

ST PETER & ST PAUL

NORTH CURRY'S PARISH CHURCH MAGAZINE

Revd Simon Bale writes his inaugural letter, and looks forward to his chance of getting out and about in the village...

Perhaps now is the time to get out the "posh teapot" for a spruce up, and rehearse those immortal lines...

"More tea, Vicar..?"



We take a look at the church organ. How has it been faring whilst idling away? Plus much more in this issue, as we banish those lockdown woes with a selection of short stories and articles.

FEBRUARY 2021

A MONTH FOR ST VALENTINE AND LOVE...



A FREE PUBLICATION



<^ Images of the organ's internal workings

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For local events, check out the Parish Council website and calendar at
www.northcurry.com

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to become part
of the PCC team.

How about becoming the
editor of this fabulous little
magazine?

Or taking on the treasurer's
role?

Contact

Mary 491434 or David 490234
if you would like to find out
more and become involved
with your local church.

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Announcements/ News in Brief

It is with great sadness, we report the passing of Marion Burt in January. Marion was a much loved member of our community, and was often seen at the Produce Markets fund raising on behalf of the Hospice. Our deepest sympathies to Dave and his family; she will be missed by one and all.

We officially welcome Revd Simon Bale to our village and parish, who will be Licensed on 4th February.

Rachel David, on behalf of the North Curry Community Coffee, sends a huge thank you to everybody who supported the opening of the Christmas Gift Shop which was a great success. People came from many villages surrounding North Curry, appreciative that they could shop locally and support artists and crafters from this area. They look forward to welcoming you back later in the year once the lockdown restrictions end.

North Curry Parish Church, congratulations to our 200 Club Winners
Prizes: First £30, Second £20, Third £10

November

1st Geoffrey Durrant

2nd Sue Cable

3rd Mike Flemming

December

1st Joh Popham

2nd Jenny Satchwell

3rd Ethne Conlon

Xmas Special: Haley Perry

January

1st Ralph Roberts

2nd Brian Moore

3rd Alex Dart

The weekly benefice bulletin (normally available at services) will continue to be produced with the very latest news and also with the appropriate readings for the week. Already about 50 people receive this by email and if you would like to receive a copy, then please email David Walker at davidwalker.northcurry@gmail.com to join.

Given that it is not possible at present to have services or social/ fund raising events, the church income is severely reduced, yet the costs remain (parish share/ insurance/ maintenance etc..). If you would like to join the Planned Giving Programme or adjust your present giving please contact David Akerman(490234).

Currently, no produce markets are planned for the foreseeable future, until Boris and friends give us the green light!

With self isolation and social distancing a government directive, we remind all individuals to wash your hands with soap thoroughly and often. If you are feeling unwell or are highly vulnerable, please stay at home.

Editor's Comments, Rob Ellis writes...

Last year, the Chinese New Year was the Year of New Beginnings.

I was therefore hoping, if not expecting, that this year would be the Year of Returning to the Old Ways. But alas, it is not. It is the Year of the Ox and begins on 12th February. As for a gift for them, well for starters, they can have their COVID19 back...

I was given a face shield, and it made me chuckle (I would cry otherwise), that it was made in China. Not only did they provide the virus, they are selling us solutions for dealing with it. Profiteering?! And yet more plastics for the landfills and oceans!?!

Thus far, it has been another mild winter, with only a couple of days of decent frost to firm up the ground. The paths around the fields have become so chewed with increased foot and paw traffic, that you need the artistic grace of a ballerina not to fall arse over tip. Luckily, my training with the Chinese State Circus meant I was able to pirouette and glide over the slippery boggy surfaces. But on a serious note, I would urge all footpath users to keep to the designated and marked routes, and not to wonder aimlessly over farmland. Not only is it trespassing, you are damaging seedlings and alike, which in turn is reducing a farmer's livelihood; not to mention food stock for the animals.

Late December and early January saw Moor Road closed due to flooding. I am wondering if this will become the norm for every year now. Whilst I was informed that the land between Knapp and Lyng was actually an overflow reservoir to prevent flooding elsewhere along the Tone valley, surely all that building work in Taunton, turning green fields into concrete and housing estates, has only heightened the situation. Instead of the land absorbing the rainfall, and trickling its way to the river, the concrete and gutters are diverting it to the River Tone much quicker and with increased focus than it once would. But maybe it's just me, as I'm no civil engineer...

You may have noticed the advert on the inside covers!?! Would you like to edit this great magazine of ours? Or indeed take on the treasurer's role. Both are up for grabs, and whilst I will continue with the editorship (unless there is a keen soul out there willing to take it on), David Akerman will be stepping down as the interim Treasurer in May. So the church would definitely need your help there. If you are willing and able, why not get involved and help out. You can contact a churchwarden or email me at ncurrymag@gmail.com to find out more.

And lastly, I wish Simon all the very best as our village vicar. We all look forward to seeing him out and about later in the year, and to quote the school children, witnessing his first miracle...

Poinsettia – just for Christmas? By Jennifer Scott

Is this the classic Christmas gift?

A neighbour of ours evidently thought so, the problem being that she just can't get herself to like them – so when she was given another, it came straight to us ...

This was a year ago, i.e. Christmas 2019 ...

Since then I have kept hearing that they last for only a short time, a maximum say of 4 to 6 weeks. Recently again I've read this somewhere, was it maybe in this esteemed publication? Indeed I recall disposing of them regularly in the past after about this length of time.

Now though I know better. With only a minimum of care, which has involved keeping it in the same place all the time, in a corner of the conservatory, and giving it a gentle watering at roughly weekly intervals, it is still with us. And it has turned red for Christmas again as it is meant to. So a good 12 months lifetime so far, and no sign of giving up yet.

Therefore, I now know better than to bin it by Candlemas. And on mentioning this to our church flowers supremo, who was as surprised as me, was recommended to publish this for the benefit of those who do actually like poinsettias!

