



“HAPPY CHRISTMAS” from all who bring THE GOSSIP TREE to you. The Gossip Tree Committee and the Christmas Chimes team wish everyone in the parish health and happiness for Christmas 2017 and for the coming New Year

The Year That Was – 2017

The Fontmell Magna & District Society organised the following talks: ‘Bhutan, a Himalayan Buddhist Kingdom’ by Dick Stainer, ‘The Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance’ by Valerie Dyson, ‘Shaftesbury’s Abbey - 600 years of history’ by Bill Owen, ‘Stonehenge - Old Rocks New Ideas’ by Julian Richards, ‘Cheeses with PDO Status’ by Charlie Turnbull and ‘Grass Fed Beef’ by Quentin Edwards.

Fontmell Film Night showed ‘I, Daniel Blake’, ‘Bridget Jones’s Baby’, ‘The Girl on the Train’, ‘A Streetcar named Bob’, ‘Their Finest’, ‘The Time of their Lives’, ‘Viceroy’s House’, and ‘Whisky Galore’.

The Garden Club had trips to Athelhampton House and to Castle Gardens, their Annual Show in August and talks on ‘Propagation’ by Adam Wallace, ‘Kingston Lacey through the Year’ by Stephen Candy, ‘Resuscitation of a Kitchen Garden by Matthew Simpson and ‘Alternative Plants in Alternative Places’ by Steve Fry.

The Iwerne Valley Walking Group had walks starting from Sherborne Castle Garden Centre, Wareham, Stourton Caundle, East Knoyle, Milton Abbas, Bere Regis, Tyneham, Ludwell, Tollard Royal, Hartgrove Farm and Stourpaine.

The Gossip Tree continued its series of articles on Bedchester, including: ‘Meadowhayes Cottage, Common Lane’, ‘Woodbridge Farm’, ‘The Bradleys of Bedchester’, ‘Bedchester - what’s in a name?’, ‘Woodbridge Mill’, ‘76 Penn Hill - Wickers End’, ‘78 (Bramblings) and 79 (Hoppy Cottage) Penn Hill’, ‘Penn Hill Cottage and 81 Penn Ridge Cottage’, ‘Well and Bede Cottages (68 and 69 Hampton Gate)’, ‘Samuel Bradley (1826-1883) and Newfoundland’, and ‘Woodbridge House’.

In March, The Fontmell organised a litter pick with the result that, later in the year, Fontmell Magna was awarded the ‘Welcome Back Award’ in the 2017 Dorset Best kept Village Competition.

In May, Eileen Hall ‘celebrated’ her 70th birthday by doing a wing walk, raising money for Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance and the Pembroke Unit at Salisbury District Hospital.

In July, the Village Archive Society’s 11th Exhibition was on ‘Land Use and Ownership in the parish of Fontmell Magna up to 1945’.

In September, the Village Fete (but with no Teddy Bear Parachute Jump this year), raised £2,700 for distribution to the community. Work continued throughout the year on the Neighbourhood Plan; an Options Consultation was held in May, with 71 written responses, and a Pre-submission Consultation held in October/November which resulted in 145 written responses.

Anna Way left St Andrew’s School after 14 years as headteacher.

The Village Hall hosted polling for the General Election - Simon Hoare became our local MP but overall the Conservatives had a much reduced majority. The Village Hall also started hosting breakfasts run by the Church on the first Sunday of each month.

In sport, England’s women won cricket’s World Cup, beating India in a close final, but lost in rugby’s World Cup to New Zealand in the final. In football, England’s Under 20 men’s team won the World Cup, beating Venezuela 1-0 in the final, and the Under 17’s also won, beating Spain 5-2 in the final. Lewis Hamilton won the Formula One Driver’s Championship for the fourth time.

We commemorated the 500th anniversary of the start of the Protestant Reformation, the 200th anniversary of the death of Jane Austen, and the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution, the battle of Passchendaele and the Balfour Declaration.

