

Award Winning

Parish Post

Miserden, Whiteway, The Camp
Sudgrove, Edgworth

Spring 2017

The Passing of Time - Parish The Thought!

A brand new year, and spring almost upon us. I guess we all know that the parish we live in is a civil parish which embraces Miserden, Whiteway, and the rural hamlets of The Camp, Sudgrove and Edgworth. But what else? A little research turns up some fascinating facts and historical information. For example, did you know that until the Middle Ages **Miserden** was known as Greenhampstead by which name it is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1066? By the late 12th. Century Greenhampstead had become known as Musardera or la Musarder after the Musard family who took on the estate from 1086. The form of the name had settled to Miserden or thereabouts by the late 15th. Century. St. Andrew's Parish Church is the oldest building in the Parish; architectural and documentary evidence confirm that there has been a Miserden church since Saxon times. The Manor House largely dates back to the 17th. Century, Miserden House was built in the mid-eighteenth Century and Miserden School has occupied its current site since 1883.



St. Andrew's Church

Whiteway was set up as a Colony in 1898 by a Quaker journalist named Samuel Bracher. The early settlers had utopian socialist ideals and proposed to confront the politics and class system of late Victorian Britain. They envisaged a network of such land schemes countrywide to influence their respective localities and ultimately change the political system. Over the years residents of Whiteway have governed the community by general meeting, and co-operative ventures have included Protheroe's Bakery, the Cotswold Co-operative Handicraft Guild and the Co-operative Gardening Group.

The Camp was known as Hazlehouse-Yate until the late 18th. Century after Hazle House, a large house close to the hamlet, and "yate" meaning gate. There is some debate as to how it came to be known as The Camp; some claims suggest that it is related to Neolithic camps as close to the village there are remains of Neolithic burial chambers; others that it was a Civil War encampment.

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The land of our Parish rises steeply in the east from the River Frome to Miserden village at over 700ft, and then rises more gently to over 800ft before falling to the valley of the Holy Brook along which stand Wishanger Manor, Honeycombe Farm and Sudgrove House. During the 17th. Century Miserden grew as a community under the ownership of the Sandys family. From only 19 households in 1563, there were to be 50 by 1650, and by the early 18th. Century the population was estimated at 250. In the 2001 census the Parish had a population of 420, increasing to 449 at the last official census in 2011; 200 male persons and 249 females.

I have been told that there are many living in the Parish who have fascinating stories to tell about the past history of where we live. So, let's try to make 'stories of the past' a regular feature of your Parish Post. Let either Hugh or myself hear from you, you can find our contact details on the back page. Personally, I think that it could provide some really interesting reading.

Alan Lord
Editor

A LIFE IN THE COUNTRY

With this edition of our Parish Post in mind, I was talking to Andy Holder recently and, as he is a man who has lived a long time in this part of Gloucestershire, I realised that he had some interesting views on so much of what makes living here so fascinating. Andy was brought up on the farm at Ebworth Estate where his father did just about everything. At that time the Estate was owned by John Workman; of course it now belongs to the National Trust. For over 30 years Andy has lived in Whiteway House, and works most of his time sub-contracted by Miserden Estate. So, I asked him to put some of his thoughts together, and what follows are his reflections.

I grew up in the countryside surrounded by farmland and beautiful woodlands. I was always fond of the peace and tranquillity that it has to offer. To this day I still enjoy exploring the surrounding area for amazing views and the variety of wildlife. I find the early mornings and the late evenings to be the best times to see so much of the local wildlife. You will see rabbits, pheasants, deer, badgers, foxes and, if you are very lucky, the odd hare.

Around the immediate area the hedgerows are alive with yellowhammers. There are so many different birds in our gardens and gracing our local countryside. Spotting them is a real joy, everything from menacing crows to cruising buzzards, jackdaws and ravens to the nuthatch, blue tits to long-tailed tits, chaffinch to goldfinch. And, look up to the sky and you might just be fortunate enough to spot a red kite or even an owl in the early mornings.

Sadly, what I do miss these days are a lot of the ground-nesting birds such as the lapwing. I think that this is due to both more land given over to farming and the over-population of ground eating animals.

Andy Holder

March News from your Village Agent



As you know I am working closely with the Neighbourhood Wardens, Community Police and Fire Service. This month Carol Novoth, neighbourhood warden, and myself would like to remind people about **Careline**.