So the message is – don't bin it – a little bit of care, with a certain amount of benign neglect, may well see it through to next Christmas. And it looks quite presentable in the summer too ...

Anyway here it is, in glorious colour (if editor allows [I would allow, but unfortunately, extra colour costs are a luxury at the moment- web version only in colour]) photographed on Christmas Day 2020, and hoping to be with us for Christmas 2021. We'll probably need all the colour we can get by then.



V is for...

Supposing you put the question "Can you name the day and month of any Saints day?" to many people, I would reckon that their first answer would be "St Valentine's Day, February the 14th." How is it that he is so popular? He wasn't one of the disciples; he was the patron saint of love and epileptics. How does this make him better known than most of the rest?

Valentine was born in the year 226. When he reached adulthood he became a priest in Rome; a rather dangerous job considering the persecutions of Christians at the time. Some accounts list him as a Bishop of Terni, an important town in Italy's Umbria region. In this profession it was usual to be arrested from time to time and so he was. Whilst under the house arrest of Judge Asterus, he discussed his faith with him. The subject arose of the validity of Jesus, so the Judge decided to test Valentine. He brought his adopted blind daughter to him and said that if Valentine restored her sight, then he would do whatever he asked. Valentine, praying to God laid his hands on the child's eyes and her vision returned. The judge asked what he should do, so Valentine told him to break up all the idols around his house, fast for three days, and then undergo a Christian baptism. The judge agreed and he, his family and servants (44 people in total) were baptised. As a result of his fasting and prayer, Asterus then freed all Christians under his control, including Valentine.

However, Valentine could not stop evangelising and a little later he was arrested again. This time, he was taken to the prefect of Rome, Emperor Claudius II. Valentine must have been a charismatic fellow, as the Emperor took a liking to Valentine, until he tried to convince Claudius to convert to Christianity. Claudius indignantly refused and condemned Valentine to death, ordering that he must renounce his faith or be beaten with clubs, and for good measure, beheaded! Valentine refused to renounce anything, so he was taken outside the Flaminian Gates in Rome and executed under Claudius's orders on 14th February 269. One account says that, just before his execution he wrote a note to Asterus's daughter signing it "from your Valentine", which possibly sparked off today's valentine cards.

Since his death, relics of him seem to have been scattered in several places. His skull is in the Basilica of Santa Maria in Rome, other bones are in St Anton's church in Madrid, and a few bits in Whitefriar Street Carmelite Church in Dublin. Other claimed relics can be found in Prague, Chelmno in Poland, Mytlene on Lesbos, Savona, Roqumarie in France, St Stephen's in Vienna, Balzan Malta, Duns Scotus Church in Glasgow and Birmingham Oratory in England. Or so it is claimed!

Despite Valentine being a popular saint, I can find no British church dedicated to him, although there are several on the continent. Perhaps it doesn't matter much, for his name will live on in the minds of his devotees. Especially in February.

Tom Jeanes

North Curry and District Amateur Gardeners

By Heather Williams

Structure, Colour and Scent in the Winter Garden.

So, here we are in February enduring Lockdown No 3.

Time to take stock of your garden in winter. When you look out the window or when you wrap up and wander round,

does it give you pleasure or is it a soggy mess? Is there structure, shape, scented plants and some colour? If not, maybe we can make some suggestions...

The structure of your garden will come from a mixture of shrubs and plants, as well as the hard landscaping. Evergreen shrubs, such as conifers, box and laurel will provide focal points and can also be clipped into different shapes. These always look good when highlighted by frost on a cold day. Then there are the shrubs with colourful stems such as varieties of cornus (dogwood) in reds and yellows or trees with striking bark (varieties of betula (birch), prunus (cherry), acer (maple), or those with an interesting skeleton structure, for example the corkscrew hazel or twisted willow.

It's always worth deciding in autumn whether some perennials can be left uncut over winter especially those that hold their shape and don't collapse. Sedums, sunflowers, echinacea and others will provide upright winter interest in your beds as well as bringing in the birds. Spiky plants and thistles including teasel, echinops, and eryngiums tend to hold their structure brilliantly in the winter.

At the moment what's looking great in my garden are the ornamental grasses. In the summer these grasses add sweeping background to other plants in your garden. But in the winter, these same grasses can take centre stage. Their cream coloured stalks and frothy seed heads look like fountains rising up into the air. Varieties of Miscanthus, Molinia, Pennisetum, Panicum and Stipa hold their seedheads through winter. When positioning grasses try to find a spot where they will be backlit by the setting winter sun, they really

do look spectacular.

Most of the winter garden's brighter colours will come from the berries of shrubs such as hollies, berberis, pyracantha, and other winter-fruiting plants which will add splashes of reds and oranges to your winter garden. But there are shrubs that will provide you with both colour and scent in winter. Winter fragrant flowers can sometimes appear small and insignificant but they have evolved in this way to lure the few pollinating insects around in winter with their scent, which can be exceptionally strong. So what to look for - *Hamamelis* or Witch Hazel. There are lots of varieties in colours ranging through red, orange to yellow.

Viburnum x bodnantense 'Dawn' and 'Charles Lamont'. Small pink flowers, highly scented. Strong growing shrubs that add shape to a border.

Daphne odora 'Aureomarginata' is an evergreen favourite with shiny pointed leaves with narrow gold margins. *Daphne bholua* Jacqueline Postill is highly scented and many feel is the best to plant near a path to appreciate the fragrance.

Edgeworthia chrysantha is an unusual shrub closely related to the daphnes. In late winter silky buds, carried in clusters at the tips of the bare branches, open into sweetly perfumed rich yellow flowers, covered with shining white hairs. Like witch hazel this is a shrub that is best grown in a sheltered situation.

