



“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 2019 and for the coming New Year

Welcome to The Chimes at Christmas 2019, in this edition, we reflect on other things that happened this year

Some reasons to Celebrate 2019

- Wonderfully, the AONB Cranborne Chase was added to 13 other dark sky reserves across the world by the Dark Sky Association for its “exceptionally starry skies”.
- Farming e-sport become so popular that it had its own international tournament this summer where contestants took part in e.g. bale stacking battles. You might already be aware of the game Sensible Train Spotting, a precursor from 1996.
- The efforts on behalf of protected dormice when 13 miles of the M1 was closed to avoid disrupting their hibernation.
- An orphaned elephant returned as a mother to the Kenyan orphanage to show her week-old calf to the keeper who had fed her bottled milk.
- Britain’s power stations went without burning any coal for the longest period since the industrial revolution over the May bank holiday weekend and the gales in March generated 38% of electricity used for seven days after.
- Young people are more aware of the dangers of fake news and are turning away from questionable sources research at Oxford University found. They were willing to challenge friends and relatives who share dubious news online and are reverting to trusted brands for their information. Older consumers are not adapting so quickly and can often be the “chief culprit” in spreading false news.
- Lego is considering a brick rental scheme in an attempt to cut down on plastic waste which has possibilities if you are not a present buying grandparent. It is estimated that 36, billion are manufactured every year
- Sub Lieutenant Roy Cooper who lives in Marnhull, thought to be the oldest surviving Royal Navy officer to take part in the Allied invasion landscaped his whole garden and in June began working on building a 8ft x 6ft wooden shed in the corner and turning his garage into a shed. He is 101 years old.
- The wet summer and mild, late autumn were ideal conditions for rare mushrooms. Novice collectors were advised to arm themselves with a couple of good reference books. A mushroom forager guide said (bravely) “it is actually much easier than people realise”.

Extras Reasons to celebrate for 51% of us

- Men’s brains may be larger but women’s behave as if they are three years younger (Washington University.) On the down-side women who collapse with a cardiac arrest are less likely to be resuscitated by a bystander than men. Except possibly on the Isle of Mull. Letters to The Times ask “Sir, at St Columba’s Episcopal Church we are about to install a defibrillator. Does this imply any lack of faith on our part?” A reply: “the installation of a defibrillator at a church on Mull should perhaps come under the heading “Assisted Resurrection.”
- Only men’s ears continue to grow into old age, the formula for which activity is Ear Circumference = 88.1+ (0.51 x subject’s age).
- Beards hold more germs than dogs carry in their fur because it is courser and traps dirt more easily. But beards don’t roll in fox poo.
- At last, air conditioning and temperature have become a feminist issue. There is ample evidence that office environments are tuned to male biology deduced from a 1960’s formula based on the metabolism of 40-year-old man. Hmm.





These home-made decorations are also especially easy if you can find a twig with buds to hold the string in place at the top.

Although they are certainly easier to make than the fiendish gardening quiz set by Alison!

Are you a Christmas Grinch or a Christmas Elf? Have a go at this Christmas quiz and test your knowledge about some Christmassy stuff..

1. Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea which is now part of Israel, What is Israel's national flower?
A) Cyclamen hederifolium B) Liliun martagon C) Anemone coronaria D) Scilla luciliae
2. Clementines are a citrus fruit hybrid which first appeared in:
A) Algeria B) Israel C) California D) Spain
3. There's nothing like a crispy roast potato, but who introduced potatoes to Europe from South America?
A) France B) England C) Norway D) Spain
4. Christmas tree ornaments were first sold in 1880 in?
A) Harrods B) Woolworth C) Liberty D) Fortnum & Mason
5. Brussel sprouts have been part of our diet since?
A) Roman times B) Stone Age C) Georgian times D) Victorian times
6. Tinsel was originally made from?
A) Gold B) silver Birch twigs C) Glass D) Silver
7. If you were to give every gift mentioned in the 12 Days of Christmas, how many would there be in total?
8. Where was "The Messiah" by Handel first performed?
A) London B) Paris C) Salzburg D) Dublin

Answers can be found at the bottom of the last page!