Careline is provided by Stroud District Council, and it plays a key role in helping older and/or vulnerable people to live independently and safely in their own homes. For many people the telephone is their only means of talking with friends and neighbours, but in a crisis the Stroud District Council Careline could provide help when you need it most, day or night. The service benefits older persons, those with a disability and people feeling vulnerable who need reassurance.

What is a Careline?

Careline is a way of getting help through your telephone system quickly and efficiently 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. A small personal radio transmitter is worn as a pendant around the neck, on a wrist-strap or clipped to clothing. This is linked to a special unit - the Careline - which plugs in to a modern telephone point with an adjacent 13amp electrical socket.

How does it work? By pressing the pendant a signal is sent to the Careline, which will then dial automatically to our Control Room. Your pre-programmed personal details will come up on a computer screen and a fully-trained operator will be able to talk to you through a very powerful speaker and listen to you through a very sensitive microphone.

How will they help me? The Control Room will quickly establish what assistance you require i.e. an Ambulance, Doctor, or perhaps one of your nominated contacts (neighbour, friend or a family member who ideally holds a key to your property). The Control Room Staff will stay on the line to reassure you until help arrives.

How are they available? A Careline can be bought or rented. There may be some financial assistance available for anyone over the age of sixty who is in receipt of a means-tested benefit such as Council tax benefit, housing benefit or income support. For those under sixty and in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) you may be eligible for financial assistance if you are also in receipt of one of the mentioned benefits.

For more information please call Stroud District Council on; **01453 754149** Monday to Friday between 9am and 4.30pm: Email; careline@stroud.gov.uk

For those who are not eligible for Careline there are other privately run carelines such as Telecare. Other “panic buttons” can also be obtained. I will be happy to talk through the options with you.

The Village Agent scheme is county wide, helping over 50's with information and support. Please call me to arrange a home visit or email me and I will be in touch gcannon@villageagent.grcc.org.uk. **07776 245767**

TAKING ON A NURSERY

Julie Dolphin and husband Steve Richardson took over the reins at Miserden Nursery in January last year. Here Julie describes how they came to be the new owners of the business.

It was one of those sublimely English summer days and we decided to make the most of it and head off for a day trip to the Cotswolds. Under blue skies, I remember the joy as we marvelled at village after village of honey stone cottages cascading down hillsides, all aglow in the sunshine. We travelled to parts of the Cotswolds we didn't know on our own magical mystery tour. We stumbled across The Lamb Inn at Eastcombe and, sitting on the outside deck looking out across the Toadsmoor Valley, we made the decision there and then that we would make the county our home.

During an early part of my career, I had worked as a reporter on the Gloucestershire Echo. I'd loved living and working around Cheltenham but I was beginning to realise there were parts of the Cotswolds I had never discovered. On returning home to Bristol, I dreamed of the country life and scoured property websites, gazing at homes with wooden beams, inglenook fireplaces and dramatic valley views (although it soon became apparent many also came with fiercely sloping gardens!). I hadn't bargained on a property listing that was to change our lives forever. In amongst the sales for commanding manor houses and bijou cottages was a listing for a commercial nursery (plants, not children, as I'm quick to tell people!). Two huge, period vine houses featured prominently in an image that accompanied the text and I was struck by their beauty.

At the time I was working as a Horticultural Researcher on the BBC Two series Gardeners' World. I'd spent years as a senior figure in national television news and features before catching the gardening bug and taking an RHS course part-time at the University of Bristol Botanic Garden. I loved working with Monty Don and the team at Longmeadow as well as touring the country making short films about amazing gardens, but I had an overwhelming desire to grow plants and to share that joy with others. In fact, with my husband Steve, we had spent many years dreaming of running our own garden business (despite his high-flying office jobs, he has always loved the outdoors and getting his hands dirty). With busy careers and four children between us, the time had never seemed quite right but with one child left at home and about to start secondary school, it was looking like a case of now or never.

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I rang the agent in the nursery advert and he suggested a visit. The drive through Miserden took our breath away. Could it get any more chocolate box?! But it was the nursery that stole our hearts. With its beautiful plants, magnificent period glasshouses and magical position within the old kitchen garden of the Miserden Estate manor house, it was a plant person's dream come true. The seed had been sown for a rural life in Gloucestershire!

