



Parish Pumpings

Welcome to our first edition for the new *decade*, and we pledge to continue keeping our Pumphlets topical, relevant and usefully informing you about our wonderful community. Your feedback is always welcome as we intend to evolve and adapt, reflecting the way the community wishes.

This edition, as promised, we are again reprinting a hard paper copy to every household in the Village, although many of you also receive it by email. This is to give everyone who may not have a computer or wish to use email, to once again opt to receive a paper copy. If you are not on the Village Hall Mailing List, just email me at localfuel@gmail.com or phone 656489 giving your consent to receive communications from us, including Pumpings and we will be delighted to add you to the list. Anyone wanting a paper copy instead will then receive a copy every time, delivered to your door. You can opt out at any time.

Questionnaire

We are delivering several items to you this month. Rest assured that this amount though, is a one off! We do need you to tell us what you think about the Village Hall refurbishment and every returned questionnaire will help us with our efforts to secure funding by showing that our community are interested and supportive. Please make time to fill it in if you can. Thank you.

Robert Hardy.

Last month, we included a lovely tribute to Bill Pumphrey, written by Maggie, and this month, I am delighted to share with you another, written mainly by Penny, about her husband, Robert Hardy, another fine stalwart of Bicknoller in past years. It is the efforts of folk like Robert and Bill that have helped make Bicknoller the active caring community it is today. Thank you for allowing me to share these memories, Penny.

Robert Hardys' connection with Bicknoller began in 1975 when he and Penny bought Dorcas Cottage. Term time was spent at Eton College where he was a housemaster, but the family would come down to Dorcas every holiday. When he moved to Milton Abbey in Dorset, Dorcas was let for a few years as the children wanted to live at Milton Abbey.

On retirement as headmaster of Milton Abbey in 1995, Hillcroft Cottage was then bought by Robert and Penny. Although, quite early on, Roberts health sadly deteriorated after retiring, he nevertheless served in the Shop and was a volunteer driver for Bicklifts. He chaired the Village Hall Committee for nearly 20 years, probably an all time record, and Rose Fish has fond memories of those years, when she herself was on the same Committee.

When Robert was no longer able to walk up Bicknoller Combe, he could be seen walking his regular triangle of the village. Having been a very good cricketer himself, he was a keen supporter of Somerset, and latterly spent a lot of his time watching cricket and golf on television

Penny has very generously shared with me a lot more information about Robert but has also said that she feels the village may be more interested in their time at Bicknoller, However, I find myself drawn to know more about people whom we have come to know, over the past years, increasingly realising that Lucy and I are privileged to live alongside some hugely talented and interesting people with often distinguished careers. I have therefore decided to share a little of this with you. Robert was clearly a Classics scholar, having taught Latin, Greek and Ancient History at Eton for 31 years, and his pastoral and teaching commitment clearly renowned and hugely respected. The wonderful family eulogy lovingly shares his great love and knowledge of literature and fine arts. In addition to being a very good cricketer, golfer and fisherman, Robert and Penny enjoyed many years of contentment and deep family love. This is expressed most notably for me with the delightful family story about the Penquin Tree halfway up Bicknoller Combe. (To learn more of this, please ask Penny!)

Forthcoming Events.

Two local Community Events not to miss this month!

Firstly, after such a wonderful effort last year, Michele and the Panto team are now hard at it, rehearsing, producing scenery etc in readiness for their next production to be presented this year on **28th – 29th February** at the Village Hall.

Michele writes....

It's Panto time!!

Oh yes it is! This year's production is titled

"Bickinson Crusoe and His Cat"

with many of last year's stars making a welcome return. There is a hysterical dame (guess who?) a dashing hero rushing to the aid of a princess, a suitably evil "baddie" and a bit of typecasting. There will also be a few surprises! The pantomime will be on 28th and 29th February with two evening and one matinee performance at 7.30pm and 2.30pm

Tickets are available from David Croxton, 656489 Dave Simpson 656266 and Bicknoller Village Shop 656172

Secondly, we will be delighted to welcome you on **Friday 14th February** at 7.30 p.m. for an evening

Dinner Dance with live music provided by Ali and the Swing Cats.

Sumptuous 2 course Buffet Supper, and free glass of bubbly on arrival.

