

January 2023

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Eastcombe, Bussage & Brownshill Newsletter

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Welcome to the first newsletter of 2023.

To receive the newsletter **FREE** by email, please contact eastcombebambnews@gmail.com. You can also read it online at www.bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk/ and www.chalford-glos.gov.uk/.

Buy printed copies, 60p each, from **Eastcombe Stores, Eastcombe Post Office, Frith Community Café** and **Chalford Parish Centre**. Customers can also read it **Head First** and **The Lamb Inn**, Eastcombe.

Please send items for the February issue to eastcombenewsletter@btinternet.com **BY NOON on 20TH JANUARY.**



2023 IN FRITH WOOD...

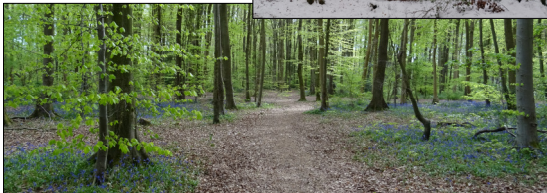


Friends of Frith Wood continue their work for nature and for the community.

In January, the entrance to Frith Wood, near Bussage, will be improved so it is easier for buggies and motorised wheelchairs. Two nature sanctuaries will also be created, the most visible one near that entrance. Attractive wooden fencing will keep people and dogs out of the area, and bird and bat boxes will be put up.

Sophie Carabine, co-ordinator of *Friends of Frith Wood*, says:

We are very grateful to Cotswold Natural Landscape for funding this pioneering work in our much loved local wood. A small area can be a big benefit to the wood's non-human residents. Meanwhile we still have so much beauty to enjoy. Please stick to the big paths and give the bluebells a chance!



Year's end is neither an end nor a beginning, but a going on, with all the wisdom that experience can instill in us. Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right.

- Oprah Winfrey

SNOW EFFORT SPARED!

A big **THANK YOU** to the Eastcombe Snow Group, who turned out in force to clear roads in the centre of Eastcombe after December's heavy snowfall.

Their combined efforts made walking and driving much safer for everyone—

THANK YOU!



NINE THINGS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT BANK HOLIDAYS...

2023 will see us enjoy an extra bank holiday - for the Coronation of King Charles III. But who invented these days off?

Before 1834, 33 saints' days and religious festivals were observed as holidays, but, in 1834, this was reduced to just four: 1st May, 1st November, Good Friday and Christmas Day.

In 1871, Liberal politician and banker Sir John Lubbock introduced the Bank Holidays Act, with the first bank holidays called 'St Lubbock's Days'. The Act decreed that there would be bank holidays on Easter Monday, the first Monday in August, 26th December, and Whit Monday. A keen cricket fan, it was rumoured that Lubbock chose the dates to coincide with matches! At the time, Good Friday and Christmas Day were considered days of rest and not necessary to include in the Act.

Time brought changes: Whit Monday (now the Spring Bank Holiday) was observed the day after Whit Sunday, or Pentecost, 7 Sundays after Easter Sunday. Because Easter moves, Whit Monday used to fall anywhere between 11 May and 14 June, but in 1971, the holiday was fixed as the last Monday in May.

New Year's Day and May Day were originally only bank holidays in Scotland, and it was another 100+ years before the rest of the UK adopted them. In 2011, Parliament debated replacing the May Day bank holiday with one in October to spread the bank holidays more evenly through the year, but the plans were scrapped.

The August bank holiday, introduced so we could make the most of the summer, was originally on the first Monday in August. However, this clashed with the 2 week summer closure of some businesses, so, in 1965, Edward Heath, President of the Board of Trade, moved it to the end of August.



In 2006, the Scottish Parliament made St Andrew's Day, November 30, a bank holiday in Scotland. However, there remains no bank holiday for St David's Day in Wales, or St George's Day in England.

Today, England and Wales have 8 bank holidays, Scotland have 9 and N. Ireland 10. The only country with fewer public holidays is Mexico, with 7, while India has the highest number, 21 days.



Local Charity Seeks Volunteer Mentors

- The Door (Reg Charity 1131919) is looking for new members of its volunteer team.
- Full training given – **courses start in February**
- Volunteering as a mentor can be incredibly rewarding
- No experience required! Just a positive attitude and a willingness to learn.



The Door has been supporting young people and their families for over 30 years, thanks in no small part to a team of amazing volunteer mentors. As demand for Mentors continues to rise, The Door is looking for enthusiastic volunteers to sign up ahead of their next training courses, which start in February 2023.