And the weather last Christmas day? Cloudy, grey and mild with the occasional spot of rain and one burst of sunshine. The maximum temperature was 11.7°C. (12.2°C in 2015) and the minimum was 5.4°C (2.0°C in 2015). Rainfall was 0mm (3.1mm in 2015). 0.2 hrs of sun (no sun in 2015).



I didn't know that

- In 1999, residents of the state of Maine in America built the world's biggest ever snowman. He stood at 113ft tall.
- Nowhere in England is more than 75 miles (121 km) from the sea.
- In Britain, the best-selling festive single is Band Aid's 1984 track, 'Do They Know It's Christmas?', which sold 3.5 million copies. Wham! is next in the same year with 'Last Christmas', selling 1.4 million.
- Britain is the only country in the world which doesn't have its name on its postage stamps.
- London sweetmaker Tom Smith created the first Christmas crackers in 1847, based on the sweet wrapper design.
- Boxing Day gets its name from all the money collected in church alms-boxes for the poor.
- The bendiest road in Britain can be found in Dorset, with a 1.5km stretch at Cann Common! ZigZag Hill
- The golden sands of Studland beach in Dorset were the backdrop for the video of the hit Coldplay song 'Yellow', appropriately.
- The thickest published book measures 322 mm (12.67 in) in width and was unveiled by HarperCollins in London, on 20th May 2009. All Agatha Christie's Miss Marple stories - 12 novels and 20 short stories - are collected and published in this volume. The book contains 4,032 pages and weighs 8.04 kg.



Meet our cat. He's "Christmas Cat." His name, although it's cute, is not because he wears a hat or festive Santa suit.

He doesn't shout out, "Ho! Ho! Ho!" He can't make reindeer fly. He doesn't go out in the snow and soar across the sky.

He doesn't own a bright red sleigh. He has no sack of toys or games to play on Christmas Day for all the girls and boys.

He never gives out dolls and blocks. His name is just because when he's inside his litter box his feet have Sandy Claws.

Kenn Nesbitt

Fontmell this Christmas?

Q: How will Christmas dinner be different after Brexit?
A: No Brussels.



Q: What do you call a snowman with a six pack?
A: An abdominal snowman

Q: How does a Snowman get to work?
A: By icicle

New Year Quiz

Christmas Anagram Quiz

1. Congress Liar (5,7)
 2. Can Assault (5,5)
 3. Refreshed Erudite Londoner (6,3,3,4,8)
 4. Drastic Charms (9,4)
 5. In The Glints (6,5)
 6. Enjoy Mad Sharp (4,3,6)
 7. Unready Cabs (6,5)
 8. Gap Pawn Ripper (8,5)
 9. I'm a Poet Madmen (9,4)
 10. Smart Heretics (9,4)
 11. Off The Sane Pest (5,2,7)
 12. In Action Slash (5,8)
 13. Vicars Themes (9,3)
 14. Honesty Warms Font (6,3,7)
 15. Tiny Pay Vital (8,4)
 16. Robust Spurless (7,7)
 17. Streaky Rout (5,6)
 18. Muddling Pup (4,7)
 19. With FT Length (7,5)
 20. B Be The Helm (9)
- (Answers on the back page upside down)

1. In the British New Year tradition, who brings good luck?
 - (a) The first male visitor to the house before midnight.
 - (b) The first red-headed person to visit the house.
 - (c) The first man to visit the house after midnight.
 - (d) Women visiting the house after midnight.
2. In the Buddhist New Year tradition, people squirt water at each other in the street.
 - (a) True.
 - (b) False.
3. In the Chinese New Year tradition, lucky money in red envelopes is given to whom?
 - (a) All relatives.
 - (b) Friends.
 - (c) Children and other relatives who are unmarried.
 - (d) Brothers and fathers.
4. The Indian New Year is a festival of _____
5. The Iranian New Year is celebrated on the first day of January.
 - (a) True.
 - (b) False.
6. Match the country with the New Year tradition:

Hungary	Burning piles of wood
South Africa	First-footing
Portugal	Eating 12 grapes
Pakistan	Burning Jack Straw
UK	Ringing Church bells and firing guns
7. In Scotland on New Year's Eve, people sing a song called:
 - (a) Hogmanay.
 - (b) Haggis.
 - (c) Auld Lang Syne.
 - (d) The Auld Wife.
8. In the United States of America, they believe that black-eyed beans are lucky.
 - (a) True.
 - (b) False.
9. The Thai New Year lasts for _____ days.
10. As part of the Persian New Year tradition, on the 13th day, people:
 - (a) Read a prayer for health and happiness.
 - (b) Kiss each other.
 - (c) Visit each other.
 - (d) Go on picnics.