There is a Licensed Bar and dancing till late.

Cost/Head £20.00 Tickets available from Bicknoller Shop 656172 or phone Kim Martin on 07437 016107

Simples Lunches

The next Simples Lunch will be held on **Tuesday 11 February at 12 noon** in aid of **Bicknoller Social Club**, in the Village Hall, as usual.

The Simples Lunch for March will be on **Tuesday 10th March at 12 noon** in aid of **Bicknoller Village Hall**.

Lunch will be soup, cheese and biscuits, and a pudding.

Bicknoller Social Club

Bicknoller Social Club is pleased to welcome **Claire of Claires Kitchen**, who will present **'From farm to fork'** on **Wednesday 19th February at 2.30 p.m.** In Bicknoller Village Hall.

Bicknoller Village Hall

Enclosed with this Pumpings is a Questionnaire inviting your thoughts about the the Village Hall and the planned refurbishments. Your opinion and ideas are needed asnd welcome and we are very grateful for the comments and feedback received so far. Please support your Community Village Hall by sharing your views with us.

Local History.

The St John Couch Tapes

I am pleased to now reproduce Part 3 from Mary Ter Braaks excerpts from the St John Couch Tapes.

“Further on up Dashwoods Lane you come to the cottage now known as Combe Cottage, an inappropriate and misleading name given to it in 1930. During the whole of the last century it belonged to the Thorne family. It was originally two dwellings of which the lower one was the post office. The Thornes let the property on a long lease to Jenny’s great grandfather and grandmother who kept the post office. Their title in those days was not Postmaster it was Receiver. After Arthur Jennings had married Miss ?????? (who was at one time the headmistress of Bicknoller

school) he built the house known as White's Meadow [*on the corner of Trendle Lane/Hill Lane*] which is the name of the field in which it stands. It was built in the first decade of this century. At the same time he built Clarence House where Jenny now lives. In the last century there used to be a cottage, set back much further from the road, where Clarence House is now.

I think it worthy of note that the Bicknoller Post Office was in the hands of four successive generations of Jennings - Isaac, Gerald, Arthur and Constance, who became Mrs. Dinwiddy. In the reigns of the two latter, the Post Office was at White's Meadow.

In 1910 there were no houses or buildings at all in Honeyrow Lane or Hill Lane. The first in Honeyrow was built in 1924 and in Hill Lane either 1923 or 1924, I'm not sure which. The big house, Great Hill Croft and Croft Cottage followed in 1926.

We now move along Trendle Lane to a pretty thatched cottage known as Harcombes. It was at one time a small farm of some 17 acres but in 1910 it was two cottages of which the larger was occupied by John Edwards and his sister Jane. He was a skilled maker of most delicious sweets, in particular black treacle toffee and coconut ice. One of my chores was to deliver the parish magazine monthly and little gifts of home made hot cross buns on Maundy Thursday. Harcombes cottage was a very popular port of call. John was a veteran soldier who had fought in the Crimean War. He was a tall man with a white beard who always wore a round ??? hat with a small brim. He had a horse and cart which he used to pick up the cuttings from the hedges and take them away. On Saturdays he used to run a carrier service to and from Watchet - the transport was an open ??? drawn by a very shaggy plodding cart horse. I don't know whether he ever carried passengers but he did carry packages.

Next door is a thatched house, now called Dorcas cottage, but for a hundred years or more it was documented by the name of Darches. According to the postman there was a blacksmith's shop there in 1838 but that has not been there within living memory in 1910. For many years before and thereafter it belonged to the Packer Slade family and in the attached house John Slade used to carry on his boot business. In 1920 to 1971, there was a village shop there kept by the late ??? and his wife."

To be continued....

Magazine Share

Carole Darke and others have come up with a great idea to share our Magazines. There is a folder in each Newspaper Box containing magazines donated by other villagers. Anyone in our Community is welcome to either put or take Magazines at any time. Just help yourself.

and finally.....

In April we are planning a **Treasure Hunt** starting with breakfast at the Village Hall and finishing there for Tea. The route, which will include some interesting and less wellknown areas of West Somerset, will be a fascinating and enjoyable day out. Watch out for further announcements soon....