Intensive Support Team Manager Shona Ross says:

"I started at The Door as a volunteer and know first-hand just how rewarding it can be. You don't need to be an expert in anything, just have enough time to complete the training and give 1-2 hours a week to a young person or parent who has reached out for help. My team will support you and your mentee every step of the way."

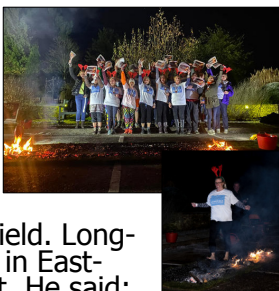
One parent told us: *'I wasn't someone that asked for help. I had always had it drummed into me that I was a useless daughter, mum, partner, sister and friend. I felt worthless...very sad, alone, lonely, unloved and unwanted by everyone. I always had a smile for everyone but inside I was broken and unhappy. Fast forward 6 months and thanks to a mentor from The Door who I see once a week, I am becoming a different person...starting to believe in myself...feeling happy, loved, worth something and a good person. For the first time in more than 20 years I am in a good place. I've still got a way to go but I am getting there.'*

Shona continues: "Whether mentoring young people or parents, it is an absolute privilege to be a part of someone's journey; by offering time, space and safety for that person to explore what's possible, great change can unfold (and it's always a joy to see)."

Any member of The Door team will be happy to talk more about volunteering (we don't need much of an excuse to share our passion for our work). Contact us through our website www.thedoor.org.uk or by calling 01453 756745. **What have you got to lose by finding out more?**

FESTIVE FUNDRAISING!

On Friday 9 December, 20 people took part in an amazing challenge in aid of Longfield Community Hospice in Minchinhampton. These fearless fundraisers took on the hospice's Festive Fire Walk, walking barefoot over hot coals at 550 degrees celsius. That's one way to stay warm this winter!



The event raised over £7,000 for Longfield. Longfield's CEO, Simon Bernstein, who lives in Eastcombe, was one of those who took part. He said: "What an incredible experience! Thank you to my fellow fire-walkers for facing their fears and braving the coals."

"Thanks also to everyone who sponsored us. As a charity, we rely on your generosity to support people across the county with urgent hospice care, delivered in the comfort of their own homes. Every pound sponsored makes a real difference."

Fancy taking on a challenge of your own to support us? Visit www.longfield.org.uk/events.

THERE'S STILL TIME TO RECYCLE YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE & RAISE MONEY FOR LONGFIELD

In partnership with Just Helping (<https://just-helping.org.uk/>), this year Longfield are once again offering to collect and recycle your tree after Christmas, with your donations helping patients, their families and carers when a devastating diagnosis changes everything. Your tree will be chipped and the chippings used locally, an environmentally friendly scheme that also supports our free hospice care.

Longfield's incredible team of volunteers will be collecting real Christmas trees for recycling between 8th and 10th January 2023 from many postcodes in Gloucestershire, including GL6.

Registration closes Tuesday 3 January at 10am. Visit: www.longfield.org.uk/event/christmas-tree-recycling-2023/

Thank you – your donation will make a real difference.



BISCAN WISHES YOU A GREEN(ER) NEW YEAR!

Climate Action Working Group:

The parish council is forming a working group to plan how the parish can reduce its carbon emissions and aid nature recovery, to do our bit towards the District's Net Zero 2030 goal. The group will be a collaboration of parish councillors and groups/residents of the parish. If you'd like to take part, please contact the Parish Clerk, admin@bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk 01452 771089.

Seeking Trees for Protection Orders: Do you know of any trees/groups of trees that merit protection by TPO? The parish council is compiling a list to submit for protection. This is especially important as **very few trees in the parish are protected.** Please send suggestions, plus what3words (www.what3words.com/) location if possible, to Tree Wardens Lesley (lesleygreene2@googlemail.com) or Jenny (jenexley36@gmail.com).

BisCAN is a community of groups and individuals in the Parish of Bisley-with-Lypiatt, which aims to mitigate the impact of climate change by reducing our local carbon footprint, and to aid nature recovery in our Parish.

Have a Happy, low-impact New Year!

www.biscan.info
bisleyeastcombeoakridgecan@gmail.com

In 2023...

KEEP UP YOUR EFFORTS TO 'GO GREENER'!