What a shame

- The institution of village cricket is struggling to survive as numbers of registered players in England fell to 278,000 in 2016 from 428,000 in 2008. Pressured lifestyles and the need for subsidies are bowling them out. However, the MCC at Lords did offer 250 seats to local primary and secondary pupils for a World Cup Match in July so that the television coverage would not show empty seats.
- While rugby players are getting bigger, the best football teams are shrinking. The average height of Manchester city players is 5'11, Raheem Sterling is 5'7 and Sergio Aguero is 5'8. The average height of players in 50 clubs analysed in 36 European leagues is just under 6ft. The average weight of Six Nations players this year was just under 16 stone 7lb with predictable consequences for the wellbeing of players.
- Unsportingly, George, the last tree snail of his species who lived alone in a tank in Hawaii has died of unknown causes. He was part of a captive breeding programme.

A cocktail? – and an opportunity to test the theory that very similar-tasting ingredients and very different-tasting ingredients can complement each other. This paired seasonal cocktail will help you decide for yourselves. (It doesn't feature in a google search of cocktails for 2019)

Beetroot, Coffee and Aniseed Mule

Take 20ml each of vodka and beetroot juice, 10ml each of sambuca and hibiscus kombucha and 5ml of cinnamon syrup, pour over ice and mix well. Strain into a glass then cover with yogurt foam and sprinkle with coffee grounds.

For the yogurt foam: mix 70ml Greek yogurt, 50ml water, 50ml sugar syrup, 20ml egg white and 10ml lemon juice in a blender, pour into a whipped cream dispenser and charge with two nitrous oxide cartridges.

Or you can just open a bottle of Baileys, if the £6,000 Diamond is Forever Martini served in the Ritz-Carlton Tokyo and made from chilled Grey Goose Vodka, lime juice with a crystal clear one carat diamond resting at the bottom of the glass is a bit pricey and you are not in Tokyo.

To eat? Do I have to be polite about sprouts? If you can't stand broccoli, cabbage or sprouts you are not necessarily a fussy eater. Everyone has two copies of the gene taste receptor 2 member 38 (TAS2R38) which has variants AVI and PAV. Those who inherit the Pav form are known as super-tasters and will find some foods exceptionally bitter including dark chocolate (pity), coffee and beer. PAVs can deflect attention from the sprouts sitting on their otherwise empty Christmas dinner plate with this from Olaf Falafel at the Edinburgh Fringe. It won the award for best joke.

"I keep randomly shouting out "broccoli" and "cauliflower", I think I might have florets!"



Red or White? 2019, a difficult year for viticulturalists. Drought, frost and hail meant that by August French winemakers were predicting a 12% fall in production - to 43.4 million hectolitres (1 hectolitre is approximately 133 bottles of wine) because vines flowered in rainy, cold weather. Then the record-breaking temperatures on much of the continent "blowtorched" the plants that had survived. Beaujolais and Burgundy were particularly badly hit so it was just as well that a farmer in eastern France who, many years ago almost by accident, bought 400 rhubarb plants instead of endives and made wine with them. A wise decision as now his family sell 40,000 bottles a year mainly to upmarket hotels in Paris. Geoffrey from Melbury Abbas, wrote to the Times about the most helpful advice he received during his country wine (rhubarb) making career, "you should reach the point where you wake in a cold sweat at 2am realising that you are down to your last 30 gallons." In Sturminster Newton, the fruit of 100 perry pear trees planted by a former supermarket executive, will be ready for a sparkling Christmas. Until the 1950s when most were uprooted, pear orchards were a feature of Dorset.

Back to France and the discomfort of someone upset that the mayor of Bordeaux has permitted "the incredible changing of names of certain wines of our land, which are taking the appellations of Chinese Folklore ... During my childhood I never met the slightest imperial rabbit nor the least Tibetan antelope."

You might consider offering Indlovu an elephant dung gin which is said to have a unique African flavour with earthy undertones and spice. Or more likely, artisan gin made from the berries from the increasing number of juniper bushes being planted to overcome the attention of rabbits, deer and by disease. Peak gin sales occur in the run-up to Mother's Day with a record last year, of 73 million bottles.