Others to look for include *Chimonanthus praecox* (Wintersweet) as well as winter-flowering honeysuckle. Two great varieties are *Lonicera fragrantissima* and *Lonicera x purpussii*. Both produce delicate creamy-white flowers on bare branches with a pungent perfume.

A final mention for winter scent goes to *Sarcococca* aka Christmas box or Sweet box. *Sarcococca* is a compact, slow growing evergreen shrub that thrives in dense shade. It produces small, creamy-white flowers with a highly intense scent.

We hope (as I write this in January) that the Gardening Club will be able to resume its meeting in September - but who knows. If restrictions ease earlier we may be able to arrange a garden visit or two and some sort of social gathering in the summer. Watch this space and if you are a member look out for our e-mails. If you are not a member but would like to be included on our e-mailing list with a view to joining us later in the year and hearing news of any possible events, contact us at - northcurrygardeningclub@gmail.com

The Revd Simon Bale writes

Hello: To begin with.

I am Revd Simon Bale, the new vicar in the Benefice of Athelney, writing my first of many monthly letters for the magazine. I am actually writing this in the second week of January still trying to make sense of all kinds of things this new year. I am not one to dwell on The New Year but it is impossible not to notice the '21 rather than the '20, and to muse, "new year, eh? I wonder what that will be like... this time." By the time this gets to you, early February, I suspect we'll still be locked down, still in the midst of that infernal virus, and still wondering what happens next.

I am also writing this in Bridgwater where I currently live, waiting to know when I might actually move into the vicarage, and wondering when I might be able to meet people and shake their hands rather than rubbing elbows or asking them to zoom.

So, again, hello-ish.

Here's a bit of background from me. I grew up in Bristol where I lived for fifty-one years until in 2013 when I was ordained and moved to be the curate at St John's, Highbridge and the adjoining parishes of Mark, and East and West Huntspill. I arrived in Bridgwater in 2017 at St Francis of Assisi and am now coming to The Athelney Benefice, with great enthusiasm.

I am married (to Louise) and have two grown sons and an almost two year old granddaughter, who I have not seen anywhere near enough of since she was one year old two days before the first lock down began. There's a lot more to me than those 'facts', of course, but I am looking forward to meeting you and sharing each of our stories in real life.

At the moment I am like a dog with two tails. Being appointed to be your new vicar is extremely exciting and I cannot wait to begin my new role; Louise and I are also very keen to take up residence in the vicarage. But, of course, the pandemic is making all that a bit less straightforward than we'd have hoped. To begin with, following my licensing (a Zoom affair on 4th February), I will be commuting to the benefice each day to work out of the office in Stoke St Gregory. My intention is to be visible but abide by the lockdown regulations. So, if you see an overweight, out of condition old geezer in a mask on a bike: please give me a wide berth (I'm driving to the benefice, by the way: I'm way too unfit to cycle here and back!)

For now, I pray that our current challenges will be reduced, that we can care for those who struggle with the isolation, and that the future will reveal all kinds of new blessings for us all. Amen.

Letter from
John Davies,
Dean of Wells

What does love require?

Having heard the announcement about the latest lockdown, I walked over to the Cathedral. I sat at the back and looked up at the Cross in the Nave. A question welled up as I sat: 'what does love require in the cold climate of Covid?', with empty streets, people shut in, schools and businesses closed.

Like many clergy I have a list of people to lift with a phone call or email. Everyone can of course ring neighbours and friends and family. And offer a word, distanced, in the street; a wave to a window; a card through a letterbox.

My neighbour is those I know and care for. But Christ teaches that my neighbour is also on the streets, needy and destitute. Food banks and charities need urgent assistance in a cold climate where indifference is not unknown.

It might be quite simple: shopping, love taking us to the supermarket. It might be conversation: love says listen as they pour it all out. It might be a bit more complicated. My neighbour might be disabled – is practical help needed? My neighbour might be held as a slave at a car wash. How do I discreetly ask? When do I alert the Clewer initiative? My neighbour may be gay, does love ask me to affirm or keep a distance? My neighbours may be black. How do I show my belief that black lives really matter?

Love can be very active in the cold climate of today. But love needs replenishing. Love becomes brittle and bossy if it is given but not received. Love means that I must be open to others, for they may want to love me and be a neighbour to me by loving me.

God is love, so in the cold climate of Covid, when community is weakened, let us give and receive love. And the coldness will vanish because love has come to stay.

John Davies
Dean of Wells

Also appearing in the Diocese publication for February, was an interview article with the Chaplain at Musgrove which may be of some interest... Read more about Julia and hospital chaplaincy during Covid at www.bathwells.anglican.org/hospital-chaplain

Going where we are called

Julia French, Lead Chaplain and Head of Spiritual Care at Musgrove Park Hospital Trust, shares an insight into hospital chaplaincy during Covid.

How has Covid affected chaplaincy in your hospitals?

With our 50 or so volunteers not allowed in, our chaplains went from working office hours plus Sunday mornings to covering twelve-hour days, seven days a week. Overnight on-call was stopped to ensure we all got some uninterrupted sleep.

Visiting is restricted so we support relatives by facilitating phone and video calls. We still try and visit every ward each week and those patients referred to us by staff, family, friends or church communities within 24 hours. Some patients who need a high degree of support we see every day.

Do you visit patients with Covid or is it too risky?

Yes, wearing appropriate PPE which for patients on ventilators means surgical gowns, gloves, FFP3 masks and goggles. We are grateful PPE is available and we are allowed in to see these patients, but it does increase the length of every visit very significantly. To a degree yes it is risky, but we go where we are called.

Do you have a message for those with loved ones in hospital?

Be assured that ward staff are still very much caring for their patients as individuals. Although it is a difficult environment to work in, even more so now than in the first wave, everyone is still focused on putting the patient first.

If someone wishes one of the chaplaincy team to visit a patient at Musgrove, how do they get in touch?