Bisley, Eastcombe & Oakridge Climate Action Network



CHALFORD PARISH COUNCIL: January 2023

01453 887204; info@chalford-glos.gov.uk www.chalford-glos.gov.uk.

Follow us on Facebook.



A happy and healthy 2023 to all.

Precept – we have agreed the funding we require from Stroud District Council for the 2023/24 year, which amounts to £197,701, a 2.97% increase over last year. It is an increase of £2.05 per annum (0.17p a month) for a Band D property. The largest increases are due to our efforts to improve biodiversity through investment in new mowing equipment and more contract labour to assist with an improved mowing regime. We have also increased the Community Youth Services reserve by £20,000 to continue our support of the Frith Youth Centre.

A reminder of what we have at the **Parish Centre**: a freezer full of nutritious meals, a book swap, walks books, the *Return to War* book, the Chalford Heritage Trail booklet and much more. In addition, we have a mini food bank, donated by residents. A big thank you to you all for your donations. Our stocks are low, so if you are able, please continue to bring in your donations. And don't forget we have a recycling bin for such items as Pringle tins, crisp packets, pens and much more. Pet food pouches are no longer accepted.

Our **warm room** is going from strength to strength thanks to our lovely group of volunteers. It is run on a Friday from 12-2pm at the Frith Youth Centre with free refreshments and a good social atmosphere.

We received numerous requests for **grit bins** after the recent heavy snow fall. All requests must be considered by Gloucestershire Highways, who, as a rule, will not site a bin on flat ground or where there is already a bin close by. Our Groundsman has been extremely busy refilling grit bins, to the extent that we eventually ran out of grit and had to wait for a further delivery from Highways. Please remember that a small handful of grit should cover one square metre. If you notice an empty or damaged bin, please report it to the Parish Centre.

Don't forget to get your **grant application** to us by the end of January. If you are a local organisation in need of funding, you may be eligible for a small grant from the Parish Council. The deadline for applications is 31 January 2023. Grant application form and rules are available from the Parish Centre or on our website.

We don't hold a Full Council meeting in January. Our **next meeting will be at the Parish Centre on Thursday, 2 February 2023 at 7pm**. Please contact the Clerk to let her know if you would like to attend, particularly if you wish to speak, so that she can make time for your issue on the agenda.

RECYCLE YOUR CHRISTMAS CARDS

FOR COLBALT



From **Monday 2nd January to Sunday 15th January 2023**, you can drop your used Christmas cards at Eastcombe Village Hall.

Please leave the cards whole (and in bags please) in the large plastic tubs by the front door. Donated cards will be sorted and upcycled into new greetings cards to raise vital funds for Cobalt. This wonderful scheme was started over 30 years ago and the hard work of the volunteers raises over £25,000 each year for the charity.

Cobalt provide diagnostic imaging (scanning) for patients with cancer, dementia and other conditions, funding for research, leading to a greater understanding of disease, predominantly cancer and dementia, as well as funding specialist nurses.

For further information about the charity and more ways to get involved please visit <https://www.cobalthhealth.co.uk/support-us/> or call 01242 535922.

STOP PRESS:

ChalCAN'S Saturday morning community walks will resume in the New Year. Join them at Chalford Sports & Social Club, 10am on January 21st, followed by coffee & cakes. The route will be posted on our Facebook page a few days beforehand.

SUPPORT US!
BECOME A FRIEND OF
THE LONG TABLE

FRIEND

Friends of the Long Table are changing the world for the better by pledging £5 a week to the Long Table.

Become a Friend:

www.donorbox.org/thelongtable

BUSSAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL: JANUARY UPDATE:

OFSTED Inspection Report: We are pleased to share with you the Final Report following our recent OFSTED Inspection. This was what is called an Ungraded Inspection. Good and outstanding schools inspected after September 2015 will normally receive an Ungraded Inspection, when OFSTED come in to check that the school is still operating at the same level. We are therefore delighted that the school has continued to be recognised as being a GOOD school. As well as containing some highly positive comments, only one area of improvement was highlighted.

The support of parents was overwhelming during the process and we want to thank all who participated in the surveys or spoke with the inspector. The children were, of course, immense on the two days of the inspection (as they are all year round) and we are all really proud of them. We are extremely pleased that the hard work and dedication of staff and governors has been rightly recognised in this report.

"Bussage Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school" – we can all take pride in that!

Christmas Fayre: Our Christmas Fayre took place at the end of November. It was a great way to kick off the festive season and raised over £2,200, which is fantastic! Thank you so much to everyone who organised a stall, volunteered on the evening and for all the donations. Yet again this was another huge team effort and everyone's help was greatly appreciated.