We were convinced the business was for us but were unsure how to make such a big financial step. At this point, Steve was commuting weekly to Holland with his job, returning only at weekends. It was not ideal and we saw the nursery and a move to the area as an opportunity to reunite the family. Then fate played a hand. The business Steve was working with was put up for sale, giving him an opportunity to ease himself out of corporate life with redundancy. With a giant leap of faith we offered on the nursery.

We've now had the business for over a year. We've sown, grown, divided, watered and fed hundreds of plants. The previous owner Dave Robb navigated us through the early days and we've had tremendous support from Ness who has worked at the nursery for almost two decades. It hasn't been all plain-sailing and we've had our share of challenges but it has been an absolute privilege to nurture the plants, get to know our customers and become part of a wider community.

Now we are looking ahead to our re-opening in the spring. We are making some improvements to the site and plan to offer teas, coffees and cakes. We have a number of exciting events planned throughout the year. Our first is the Select Sculpture Festival from April 25 until May 28. Some exceptionally talented artists will be taking part including Cirencester-based Loco Glass which is designing work for the nursery borders as well as producing a 'Miserden' rose bowl especially for the festival.

We're also showcasing two talks on horticulture, one from a leading garden writer and the other from a head gardener who's also a guest presenter on Gardeners' World. We're planning some workshops too and essentially, we want the nursery to become a place where people of all gardening abilities can get excited about plants, share knowledge and learn a little or a lot.

But what we are most thrilled about this year is the range of plants we will be offering. We'll have all the usual favourites and some fantastic new additions, too. From our huge variety of herbaceous perennials to shrubs, David Austin roses, climbers and bedding, our plants will always be at the heart of what we do.

The nursery re-opens on Saturday, March 25. For further details, visit www.miserdennursery.co.uk

Julie Dolphin

Miserden Village Hall News

In the Autumn 2016 issue of your Parish Post I wrote about some exciting plans to refurbish Miserden Village Hall. These plans include removing the existing ceiling, installing new lighting and refreshing the decorative appearance of most areas. We are hoping to carry out the work later this year, and to this end we are pursuing financial support to ensure that the whole scheme is viable and achievable. Indeed, the Parish Council has agreed in principle to award a grant towards the scheme, and an application is being made to Gloucestershire Environmental Trust.

The Hall continues to attract a variety of bookings throughout the year; everything from Scottish Country Dancing and Morris Dancing, a Vintage Ball organised by Miserden School Friends Association in aid of the School, wedding receptions to an evening of Indian Street Food and Summer Folk Camps. The Hall was even booked for a Family Christmas Day Dinner (see piece from Laura and John on page 8). During 2016 bookings income performed well, up by 10% on 2015, and the Hall Committee invested in maintaining all of its major kitchen equipment to high standards, ensuring its electrical installation and fire safety equipment met safety requirements and in essential costs to accommodate the Parish Community Library basing itself at Miserden Village Hall.

It is intended that by carrying out the proposed major work this year Miserden Village Hall will attract even more hirings, and there will be opportunities for a wider variety of activities for everybody to enjoy. Watch this space! ***Alan Lord***



Miserden Village Hall

The Hall is available to hire for your Special Occasion. Anniversaries, Wedding Receptions, Parties, Meetings it makes the ideal Venue for you. The Kitchen is well equipped if you require catering facilities for your Event.

Hire Rates: **If you reside within the Parish our Rates are as follows:-**
 £9 per hour or £50 per day without the Kitchen facilities
 £13 per hour or £75 per day using the Kitchen.

If you reside outside the Parish our Rates are:-
£12 per hour or £70 per day without the Kitchen facilities
£16 per hour or £100 per day using the Kitchen.

For Availability or to Book the Hall please ring Pippa Lord on 01285 821829



Miserden Parish Community Library

Open Wednesdays 3-7pm.
In the Attic of Miserden Village Hall

Also offering

Starbooks Coffee Shop

Re-opening every Wednesday
from 1st. March 3-5pm. With the Library.
Lots of sweet treats and Lovely coffees.
Come along and have a chat whilst enjoying a
coffee and a cake and choosing a new book to read.

If you'd like to **join the library volunteers**
ring Ann on 01285 821511

Singing For Joy

Whiteway Colony Hall

Every Friday 2-4pm

Come and join us, singing varied music, just for fun!

All welcome, no experience necessary.