Telephone 01823 342515 (there is an answerphone which is checked several times a day)

E-Mail Chaplains.Acute@Somersetft.nhs.uk

The Athelney Benefice – Service Rota February 2021

Currently, all services are suspended until further notice.

Although Government regulations still permit communal worship, we feel with the continuing health emergency it is the right and responsible decision to have closed the parish church and suspend services for the time being. The church grounds remain accessible each day for quiet and respectful reflection. The Revd Dr Simon Bale, your new Parish Priest, will be licensed on Zoom by the Bishop of Taunton on 4th February, after which he will take up leadership of the four “Athelney Benefice” parishes of North Curry, Stoke St Gregory, Burrowbridge and Lyng. He can then be reached by email on athelneyvicar@gmail.com. Wedding, funeral and other enquiries can be sent to him or the churchwardens.

We thank Mary Piers and David Akerman, visiting ministers and many others in the Church and Community for keeping the Church functioning and maintaining some form of normality during the Vacancy, and especially during the Coronavirus pandemic.

News from North Curry/ Curland Methodists, by Daphne Gilham

Revd Deborah Kirk, Methodist Minister 01823 334854/ deborah.m.kirk@googlemail.com

What feels like back in the mists of time, but in reality, only 2 months ago, the congregation of North Curry/Curland Methodists were able to worship at their Annual Carol Service.

The chapel was beautifully decorated, with floral arrangements on the window sills, candles, the Advent ring and the Christmas tree, all thanks to Christine Poulson.

Mrs Elaine Dew led the service which was attended by 14 stalwarts.

Well known hymns including ‘While Shepherds watched their flocks by night’ and ‘Hark the Herald Angels sing’ were played on the organ by Andrew Goodwin while the congregation ‘sang’ silently into their face masks. Andrew also provided suitable appropriate music.

As with all places of worship, the church is now closed again during the pandemic regulations. The congregation is ‘worshipping’ at home and /or tuning in to the services online which are proving invaluable to all ‘locked ins’.

Meanwhile, North Curry/Curland Methodist friends wish everybody a peaceful and healthy 2021.

The Church Organ

Did you know that our church holds a rare pipe organ?

All too often, the church organ is overlooked by its bigger and louder neighbour, the bells. But without the organ, hymns and alike would not be the same, and playing it is becoming a past art.

This month, I asked Helen Griffiths for her insight on playing the church organ, plus reminding us all of its history and importance.

She begins, "It is actually a great privilege to be allowed to take charge of this medium-size monster on a regular basis (as you will remember, Trevor Astin played every week for many years and we have not found anyone as skilled as he was to succeed him – apart from Patrick on the first Sunday of each month.)

It is only a medium-size monster because it has only 2 manuals (keyboards) and a limited number of stops and couplers (of which more later). Cathedral organs regularly have four manuals. The manuals are called Swell (the upper one) and Great (lower). The stops are the knobs on the right and left of the keyboards – each labelled in beautiful italic writing – principal, open diapason, stopped diapason and so on. The stops determine the quality – and to some extent the volume- of the sound of the notes. There is also a foot pedal – the swell pedal – which increases or decreases the volume.

Like many church organists, I started off as a pianist: it was only when the organist in my father's church thoughtlessly moved house that I was told that I had to step up to the mark (at the age of 16) and play for all services every week as well as all the weddings and funerals.

After this baptism of fire, I went up to Oxford not intending to play the organ but was co-opted very early on to play for services in chapel. I took over from the retiring organists on a "temporary" basis in the various villages where we lived over the last 40 years until we came to Somerset – where I tried hard to conceal my experience – without much success, obviously.

This is a rather roundabout way of approaching the matter but explains why my pedal technique is so splashy (technical term)!

The North Curry organ has a tracker-action mechanism – which means that when keys are pressed down, the action physically opens a series of levers to let air into the pipes to play the required note or notes (this is true of most old organs). This makes playing pretty hard work! It is even harder work if the manuals (that is, the keyboards) are coupled – this is done by pulling out the

stop which says "Coupler – swell to great". When this is done, then the notes are played on both manuals and this changes both the volume and the quality of the notes. There is also a coupler for the pedals which means that the pedal notes sound at the same time as the notes on the Great manual.

The volume and tone of the sound are dictated by the stop or stops pulled out beforehand. Some of the stops are a bit old and tired and produce strange squeaks and whistles not intended by the makers back in the Victorian era, when the original organ was installed. In addition, plaster occasionally falls off the wall behind the organ and falls into the works, which does not do the sound any good... [sounds like a fund raiser for 2022!]

The organ dates from 1922 in its present form – when it was bought secondhand from Sandringham - and was last given a major overhaul in 1987, so it is performing pretty well all things being considered. It has also survived being moved first from under the Gallery below the West Window into the St Michael Chapel and then from the St Michael Chapel into its present position. It is quite tricky to judge the volume at which hymns should be played, given the distance from the organ to the congregation- if it is too soft, the congregation grumbles that it is inaudible – though if the organ is played too loudly, the poor choir is deafened...

Next time we are allowed into church for services, please do come up after the service and have a try - you might enjoy it enough to start playing yourself!"

Unfortunately, many churches have replaced these fine instruments with modern electric variants. Those still working have been modernised so that their inner workings are also electronic although they retain the pipes. Ours is still worked in the original way, by slats of wood, wires and string, and is a masterful piece of engineering.

As Helen has stated, the sound is produced from a huge number of whistles and pipes. Air is blown into them from the bellows in the Vestry. The organist chooses which pipes should sound by pulling out the 'stops' either side of the keyboard. Each pipe makes a different sound, some very soft and gentle, some very loud indeed. Some even mimic the sound of other instruments. When the organ is tuned (twice a year), the tuner has to actually get inside the organ to make adjustments to the pipes that are not quite right. Tuning is quite the challenge, as the scaffold tower needs erecting beforehand. A few of the heavy pipes are removed to allow access in and behind.