Q: What do you get from sitting on the snow too long?
A: Polaroids!

The Sky at Night

Was any Fontmell Magna villager lucky enough to see the blazing fireballs in the sky on the night of Saturday 25th November? The first appeared just after midnight, while the second appeared six hours later. I was lucky enough to capture the first one while looking out my skylight window across to Bedchester around 1.30am. I thought how low the moon looked and how weirdly on fire it seemed. In fact, it was a bit spooky as I'd never seen the moon look that way before and it was so low, as if it had literally dropped out of the sky. I went to the bathroom and, on my return, it had gone. Tired, I just thought that was strange and went back to bed. Three days later there was a pop up on social media about how there had been reports of fire balls in the sky that night that were seen by many other people; they were meteors. Had I waited just a while longer, I'd have seen the one I witnessed shoot across the sky and explode; others who saw it said they even heard a loud boom as it hit the ground. Experts classified it as a bolide, which is the term used when a meteor causes a flash as bright as the moon. Footage of the fireball, filmed in Wilcot, Wiltshire, shows a bright dot rapidly getting bigger as it travels across the sky. It culminates in a huge flash of light before quickly reducing in size until it disappears. Another meteor was seen flying across the same region six hours later with some witnesses reporting that it appeared to break up in the sky. UK Meteor Observation Network member Richard Fleet said the first fireball was the second brightest the country had seen in three years.

Q: Which parent is likely to do the Christmas shop at Tesco this year?
 A: Dad might, Marmite not.

Q: What's the difference between the clementine in your Christmas stocking and Donald Trump?
 A: Nothing, they're both a little orange.



Recipe - Gluten Free Gingerbread Biscuits

Preparation time - less than 30 mins
 Cooking time - 30 mins to 1 hour
 Makes about 50 biscuits

- Ingredients
- 230g/9oz buckwheat flour, plus extra for dusting
 - 120g/4¼ oz potato flour (also known as potato starch)
 - ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
 - ½ tsp xanthan gum
 - pinch sea salt flakes
 - 3 heaped tsp ground ginger
 - 110g/3¾oz cold unsalted butter, cubed
 - 1 large free-range egg
 - 170g/5¾oz soft light brown
 - 2 tbsp syrup from a jar of preserved stem ginger
 - 2 tbsp date syrup or maple syrup

Method

Preheat the oven to 190C/170C Fan/Gas 5. Line two baking sheets with baking parchment.

Sift the flours into a large mixing bowl and add the bicarbonate of soda, xanthan gum, salt and ground ginger. Rub in the butter until there are no visible lumps (or blend in a food processor). Stir in the brown sugar.

Beat the egg with the two syrups and pour into the dry ingredients. Stir in the liquid with a knife and then knead it by hand until the mixture comes together as a soft dough.

Dust a work surface with buckwheat flour and roll out the dough to 4mm thickness. Using biscuit cutters or a template, cut out the biscuits.