Whiteway Fête Photo Competition

We are planning to run the Photo Competition again at this year's Fête, so with Spring on its way (yes, really!) it's a good time to have your cameras/phones at the ready. Categories will be varied enough to ensure that your photos will suit one of them.

The competition is open for anyone living in the parish – novices, amateurs, enthusiasts, so please do have a go.

We plan for you to be able to email them to us, so that we can get them printed en masse. The cost will be included in the entry fee. Details will be advertised in the Parish Post and on notice boards closer to the event.

'Twas Christmas Day in the...Village Hall?

Normally we all congregate at my Mum's in reading for Christmas; she is gifted the dubious honour of cooking for and hosting up to 19 family members as well as a few strays collected along the way. But, the past two years have been sad ones for Mum, and so we decided to break with tradition by holding Christmas Day in Miserden Village Hall! It has a huge oven perfect for an equally huge turkey, space for the kids to run around and a dishwasher. It will be easy right? How difficult can it possibly be? Of course, what we didn't factor in was that we closed the shop at midday on Christmas Eve and then had no chance to take a breath before decorating the Hall and preparing an enormous amount of food. Who knew that Christmas dinner was so complicated? After all, my Mum had managed it for the last 39 years singlehandedly.

Christmas Day morning started like all others. With Daisy delighted over her stocking, Mum and I went to the Hall turned on the ovens and considered an action plan. Bucks Fizz settled the nerves, and Jon came to the rescue as our roast turkey saviour. After Church with songs in our hearts and a feeling of goodwill we welcomed everybody and went to the Hall. An amazing smell greeted us together with sounds of laughter from the menfolk in the kitchen. The children instantly started screaming with delight and running around madly waiting for the handing out of presents. Thank goodness for all that space! My Mother still cooked most of the Christmas dinner (thankyou and sorry Mum!).

As with every Christmas too much food and drink were consumed. The joy of being in the Hall was that the adults could relax over-indulged whilst the children happily and safely ran riot. The evening drew in, we started to reluctantly pack and clear up. It seemed to be much nicer and easier to clear up in the Hall than it does at home! And, of course, we returned to our clean home laden with gifts, full of good cheer and truly merry.

What a great Christmas Day! A lot of effort was needed to host the family, but it was really worth it. After swearing that it was a one-off not to be repeated we have already booked the Hall for Christmas Day 2017. Now we have the task of making it as good if not better; how can that be possible?!

Laura Barlow Cobb



Collection for Bob

I am sure most readers will be familiar with Bob Grist who has delivered post to our doors for very many years now. He is retiring in May. If you would like to contribute towards the collection for him for a leaving present you can do so care of Laura and John at Miserden Village Stores.

MEDITATION

Spend some time together in silent meditation and contemplation

Whiteway Colony Hall

Tuesday mornings at 11.00 am

All are welcome – come when you can

Please wear comfortable, warm clothing and bring cushions/rugs, as it can be chilly

Lions Message in a Bottle

We help the emergency services

Lions Message in a Bottle is a simple, but effective, way to keep essential personal and medical details where they can be found in an emergency – the fridge.



More than 5 million **FREE** Message in a Bottle kits have been distributed by Lions Clubs British Isles & Ireland in recent years to people with conditions such as diabetes, allergies, disabilities and life-threatening illnesses.

The bottles are supplied **FREE** of charge thanks to generous donations from the public and businesses.

Lions clubs supply the bottles to health centres, doctors' surgeries and chemists. They are also available direct from Lions clubs – contact us for more information.

Paramedics, police, fire-fighters and social services support this life-saving initiative and know to look in the fridge when they see the Lions Message in a Bottle stickers.

The Lions Message in a Bottle initiative is praised by hundreds of emergency services personnel. Senior North West Ambulance Service paramedic Steve Nicolls said: "It's of invaluable assistance to us when we have to attend an incident at someone's home". Talking to Knowles on the BBC's Emergency Rescue programme, Andy Capes from West Ambulance Service said he can rely on the Lions Message in a Bottle: average two or three times a week; it saves time and lives."