The pipes are part of the original organ that was put in the musician's gallery that was high up at the back of the church where the West Window is now. It replaced the Village Musicians who had led the music of the service until then. When the window was put in, during Queen Victoria's reign, the organ was moved to its current position.

I hope this article has struck the right note (ho ho) between being too technical and alike, and will give you the chord of encouragement to find out more once the church re-opens. Perhaps 2021 could be the year you learn to play the church organ...

More on the organ can be found in the history book in the church (when it opens again!), written by Angela Dix. I thank Helen for her contribution and insight.

Katie had decided in this lockdown, she would clean and disinfect the house from top to bottom...

Tiddle the kitten was not impressed with this idea...

8			7	1	5			4
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			8		7			
	5			4				9
6		9	5		3	4		2
		4	9		2	5		
5			1	6	4			9



Churchwardens' Report

This year seems to be starting as the last one ended. Dreaded Covid!

With great reluctance the churchwardens decided to close the church and suspend services until further notice. Sadly, with Covid cases in the parish we had to balance the desire to keep the church open with the safety of church users, most of whom are in the vulnerable age group.

Certainly not what we wanted but safety and common sense must prevail.

It is heartening to hear that already a good number of people in the Village have had their vaccinations.

The Revd Simon Bale will be Licensed on 4th February. Under present circumstances this must be by ZOOM.

If you would like to join please contact one of the Churchwardens. It is likely to be at 7pm on Thursday 4th February but details are still to be confirmed. Simon is hoping to stream Services from our Churches as soon as possible.

Simon's wife Louise, will be Ordained at Wells Cathedral on 26th June and we plan to hire a coach to take supporters over for this special occasion.

Who knows when restrictions will be lifted, but something to look forward to God willing, is a Concert in the Church on 3rd July, to be given by Ben Griffiths [Helen's son] and members of the Aurora Orchestra.

On 4th July, we will celebrate our Patronal Festival. More details nearer the time but we hope for the return of some form of normality by then. If you know of anyone who needs help (within the limits of Covid restrictions) then please let us know.

Meanwhile keep safe and look forward to Spring.

Mary Piers 491434

David Akerman 490234

The North Curry Parish Church 200 Club always has room for one more!
Players must be 18yrs+ to join. Only **£18 per year (£1.50/month)**

Prizes each month £30/ £20/ £10

Plus a special Christmas bonus draw of £60

Proceeds for churchyard maintenance

To sign up, contact Sue Bethune on 01823 490179

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The Four Wise Men, by Zillah Sykes.

The dawn of a new year brings with it hopeful expectations of a brighter future. Christmas memories have faded with the dismantling of the Christmas tree and the finishing of the festive food, yet the Church continues to celebrate as wise men from the East move majestically into view and once more draw our attention to the young child, Jesus.

And who were these Wise Men, or Magi, and how is it that they set out on their journey to find Him? The gospel account tells us little about them, but they were probably from Persia and dignitaries in the courts of their king, men of wealth and great learning. In studying the heavens they were captivated by the rising of a brightly shining star and, in searching for its meaning they came upon prophecies in the Jewish scriptures that foretold the birth of a great and glorious king. Compelled to search for Him, regardless of personal cost, they set out on a journey that proved to be long and arduous. It took them across inhospitable deserts, over rough mountain terrain and through deeply flowing rivers until eventually they reached Jerusalem and the palace of King Herod. They did not find their king there. Looking up to the heavens, they were overjoyed to see the star, once again shining brightly above them and they followed its guiding light to Bethlehem, where it stopped and rested over the home of the young child, Jesus. There, in that humble place, they knelt in worship and offered Him their precious gifts of gold, incense and myrrh, that were worthy of His majesty.

Then, satisfied that their quest was over, they set off for home. They had found the King.

This story is taken from Matthew's gospel, chapter two, but there is another wise man whose story is not found in the scriptures. "The Story of the Fourth Wise Man" was written by Henry Van Dyke in 1895. Here is a retelling of that story as told to us by Revd Jane Sutton on Epiphany Sunday.

Continuing in the theme..

The Fourth Wise Man, by Revd Dr Jane Sutton

Did you know that there was a fourth Wise Man? His name was Artaban. And his gifts were three jewels of matchless beauty, a sapphire, a ruby and a pearl. He had arranged to meet up with the other Magi to follow the star in search of the new born King of the Jews. Now before he reached them, he came upon a poor old man

who lay in his path, very near to death. Artaban, who was a skilled physician, knew he could save the old man's life if he took care of him, but he also knew that he would miss his companions if he did so. His tender heart did not let him pass by and for many hours he laboured to help the stranger.

When he finally reached their meeting place, the Three Wise Men had indeed departed without Artaban. He decided he must sell a sapphire to buy a train of camels and provisions to cross the desert.

He reached Bethlehem safely, but to his despair he was too late. The Magi had left after seeing the Christ child and a young woman who was cradling her own baby son in her arms told him that Joseph of Nazareth had taken the child and his mother and fled away secretly in the night. While they were talking, suddenly there came a noise of a wild confusion in the streets and a cry: "The soldiers! The soldiers of Herod! They are killing the children". In terror the young woman fled into her house. Artaban managed to persuade the soldiers' commander to move on without searching the house, by offering him the ruby.

After that, Artaban travelled from country to country searching for the King. In all this world of anguish, though he found none to worship, he found many to help. He fed the hungry, clothed the naked, healed the sick and comforted the captive. After 33 years, old and weary, he came once again to Jerusalem, where he found a crowd in great uproar, they told him: "Today they are crucifying Jesus of Nazareth, who says he is the Son of God and the King of the Jews!" His heart stood still. "Have I come in time to offer my pearl in ransom for the King's life?", he asked himself.