Transfer to the prepared baking sheet and bake for about 10 minutes or until golden-brown. Allow the biscuits to cool for a few minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

Christian Traditions

Christians in the Middle East, such as the Orthodox Church, use the Julian calendar. This dates from 45 BC, and is 13 days behind our new-fangled Gregorian one. One thing all these Christians have in common is celebrating Christmas on 7th January. However, the huge variety of ancient Christian traditions sees it celebrated a dozen different ways. Orthodox Christians in Turkey dive into chilly rivers, lakes and seas to fish out wooden crosses to mark the Epiphany. In Lebanon, families plant chickpeas and lentils in cotton wool ready to sprout in time for Christmas Day. Palestinians eat lamb, Iraqis tuck into grilled carp, Jordanians spend weeks preparing cakes. Nativity cribs are generally more common than Christmas trees. And for many branches of Middle Eastern Christianity, the 45 days leading up to Christmas are a period of fasting and restraint. On the big day itself, Lebanese Armenians are unusual in choosing to visit the graves of loved ones, and most religious rituals take place close to midnight. In the Church of St. Catherine of Alexandria, in Bethlehem, it's not unusual for three services, in different scriptural traditions and different languages, to occur at the same time. In recent years, Christmas celebrations across the region have had to take place under heavy security.



The Elf on the shelf

If you're not familiar with this growing holiday tradition, the Elf on the Shelf is dispatched from the North Pole at the start of Advent to keep a watchful eye on the children and make sure they belong on Santa's "nice" list. The Elf on the Shelf explains that scout elves get their magic by being named and being loved by a child. ... Once the elf is named, the scout elf receives its special Christmas magic, which allows it to fly to and from the North Pole.

Picture for colouring in



Poem

By Iris W. Bray

Christmas is for giving
 And for showing that we care,
 For honouring the Christ Child
 With the loving gifts we share.
 The wise men gave of riches;
 The shepherds, faith and love.
 Each gift, in its own measure,
 Was smiled on from above.
 Let every gift be treasured;
 Not always size or price
 Determines the extent of love
 And willing sacrifice
 Handsome gifts with festive trim
 Bring smiles of sweet content,
 But modest gifts of humble
 means
 are oftimes heaven sent.
 Whether it be large or small,
 Each gift will share in part
 The message of true Christmas
 joy
 If given from the heart!



Merry Christmas to all our British Troops both home and away

Wishing our troops who can't be with their families this holiday season a safe Christmas with our utmost thanks.
 And to one and all may you all have a very Merry Christmas.

Reflections

The New Year is a moment of quiet reflection. Reflect on the year gone by; of the happy gains and missed opportunities. Recount the good and bad of the past year. Introspect on your personal growth and learn from the experience.

New Year is the time to ensure that we bring balance to our life with positive influences overriding the negative ones. Try to learn from the year that is about to leave you and reflect. Know that sometimes when someone is angry they have the right to be angry, but that doesn't give them the right to be cruel.

It's not what you have in your life but who. Either you control your attitude or it controls you. Heroes are the people who do what has to be done when it needs to be done, regardless of the consequences.

Two people can look at the exact same thing and see something totally different. People will forget what you said, and people will never forget how you made them feel.

Be patient, be kind and make 2018 a memorable one, forget regret or life is yours to miss.

Christmas Anagram Quiz

Answers

1. Carol Singers
2. Santa Clause
3. Rudolf the red nose reindeer
4. Christmas Cards
5. Silent Night
6. Mary and Joseph
7. Brandy Sauce
8. Wrapping Paper
9. Pantomime Dame
10. Christmas Tree
11. Feast of Stephen
12. Saint Nicholas
13. Christmas Eve
14. Frosty the snowman
15. Nativity Play
16. Brussel Sprouts
17. Roast Turkey
18. Plum Pudding
19. Twelfth Night
20. Bethlehem

Christmas is a special time of year. A lot of people will be in their homes enjoying fun and food with their families opening presents and watching the Queen's speech.

But sadly, for some people, home and away, they will not be so fortunate.

If you have a few pennies to spare to donate to a food bank at your local super market or a blanket/some warm clothing to the homeless or some treats to an animal shelter, then we thank you now.

Answers to New Year Quiz

1. (c) The first man to visit the house after midnight.
2. (a) True.
3. (c) Children and other relatives who are unmarried.
4. Diwali.
5. (b) False (it starts at the Spring Equinox).
6. Hungary - burning Jack Straw.
7. (c) Auld Lang Syne.
8. (a) True
9. 3 days.
10. (d) Go on picnics
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