Nick
South
"I use it on

<http://lionsclubs.co/Public/lions-message-in-a-bottle/>

The Perfect Coffee and Walnut Cake

This recipe came about because one of my mother-in-law's carers, who is Romanian, brought us a gift of walnuts that her father had picked and shelled for her from the walnut tree in their garden in Romania. They were wonderfully fresh and tasty and so I decided it had to be a coffee and walnut cake. I usually find sponges too sweet, especially the icing, so I googled for a recipe and came up with this one from the Guardian(<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/wordofmouth/2014/apr/16/how-to-make-perfect-coffee-and-walnut-cake>). I have adapted (in red print) to suit our own particular tastes. The article, drawing on the experience of a number of top chefs, concludes that the secret seems to be in having a strong coffee flavor and that, surprisingly, instant coffee grounds are best. Adelena, our carer, loved it (as do we!) and now makes a point of bringing us walnuts when she returns from holidays in Romania.

Hugh Shewring

Felicity Cloake's perfect coffee and walnut cake from the Guardian

(serves 8)

2tbsp instant coffee

100g walnut halves

225g butter, at room temperature *[alternative - 150g butter]*

225g soft, light-brown sugar *[alt - 125g sugar]*

4 eggs, beaten together

225g plain flour

3tsp baking powder

¼ tsp salt

Milk, optional

For the icing:

2tbsp instant coffee, 165g butter, at room temperature, 425g icing sugar, ¼ tsp salt,

4tbsp double cream

Alternative icing and filling with less sugar and butter and no cream:-

2tbsp instant coffee (or 1tbsp coffee + 1tblspn cocoa powder) in 1 tblspn boiling water

2 to 3 dsrtspns honey

75g butter

3 or 4 tblspns Greek style yoghurt

Lemon or lime juice – 1 dsrtspn approx (optional)

¼ tspn salt (opt)

Mix the coffee with 1tbsp boiling water and leave to cool. Toast walnut halves in a dry pan until they smell toasted and nutty, but careful they don't burn! Set a quarter of them aside and roughly chop the remainder. Heat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan) and grease and line (opt.) the bases of 2 x 20cm sandwich tins. Beat the butter and sugar together until really light and fluffy and with mixer still running, pour in the egg mix very gradually, scraping down the sides of the mixer as necessary. Once incorporated, sift in the flour, baking powder and salt, and gently fold in with a large metal spoon, adding the coffee and chopped walnuts as you go. The batter should fall, reluctantly, from a spoon; if not, add a little milk to loosen it. Divide between the 2 tins, and bake for about 25 minutes until well risen. Cool for 10 minutes in the tins, then put on a wire rack to cool completely. Meanwhile, mix the 2tbsp coffee for the icing with 1tbsp boiling water and allow to cool. Once the cakes have cooled, make the icing. Beat the butter until soft, then sift in the sugar and salt and add the cooled coffee and cream. Stir together until evenly combined. Top one cake with a little less than half the icing, spreading it more thickly in a ring around the edge, and then place the other cake on top. Spoon the remaining icing on the top, and arrange the walnuts in a pleasing pattern.

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

New Website

Miserden Parish Council is pleased to announce the launch of the new website. For those of you who can access the internet I would urge you to take a regular look at the site as it will include news of the activities of the Parish Council along with Agendas, Minutes and a Calendar showing future dates of Meetings.

Members of the public are also welcome to use the site to publicise events in the Parish, and it is hoped that contributions will include items such as photographs, stories, history and poetry; in fact anything which you think will be of interest to others who may access the site.

Any local business or organisation based within the Parish can ask for contact information to be published in the Community Directory. Requests or suggestions for content are welcome. Please contact the Parish Council Clerk, Bob Reade (*see back page of the Parish Post for contact details*).

The Parish Council appreciates the time and effort that Mandy Reade has contributed to the launch and running of the website, and to her we say a big thank you.

The website address is- **miserdenpc.org.uk**.

Parish Community Library

At a recent meeting of the Miserden Parish Community Library I and all those present were very sorry to hear Ann White announce that she is stepping down from her position as Secretary. Ann has been very instrumental in the successful setting up of the Library in its present location in Miserden Village Hall. There is no doubt that her talents and enthusiasm will be greatly missed. I have to say also that the Library Committee is very strong, and lots of ideas were suggested at the meeting to further develop the Library. I think that we will see many initiatives introduced in due course. I do encourage you all to make use of your Library, even if only for a chat and a coffee. It will only succeed and flourish if we use it!

Local Elections

A reminder that elections in May will elect a new County Councillor for this area. (*See page 12 for more details*).