At that moment a girl broke loose from some soldiers and threw herself at his feet begging him for help. She was to be sold as a slave. He took the pearl from his pocket and laid it in the girl's hand. "This is your ransom", he said, "It is the last of my treasures that I kept for the King". While he spoke, a shuddering earthquake rocked the city and the sky grew dark. Artaban fell, and it seemed to him as if he heard a quiet voice telling him "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me". A calm radiance of joy lit up his pale face. One long last breath of relief gently parted his lips. His journey was ended. His treasures were accepted.

Artaban had found the King.

Have you found the king?

Quilt raffle for the Church Bells Appeal

Tickets £1 each, available from the Post Office or directly through Elaine Moll (elaine.moll@lewtec.co.uk)

The Prize Draw will take place at the end of May.



A handmade patchwork quilt is being raffled in aid of the church bells appeal. The colourful quilt, made by North Curry quilters, was recently on display in the village shop window.

The fundraiser started 18 months ago after the bells fell silent and the church announced the bell tower needed urgent repairs. It followed the quilters' 30th anniversary exhibition held in the church which attracted hundreds of visitors who made donations towards the appeal.

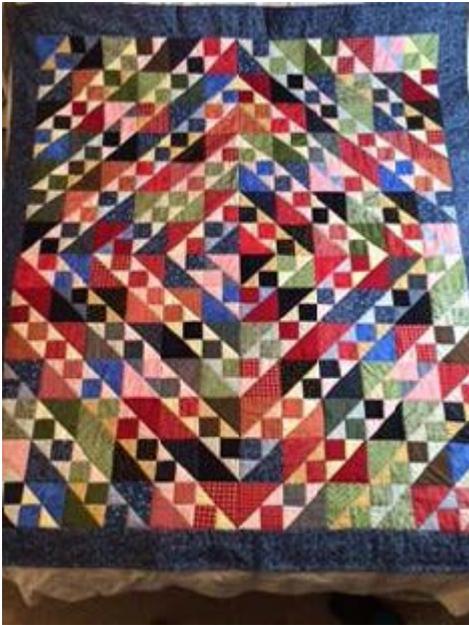
The group decided to build on the exhibition's success by using some of the money raised to purchase materials for a new fund-raising project.

Members settled on a popular and an attractive design for a quilt which can be used on a double bed or as a throw. The design is a variation of a traditional scrap ladder quilt and is based on a four patch block. Quilter Sue Morkane added: "There is nothing 'scrap' about the quilt, however. Its success lies in the careful choice of value proportions. The effect is to make it seem modern and timeless, colourful and yet elegant. The entire quilt is made

by hand, with the quilting done by the 'in the ditch' method, making each of the geometric shapes stand out."

The quilters are an informal group of 12 friends who have been meeting in each other's homes fortnightly to quilt and chat; now they Zoom!

Over the years they have made a number of charity quilts, the most recent of which raised £1,000 for the RNLI, as well as personal quilts to mark family occasions including births and weddings.



The quilt is the first prize in the raffle; in addition there will be a hamper of local produce.



Tickets cost £1 each and the raffle will be drawn at the end of May. Tickets can be purchased from now until the end of May, from either the Post Office (by kind permission of Alison and Noel Prosser) or from Elaine Moll.



The committee are delighted to welcome Colin Trim back to the village, and look forward to his joining the Society.

We were perhaps optimistic in expecting our 2021 talks programme to resume in March, but will be back "soon" with our investigations of local and natural history in and around North Curry.

A Trip Down North Curry's Memory Lane...

We hope to bring a series of articles from long standing residents of the village, with their insight and memories of North Curry from the yester years... To kick us off, Anne Totterdell has kindly written the following...

Some memories from North Curry from 60 years ago!

We moved into North Curry in the summer of 1959, into a village and way of life which was in many ways very different to the North Curry of 2021.

Our cottage cost £2,100 (no, I haven't got the noughts mixed up!), Clarke's Hill, was half of a seventeenth century farmhouse which had originally been the Home Farm for what is now Manor Farm. Because of the age of the property (rather than its size and importance), we had to contribute annually to an ancient charity, the Reeves Feast, which supported the poor of the Parish. There was a certain irony here! Much more rural than it has become, the cottage was set in a large orchard, and was surrounded by fields. There was no Canterbury Drive, no Overlands - only fields and farmlands which were the childhood playgrounds for my four children.

A very big difference was the number of shops and pubs. We had three popular and well supported pubs; The Angel, The Bird in Hand and the White Hart. Shops included two general stores, London House Stores and the Post Office stores, Brownseys, which was a haberdashers with a hairdressers upstairs, Betty Koppa's woolshop, John Webb's hardware shop, a butchers (Charlie Duddridge was well known for his friendliness and for giving free bananas to all the children who entered his shop), shoe repairers, and of course there was the incomparable Hutchings, the newsagents where you could buy almost anything. This was before supermarkets had taken off for shopping; you did not really need to leave the village!

Our milk and bread were delivered to the door. 61 years later my milk (in bottles) is still delivered to the door.

Shopping itself was a very different experience and a great opportunity for meeting people. During the sixties, most mothers looked after their under fives at home. Playgroup/ nursery provision had not yet got under way, and when it did it was initially looked as a way to help children to socialise once or twice a week before starting school, and not as a provision of full time child care so that mothers could return to work.

This meant that the village was full of prams and small children and that shopping was a frequent opportunity for social contact - and how useful our big prams were for bringing that shopping home!

Though there were no playgrounds as such until the late sixties, the roads were much quieter and children had the freedom to wander. My own four children regard their childhood in North Curry in the sixties and seventies as having been idyllic!

If you have a favourite memory or view of North Curry from the ages, we and our readers would love to hear from you. Please email Rob Ellis at ncurrymag@gmail.com. As a guide, 400 words covers a page, but can be as long or short as you wish.

