wind came from the south west which is a cross wind. This, of course, makes the birds very challenging and our beaters day produced forty birds for over four hundred shoots. In fact, if you are a pheasant living at Whitcombe, it is probably one of the safest places to be!

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Beautiful photo of the fireworks from New Year's Eve. Taken by the stunning photographer Simon de Trey-White.

Cam Vale Tuesday Group

from Marion Chapman

Due to bad weather and the fact that this was the first day after the New Year holiday we did not expect many members.

However, 21 members braved the wind and rain to come along to listen to Trudi and Clare. They are two of the three Health coaches from The Queen Camel Health Centre. They gave a short talk and then answered questions from the floor.

I was astonished at what the Health Centre offers. They seem to cover every eventuality. They will advise on healthy and practical ways for their patients to maintain independence and stay out of hospital.

There is a rehab team that includes a physiotherapist and an occupational therapist. They will visit patients in their homes.

They provide help and advice for carers, also for those facing bereavement, or loneliness and isolation. Patients can access a Library Home Service where someone will discuss with patients the sort of books enjoyed, and will then provide the books wanted.

For those struggling with modern technology the centre will help with getting the Attendance Allowance or a Blue Badge. Transport for hospital appointments can be provided. Even care for ones pets can be arranged.

They provide Dementia care and monitoring. Anyone with mental health issues can contact the centre to find support. Advice and help is given to those who are struggling to give up smoking and vaping. Walks of differing lengths are arranged to help mobility issues. Trudi and Clare came armed

with leaflets which we were encouraged to take home.

I came away with the impression that those under the QC Health Centre are extremely fortunate.

After the talk, Georgina; one of our committee, ran a quiz. It was both varied and interesting. And everyone enjoyed it. Can you name 3 cities where there is a Barbican? Our team knew two.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 6th at 10am at the Queen Camel Memorial Hall. New members and visitors are welcome.

For further information please contact Marion Chapman. 01963 220741.

Village Hall News

from David Morgan

A date for your diaries-

Thursday 22nd February 2024 at 3pm

The return of Gregory Steward - the young and talented local Professional Tenor. Those who saw him this time last year were highly impressed by his professional and entertaining performance.

This year he will be performing popular favourites from Phantom of the Opera, West Side Story and many more.

Tickets £12 from Joan Sparrow (220063) or joansparrow43@gmail.com

Refreshments will be available.

Please come and support this local talent.

NEWS FROM ST ANDREW'S CHURCH

Very recently we have acquired a new gate for Corton Denham cemetery, as the old one was gently disintegrating and has become very difficult to open.



The beautiful new gate was the brainchild of Nigel Young. It was designed, built from old English oak, and installed by Dr Robin Odgers. The cost was covered by the most generous donations from our villagers. We are truly grateful for the generosity of all our friends and for the time, energy and hours spent by Robin gifted to this work.



After three years of applying for a Faculty to clean our church windows, we have finally received the go-ahead at the middle of January.

Our celebrated, rare, stained-glass windows were commissioned from Jeanne-Baptiste Capronnier, from Brussels in the 19th century.

As far as we know they have never been cleaned before.

This cleaning and restoration process has been made possible by the generosity of our congregation and village and our gratitude goes out to each and everyone who contributed to and supported this scheme.

Susanna Thatcher

(Photograph by Lester Solomon)



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CHURCH CALENDAR

4 February

9.30 am Queen Camel All Age Service
10.00 am Corton Denham Morning Service
3.00 pm West Camel Tea @ Three

11 February

9.30 am West Camel BCP Holy Communion
10.00 am Western Bampfylde Morning Prayer
10.00 am Sutton Montis Morning Prayer

14 February

7.00 pm West Camel Holy Communion

18 February

9.30 am Queen Camel BCP Holy Communion
9.30 am Sparkford BCP Holy Communion

25 February

10.00 am Sparkford Together @ Ten

Clergy Details

Rector: Vacant
Benefice Administrator: Kerry Pike
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VILLAGE WEBSITE: WWW.CORTONDENHAM.ORG.UK

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