Martin Ractliffe



A very good year for Snowdrops



But barely a drop of Snow!

YOUR VOTE MATTERS - PLEASE REGISTER

Ahead of the County Council Elections taking place on Thursday 4 May 2017, Stroud District Council is urging its residents to get involved by registering to vote.

Since the law changed in June 2014, every individual is now responsible for their own registration, rather than registering as a household.

Anyone who has changed their address or is a new voter needs to make sure that they are registered. Not being on the electoral register could also affect your credit rating.

Registering to vote is easy and can be done online by visiting www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. Those registering will need to provide their date of birth and national insurance number. Anyone without internet can contact the elections team.

You can register to vote at any time, but the deadlines for registration ahead of the election are:

- Last date for Registration – Thursday 13 April 2017
- Last date for Postal Vote Applications – Tuesday 18 April 2017
- Last date for Proxy Vote Applications – Tuesday 25 April 2017
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The publication of candidates standing in the elections will be available from Tuesday 4 April for the County Council Elections.

If you would like to know more about electoral registration, or request registration forms, please contact the elections team.

Phone: 01453 754 886

Email: elections@stroud.gov.uk

www.stroud.gov.uk/vote

The Carpenters Arms

Kevin and Debbie hope to be back in business in early May

Open 11.30-11.30

Everyday

Award winning home cooked food served

All day, every day

OAP concessions Monday to

Friday Lunchtime

Main course £6.50

See Black Board outside pub for other special nights

Afternoon Cream Teas

sold every day

Dogs welcome.

Outside bars available.

**Conservation area location in the
village of Miserden**

GARDENING TIPS FOR SPRING

With the onset of warmer weather and longer days, growth will be continuing apace. There is much to do in the garden, but don't be in too much of a hurry to get all those tender plants in the ground as frost can still hit even in May in our area.

March

- Lift and divide snowdrops and aconites after flowering.
- Just before leaf break, cut to the ground all dogwoods and willows to provide the brightest coloured stems next winter.
- Cut back late summer-flowering shrubs such as buddleja, sambucus, perovskia and fuchsia, pruning back the previous year's flowering stems to one or two buds of the framework.
- To keep lavenders bushy and prevent legginess, cut back all top-growth down to the lowest point where you see new buds forming. Don't cut back too far though as lavender will not regenerate from old wood.
- If you have a greenhouse, start sowing annuals and tender perennials. The selection is huge, but some of the best for summer-long colour include cosmos, dahlias, aygryranthemums, lavateras, petunias and zinnias.
- In terms of vegetables, the following can be sown under cover: tomatoes for growing under glass, as well as lettuce, peas, broad beans, beetroot, coriander and dill for planting outside once they have hardened off.
- Plant out early potatoes.
- Towards the end of the month order plug plants of flowers and vegetables from mail-order companies.

April

- Keep on top of annual weeds such as speedwell, hairy bittercress and groundsel which are romping away at this time of year. I find an onion hoe the easiest tool for the job.
- To encourage the regeneration of new growth, remove about a third of the oldest stems of winter-flowering shrubs, such as mahonia, *Lonicera fragrantissima* and *Viburnum x bodnantense*, pruning as near to the ground as possible.
- Sow new lawns and repair existing ones.
- Rake over the soil and sow hardy annuals such as calendulas, cornflowers, nasturtiums and Californian poppies where they are to flower. Thin as necessary and keep well watered.
- Stake tall herbaceous perennials with pea sticks, proprietary supports or canes and string. Put into place early, new growth will quickly camouflage them and render them almost invisible.
- In the greenhouse prick out all seedlings once they have made a pair of true leaves, taking care not to damage the stem. Dib them into their new pot or seed tray right up to these leaves, don't be afraid of burying the entire stem.
- Towards the end of the month sow under glass courgettes and squashes, French and runner beans, as well as sweetcorn. They all have large seed so aim to sow one per pot about an inch deep.
- Once the soil has warmed up, begin sowing outside hardier vegetables, such as broad beans, early brassicas, carrots, parsnips, beetroot, radishes and spinach.
- Plant onion sets, shallots and garlic.