Anne's tale of how the village was is probably very similar to most villages up and down the country of any size. I grew up in the village of Mayfield, in East Sussex. It was maybe a bit bigger than North Curry, and at one stage, could boast having 7 pubs, 2 banks, a railway and petrol station amongst its facilities. I just about got the chance to sample all pubs before they closed, but the station had long gone before then. The railway line was converted to a by-pass. With only 2 pubs remaining, a village pub crawl would never be the same again... It's also no surprise the banks and petrol station are closed too.

But supermarkets cannot be held responsible for the closure of so many small stores. The reason is us the consumer. If we had not found the supermarket so convenient, then they would not have grown into what they have today. In essence, consumerism drives commerce... the basic capitalist virtue of supply and demand. Without the demand, the supply will go...

Perhaps the recent lockdowns have shown the true value of the local friendly shop; our ever ready reliant in a turmoil world, that we should cherish and support in all times. We continue to thank our local village store for their super hero efforts during the lockdown restrictions.

Can't stop now, I've a fence to finish...

Back in the good ole days, you remember them, when you could hug and sing in public, a project was started at the church. In January 2019, Tom with his gofer Rob, begun the job of replacing the rusting chainlink fence around the extended graveyard. Whilst the north side was completed in a month, the ailing fence of the east side would have to wait...

But wait no more, for in January 2021, the dynamic duo set about righting that wrong. Perhaps not with the same gusto as say Dangermouse and Penfold, but all the same, the pair worked tirelessly (not even stopping for a tea break - as we forgot the flask) to complete the errant project. I wonder if Gal Gadot will be available for the official unveiling ceremony! Exclusive photos to come in the next issue...

2022 Calendar Competition.

After the success of the 2021 calendar, we have decided to run the competition again this year – it's your own fault for all being so super talented and artistic!

The competition for selection is open to all amateur photographers who live in the parish, and as before, the subject is to be the parish month by month – places, events, and so on; family photos are not required.

The aim is to create a calendar with relevant pictures for each month of the year, so don't hesitate to submit winter pictures!

Each photo **MUST** be LANDSCAPE in orientation (like the image to the right) to be considered, and bearing in mind will be A4 size once published, must be of a high definition quality.



The name and address of the photographer, together with the picture title, location, and month must be identified for each photograph, and the photographer must declare that they hold the copyright.

So to recap, entries are to be submitted to the editor of the parish magazine in digital format in high resolution JPEG files, in landscape format, at not less than 200 dpi, and sent to **ncurrymag@gmail.com with an email covering** the instructions in the paragraph above.

The closing date for entries is 31st August 2021.

No fees will be paid to the entrants, and the proceeds of the sale of the calendar are to benefit the parish church.

Selection will be made by a panel of judges, appointed by the PCC; the criteria will be the merit of the photograph and its suitability for the calendar. The judges' decision is final.

We look forward to seeing your creative pictures.

However, portrait orientated pictures might be used for the front cover of the magazine. So if you have a stunning portrait picture that you wish to share with the village, send it to the editor for consideration.

As you probably know, North Curry Film Club had to postpone film showings last March due to the lock-down. We hope to resume in March 2021. In the meantime, here is an article that may be of interest:

Happy 60th birthday PJ

Have you done some 'binge' film/TV watching whilst on lockdown this winter? For us it was the three *Lord of the Rings* films, directed by "PJ" – Peter Jackson's actual nickname. We wanted the escape given by this immersive fantasy world. We enjoyed the films immensely and they delivered nearly 9½ hours of escapism! So, by way of thanks, I would like to celebrate this amazing director, who will be 60 later this year.



Jackson, as you might guess from the stunning landscapes filmed in *The Lord of the Rings*, was born in New Zealand. His interest in films started early. He was given a Super-8 film camera and, aged 9, filmed a version of his favourite film *King Kong* (the original 1933 version). His first feature film was *Bad Taste* (1987), a 'splatter' sci-fi comedy. 'Splatter' films delight in showing as much gore as possible. Like me, you might have (deliberately) missed this



masterpiece even though it was shown at the Cannes Film Festival and distributed around the world. His first big budget film was *The Frighteners* (1996), starring Michael J Fox. This comedy/horror film was a box office failure. So far, not so good. However, a little later in October 1999, Jackson started filming *The Lord of the Rings* and you will know how successful these films have been - *The Return of the King* won 11 Oscars. This success

enabled Jackson to pursue his childhood dream to remake *King Kong* (2005) with the benefits of modern technology. Jackson, like some other directors such as Alfred Hitchcock, always has a small cameo role in his films. In *King Kong*, he is a gunner at the back of a bi-plane shooting at Kong on top of the Empire State Building. Next came *The Hobbit* series of films, though initially Jackson was not going to direct them. It was meant to be Guillermo del Toro (also well known for fantasy films with a lot of special effects such as *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006) and *The Shape of Water* (2017)). However, del Toro dropped out and Jackson took the helm. More recently, Jackson put his knowledge of visual wizardry to amazing effect in the documentary *They shall not grow old* (2018) made for the centenary of the end of World War I. Old black and white footage of World War I was transformed, made sharper and coloured. Lip readers were able to dub what the soldiers were saying. As film critic Peter Bradshaw said "The effect is electrifying. The soldiers are returned to an eerie, hyper-real kind of life in front of our eyes".

What can we look forward to from this talented director?

There is a re-make of the film *The Dam Busters* planned and another documentary called *The Beatles: Get Back*. In this film, he will be using some of the same techniques to update original footage of the Beatles.

Don Hoyle (in a personal capacity – these views are not necessarily those of the Film Club).

Tea Break

I walked by a farm and read a sign that said, "Duck, Eggs".
I thought, "That's an unnecessary comma."
And then it hit me.

If anyone's got an idea how to fix my terrible
condensation problem then please pop round.
The kettle's always on.

If a pig loses its voice, is it disgruntled?

When George gave Mildred an Italian flea,
it wasn't her idea of something Roman-tic for
St Valentines...