Rare whisky has become an investment as its value rose by 40%. Not such good value were 250 Wimbledon branded steel tumblers for the royal box which disappeared with guests within a week. The National Trust strategy for keeping their teapots and jugs is to use those which are bad pourers.

Which tree lights? The energy of LED lights is strictly proportional to the percentage of their "on" time. If they are only on half the time, they use half the energy of static lights. Incandescent lights that twinkle individually waste further energy because they use thermal timers in each bulb. Current passing through a bimetallic strip, causes it to heat up breaking the circuit until it cools down to repeat the cycle. LEDs can twinkle using solid state timers that use negligible energy. Useful to know.

Would you like coffee or tea? Choose coffee and you'll be pleased that research into ages and cause of deaths of 450,000 people shows that as little as two cups a day can raise your life expectancy by as much as two years. (European Journal of Epidemiology). If you chose tea, well, the same may apply according to other research so somewhere are a number of people not drinking tea and coffee with shortened longevity. A note of caution: "some experts believe that a high intake of caffeine can cause the skin to wrinkle prematurely because caffeine has been found to slow down collagen production and is a weak diuretic. Stick to four cups a day particularly if you favour Elida Geisha 803 served by Klatch Coffee Roasters in San Francisco for £60 a cup. Use the grounds to remove the odour of strong cheeses in your fridge. It works because their oily surface and large surface area absorb the cheese aroma compounds.

Do you want milk with it? What do you mean by milk? – almond, rice, oat, fortified? Would any be served with a cup of Sri Lankan Golden Tips available at the Rubens Hotel in London? This brew requires a silver tea pot, gold tweezers to weigh out exactly 3g and a timer. £133 a cup. No mention of tea cosy in the report.

Pie Fidelity In Defence of British Food by Pete Brown pub: Particular – Fish and chips, cream tea, Yorkshire pudding, Spag bol, full English. How climate, soil, breeding practice and played their parts in defining British tastes

Food to avoid? Mackerel which lost its status as sustainable food this year because of over-fishing. What else? The EAT-Lancet report spent three years looking at evidence for the best diet in terms of health and the environment concluded that consumers need to change what they buy and cook, farmers and shops must produce and promote healthier and more sustainable food, most of the world's population should avoid adopting the terrible diets of people in the US and Europe and waste should be reduced at every stage of food production. We know this and

An alternative? In a letter to the times: "Domesticated six millennia ago in Peru, the guinea pig provided Incas with a reliable source of protein, the equivalent to old world chickens. When I was working on a dig in the Andes, the major-domo would summon us for lunch each day: half a guinea pig per head and a mound of bright yellow turmeric potatoes washed down with ice cold beer". Guinea pig is probably not on the counter of one of Britain's oldest butchers which is in Bournemouth. Where once there were 11 in the same street it is now the only one and the concern is that it too will close soon.

Cheese? Make it camembert, emmental or goat which have respectively the lowest CO2 equivalent emissions per kg produced. (Cheddar is the worst offender at more than 16 kg CO2 of per kg cheese). A nuisance to vegetarians but not as much of a nuisance as the camembert placed in every French MPs parliamentary letterbox to denounce what producers said was a threat to the country's cultural heritage i.e. plans to allow factory made camembert to use the Protected Designation of Origin label.

Say a few words? woodlice also known as yekersterse, chuggylice, baker, granfer-grig, parson's pigs, slatyback, bragloose, chicky pig, monkey pea, peabug, Hairy Molly, potato bug, shellackybooky. A New York Times project to deduce which region a speaker came from through regional dialect was surprisingly successful.

Or read a bedtime story: **Dr Seuss, How the Grinch Stole Christmas**

And the Grinch
with his Grinch-feet ice cold in the snow
Stood puzzling and puzzling
How could it be so?
It came without ribbons, it came without tags,
It came without packages, boxes and bags
And he puzzled and puzzled 'till his puzzler was sore
Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before
What if Christmas, he thought doesn't come from a store
What if Christmas perhaps means a little bit more

Christmas Quiz answers:
1) C, 2, A, 3, D. 4. B, 5. C, 6. D, 7. 364, 8. D