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May

- Carry out 'the Chelsea chop' around the third week of May, which means cutting back by about half all stems of certain late-flowering perennials, such as **sedum, coreopsis, rudbeckia, echinacea, helenium, veronicastrum, goldenrod and Knautia macedonica**. This may seem like horticultural butchery, particularly if plants have already started making flowerbuds, but it really is worth girdling your loins as you will get far sturdier plants, with more flowers over a longer season.
- Continue pulling or hoeing weeds as soon as they appear.
- **Regularly tie in the growth of climbing plants.**
- Prune spring-flowering shrubs such as ribes, bridal wreath, kerria and forsythia, aiming to remove about a third of the oldest wood every year.
- Pull out spent forget-me-nots before they seed too much.
- Plant out dahlia tubers.
- On warm days open greenhouse door and windows.
- Plant greenhouse tomatoes into large pots or growbags.
- Earth up early potatoes and finish planting second earlies and maincrops.
- Towards the end of the month after all risk of frost is over, plant out tender summer bedding and vegetable plants.

Sue Spielberg

Seasonal Star Plant

Narcissus pseudonarcissus (wild daffodil)

It amazes me that anyone would go to the bother of planting any other daffodil than our native narcissus. Unlike the gaudy cultivars that litter public parks and village greens, this little beauty will naturally set seed and gradually increase to form the large, loose drifts, about which William Wordsworth waxed lyrical. At around 30cm (12in) tall, with pale primrose petals and clear yellow trumpets, this spring bulb does particularly well beneath deciduous trees and shrubs as well as in sunny meadows.



Wishanger Country Kitchen

Dear Readers, This will be my last recipe page. I have written my recipes since 2008, and now I feel that all you good cooks must come forward and give the Parish Post YOUR family recipes for all to enjoy. Go on – do it!

My last two recipes this are ***Old Fashioned Christmas Pudding*** and ***Chicken and Mushroom Salad with Crab Sauce***. My Christmas pud is a recipe lost in time - I have made it all my life. The secret of its moisture and keeping power is always to boil the pudding, not to microwave, and to use Atora. The original recipe used solid beef fat which you grated and that is the only thing I changed when making this pudding – I always keep one for Easter Sunday lunch.

Christmas pudding

Makes 3 x 1lb. puddings and 3 x 2lb. puds.

2lbs sultanas

2lbs currents

1lb moist light brown sugar

0.5lb chopped mixed peel

1lb white breadcrumbs from a loaf

1lb self-raising flour

1.5lbs shredded suet (Atora original)

Grated rinds of two lemons

4 small bottles Guinness original stout

1 wine glass of brandy

1 teaspoon mixed spice

1 tablespoon gravy browning

Method

In a very large bowl add fruit, breadcrumbs, sugar, spices, lemon rind and suet all together and stir well. Add brandy, stout and browning and gently sieve flour into mixture, mixing well. Leave mixture overnight – not in fridge – covered with a wooden board and tea towel for the flavours to come out. Fill pudding basins 2/3rds full, cover with a greaseproof circle cut to fit top and a cloth tied around the basin rim and knotted at the top. Boil gently for 3-4 hours, topping up water if required. Leave in water to cool, when cold replace cloth with a fresh one and a new greaseproof circle. I add a tablespoon of brandy to the top before covering. These puddings can be stored hanging from a hook in a larder or on a shelf. When required, boil for a further 3 hours and serve with brandy butter and cream. Enjoy!

Chicken and Mushroom Salad with Crab Sauce.

This one is good for using up any leftover chicken or turkey. This is a very good supper or party dish and makes a change from rich foods.

3.5lbs chicken cooked and diced

4oz button mushrooms, sliced very finely

6oz (175gm) can of crab meat

6 tablespoons double cream

1 teaspoon paprika

3 teaspoons red wine vinegar

Good pinch of chilli powder

Salt

Parsley or cress to garnish

Method

Place chicken and mushrooms into a bowl. For the sauce, drain crab meat and place into a food processor, add all the other ingredients and whizz until smooth. Pour sauce over chicken and mushrooms and mix well. Turn into serving dish and garnish.

I wish you all a lovely Spring and Summer. I have so enjoyed writing for you all!

J.P.M.S. Wishanger

Parish Council Meetings

These are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7.30 pm. All members of the Parish are welcome to attend. Participation is at the discretion of the Chairman.

Planning Applications

Plans of any applications for property in this Parish may be viewed by appointment with the clerk. T: 01285 821871 Email: clerk.miserdenpc@hotmail.co.uk

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Disclaimer

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