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Valentine's Day Word Search

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j s w e e t h e a r t
e f p a c u p i d a e
v h o i k a c p s r t
a o g u y h e a r t s
l o v e r r d e g o f
e k r a p t r r o w r
n r i r o s e s p x i
t o h s d r d e i r e
i s u h s p i n n h n
n r g a r e l l k t d
e o s c h o s r o s h
s w e e r t s f r i e
v c h o c o l a t e k

valentine
arrow
cupid
hearts
love

red
fourteenth
hugs
chocolate
pink

roses
friend
flowers
sweetheart
kisses

North Curry Church

Is part of the Benefice of Athelney, along with the parishes of Stoke St. Gregory, Lyng and Burrowbridge – the Parish Church is frequently referred to as 'The Cathedral of the Moors', and from the River Tone valley it is easy to understand why. It was built on a site of an earlier Norman church in about 1300 in the Decorated style, using Ham Hill stone, blue lias stone, and some grey sandstone from a quarry within the parish.

About a hundred years later it was updated in the Perpendicular style when the roofs of the nave and aisles were raised to accommodate larger windows.

Evidences of the original pitches can be seen both outside on the south and east faces of the tower, and inside on its west arch. At this time the upper stage of the tower and the parapets were added, as was the interesting collection of gargoyles and hunkypunks.

The North Curry Parish Registers of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials date from 1539 and are almost complete.

The churchyard, just over two acres, is in two parts, with the lower 'new' part has been in use since 1952. The upper 'old' part has gravestones that are centuries old, and includes war memorials. A plan of the graves, complete with the names of the occupants, can be found in the church porch. This is a place of solace and tranquillity, with seating on the north (far) side affording magnificent views across the River Tone to yonder hills in all directions. In springtime, the natural beauty is never more apparent, when the flora carpets amongst the headstones and trees.

Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals

If you are interested in getting married, having a church blessing for a civil marriage or organising a baptism or funeral please contact one of the churchwardens.

The statutory fees are set by the Church of England and a fee list is displayed in the church porch, or is available online from www.churchofengland.org.

Additional local fees may be due in accordance with the services required. At the time of your enquiry, all fee options will be explained.

There are also regulations governing the condition of the churchyard and graves, designed to ensure it remains a special peaceful place.

Will Planning and Legacies

Having a Will in place, for when the time comes, is strongly recommended for all individuals, to ensure your final wishes are clearly laid out to friends and family.

Planned Giving and Donations

Planned Giving, by standing order, is a regular charitable payment (or pledge) to the church. This type of giving is an important and integral aspect of our finances, as the majority of our income comes through the planned giving scheme.

Donation pledges by standing order are easier to administer, both for you and us. Regular planned giving can also attract tax gift aid, enabling us to boost your donation by 25%. Donations can be given monthly, quarterly, or yearly, and the amount is very much up to you. You are not beholden once started, and can be cancelled at anytime. Please contact our Treasurer for the appropriate forms to complete, or to discuss your giving pledge. Standing order mandates are not the same as direct debit mandates. The amounts and dates are fixed, and the instruction to your bank is completely controlled by you.

One off donations can be made anytime – cheques payable to North Curry PCC, and can be mailed to the Church address – see inside back page for details.
BACS to North Curry PCC – Account No: 00514650, Sort Code: 30-98-45

Commonwealth War Graves

Private Harry Udell Gannett, Devonshire Regiment died 13th January 1919
Private Charles William Stodgell, Devonshire Regiment died 2nd February 1919
Second Lieutenant Peter John Carr , Royal Artillery died 11th October 1941
Sgt John Bernard Hebditch, Royal Airforce Volunteer Res. died 1st December 1943
Information taken from the War Graves Commission website

Register of:

Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals (August 2020 – January 2021)

We ask for God's Blessing on all the following

Baptisms

None

Weddings

Stephen Ball/ Felicity Colston-Lane August

Funerals

Margaret Hayhoe August

CHURCH OPENING & CLOSING ROTA

Due to lockdown protocols, the Church is closed. Accordingly, there is no rota to publish!

However, if you would like to join the rota for when things get back to "normal", please contact Mary Piers.

Churchwardens /officers numbers see inside back page

And finally for your amusement...

There was a young man from North Curry,
Who fell on his face in the slurry.
His girlfriend just laughed
And said "You look daft,
I'll not kiss those lips in a hurry ". *by Sally Whittet*

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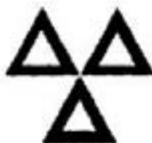
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Little Angels/ Electoral Roll	Jenny Satchwell	01823 490463
Choir	Jean Smith	01823 490961
PCC 200 Club	Sue Bethune	01823 490179

PCC (Parochial Church Council) Address, for general correspondences
St Peter and St Paul Church, Church Road, North Curry, Somerset. TA3 6LJ
(Post box by kissing gate, at vicar's parking area)

The church website is www.northcurrychurch.co.uk

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Magazine Distribution	Jenny Satchwell	01823 490463
	or Paul Scott	01823 490679

General enquiries - email: ncurrymag@gmail.com

Other useful numbers for North Curry

Coffee Shop	01823 491414	
Little Herons	01823 490423	www.northcurryschool.co.uk/little-herons-pre-school/
Methodist Minister	01823 334854	Revd Deborah Kirk
Parish Council Offices	01823 490136	www.northcurry.com
Post Office/ Stores	01823 490261	
Primary School	01823 490423	www.northcurryschool.co.uk
Surgery	01823 490505	www.northcurryhealthcentre.co.uk

Community Police officers:

Tony Wearmouth 07885 655312 tony.wearmouth@avonandsomerset.police.uk

Steve Chapman 07889 655196 steve.chapman@avonandsomerset.police.uk

P T Electrical



Domestic • Industrial • Commercial

Paul Turner

Bradstones, Stoke Rd,
North Curry,
Taunton, TA3 6LR
Somerset

Tel: 01823 490410
Mobile: 07773778225
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