Visit us! If you are new to the area or have a child who will be starting school soon, we would love to show you around our school, please contact us for more details. You can contact the school on 01453 883 205.

Eastcombe Baptist Church

A service is held every Sunday morning at 10:30am at the church in Dr Crouch's Road, Eastcombe.

EASTCOMBE VILLAGE GROUP

Thank you to everyone who came to the **lighting of the Eastcombe Christmas Tree** on Monday 5th December.

There was a lovely atmosphere both on the Green and in the Lamb Inn afterwards, helped by Christmas carols from the Hilltop Band, and the mulled wine, cider and festive goodies served by The Lamb Inn. Thank you to Gardiners from Middle Hill for providing the tree, to Tony and Andy for organising the lights and sound system, and to Mike and Debbie at the Eastcombe Stores for providing the power. Special thanks also to the Hilltop Band for the music, to Sarah and her team at the Lamb for the refreshments, and to Carol and Alex Lambert for their help with the 'switch on'.

We are delighted that a number of people have put decorations and messages on the tree, with donations to the Long Table. If you wish to keep your decoration, please collect it before Wednesday 4th January, when the tree is taken down.



The annual **Village Quiz** takes place on Saturday 11 February at the Village Hall. Organised by Scott Sissons, it includes a ploughman's supper. See you there.

At our last meeting, it was agreed that it would be good to involve the **younger families** in the village more, possibly organising events especially for them. If you have ideas as to how to do this or would like to be involved, please get in touch.

Our next meeting will be **Monday 23 January at 8pm** in Eastcombe Village Hall annex. Everyone is welcome, so please do come and share your ideas and thoughts on activities for the coming year.

Wishing everyone a happy New Year.

Peter Scott
peterhscott@btinternet.com



St Michael's & All Angels, Bussage

Visitors are always welcome at our services:

- **January 8th: Holy Communion at 9.30am**
- **January 15th: Morning Prayer* at 9.30am**
- **January 15th: Hilltop Cafe Church, 2.30pm at Eastcombe Village Hall** (see poster on page 8)
- **January 29th: Candlemas at 9.30am**

*Morning Prayer is a simpler and shorter service

On the other Sundays there are services in different parts of the Benefice. For full details visit www.bisleybenefice.org.uk or sign up to our mailing list: pewslipsbisley@hotmail.com

For weddings, funerals & baptisms, contact Rev. Sue Murray: vicar@bisleybenefice.org.uk

District Council Notes for January

Bin Collection: Residents are asked to put containers out by 6am on their normal scheduled collection days, and to recycle as much Christmas waste as possible. *Details on the council website.*

Warm Welcome at The Lamb Inn: Share warmth, company and refreshments, free, every Tuesday and Thursday 2-5pm. Huge thanks to landlords Sarah and Mike! Supported by SDC and the Parish Council.

Cost of Living Emergency: Advice is available on the SDC website www.stroud.gov.uk, or call 01453 766 321 (out of hours 01453 222104). The Council is running specific events for its tenants, with support.

Job Vacancies with SDC on the website include Electrician, Skills and Fitness Instructor.

Bicycle Mayor: The council is looking for a 'Bicycle Mayor' for Stroud district. Council Leader Catherine Braun says: *'This is a voluntary role to advocate for cycling in our local area and help make cycling accessible to all. A mayor would join the global network of Bicycle Mayors: <https://bycs.org/>. Applications close 20 January.* You don't have to be a MAMIL – though it isn't a disqualification!

A Very Happy New Year to Everyone!

Martin Brown, District Councillor, 01452 770878
cllr.martin.brown@stroud.gov.uk

CHALCAN UPDATE:

The start of a new year is a good time to make resolutions about what we can do to live more sustainably. Check out these suggestions:

- **Keep up the energy saving measures.** Is this the year to invest in insulation, a sustainable energy source, an electric car or bike?
- **Express your views and use your power as a consumer and voter.** Write to your MP, council and companies to let them know what action you would like taken.
- **Sharing is caring and reduces your carbon footprint.** If you need a new tool, book or outfit consider borrowing, or use sites such as freecycle.org.
- **Step up your recycling.** Go beyond the weekly collections: sort batteries, electronics, wrappers and packaging, spectacles, bikes, toys, furniture, clothes etc. More details on the ChalCAN website.
- **Audit your IT habits.** Review your browser, how much storage space you use, whether you could use a green network provider for your phone, how often you stream videos and films.
- **Switch to a green energy supplier.** Find a supplier using renewable sources, but beware of 'greenwash'. Few companies supply 100% green energy.
- **Take steps to cut the carbon in your diet.** Try cutting out or cutting down on meat and dairy. Buy local produce. Keep asking questions and checking labels.
- **Take action to promote biodiversity.** If you have a garden, try planting a tree, hedge or sowing wild flowers. You can also create 'scrub' areas for insects, hedgehog highways through fences and bird boxes.
- **Help spread the word and talk to others.** Talk to your friends, family and colleagues about the steps you are taking to help combat climate change. Suggesting solutions may encourage others.

Are you struggling with energy bills, or know someone who is? ChalCAN can help!

With Retrofit insulation experts, **we have secured funding to offer free surveys to homes in the Chalford Parish** to advise about home improvements such as loft insulation. A survey takes about 45 minutes.

In addition, if you are finding home improvements too expensive, we may be able to help with the cost of materials, or with advice about what might help the most. To find out more contact: info@chalcan.org.uk, with 'insulation' in the title. **Please note:** we have limited funding and work on a strict first-come first-served basis. Visit www.chalcan.org.uk for more information.

ChalCAN

EASTCOMBE WI

Eastcombe WI would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year.

The last meeting of 2022 was the Christmas Party for members, which was enjoyed by all.

As a group we regularly enjoy outings, luncheon club and participate in craft, book club and scrabble meetings. New members are always very welcome.

Meetings, most of which most are open to non-members for a small fee, take place on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 7.15pm at Eastcombe Village Hall, and usually include some form of entertainment. We look forward to warmly welcoming you.

The itinerary for the first part of 2023 is:

Jan 17: Chatsworth and the Cavendish Family, 1550-1850

Feb 21: Villa Gardens of the Italian Lakes

Mar 21: Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust

Apr 18: Humorous Poems

May 16: 90 years: Eastcombe WI, a Celebration

June 20: Shadows from China

For more information please contact the Secretary, Glenys Sharpe, on 01453 886298



SCREEN ON THE GREEN

presents

FISHERMAN'S FRIENDS: ONE AND ALL

The next instalment of the Fisherman's Friends uplifting story, following the celebrated shanty singers through the highs and lows of recording their second album.

Join us for an enjoyable start to the New Year, With SPECIAL NAUTICAL THEMED ENTERTAINMENT IN THE INTERVAL!



Venue: Eastcombe Village Hall

Date: Saturday 14th January

Time: Doors 7pm, Film starts 7.30pm

Admission: £4 per person

Selection of Ice Creams £2 each

All welcome!

IS IT CHEAPER TO COOK WITH AN AIR FRYER? And OTHER SMALL WAYS TO SAVE MONEY...

With food and energy prices increasing at their fastest rate in 40 years, everyone is looking to cut costs. This could mean making use of the latest technology—and thinking about small ways to make a difference.

What is an air fryer? About the same size as a bread maker, an air fryer cooks by blowing very hot air, at high speed, all around food, in a similar way to a fan oven. However, due to its small size and powerful fan, it is more efficient than an oven and needs little pre-heating, leading to shorter cooking times.

How much energy does it save? In an experiment, a baked potato was cooked in a conventional fan oven and another of the same size in an air fryer. In the regular oven, the potato took approximately an hour to cook, while, in the air fryer, it took 35 minutes. Based on the government limited price of 34p per kWh (kilowatt hours) it was possible to say that the oven used 1.31 kWh of energy at a cost of 44.5p, while the air fryer used 0.55 kWh of electricity at a cost of 18.1p. So, allowing for variations like the age and efficiency of the oven, an electric oven costs more than double what it costs to cook in an air fryer.

However: Because the drawer has less capacity, you can only cook small amounts at a time, meaning that, if cooking for several people, it may be necessary to cook food in batches, adding to time and cost. You also need to factor in the initial cost of an air fryer—prices vary, but, if you were to buy a £50 air fryer and save 20 pence each time you cook, it will take 250 cooks to pay off the cost. If you use the fryer 3 times a week, this amounts to 83 weeks, or around a year and a half.

Some air fryer recipes: www.bbc.co.uk/food/collections/air_fryer_recipes

Other small things you can do to save money:

- Fit PIRs to light switches to prevent lights being left on.
- Open windows for a couple of hours in the morning to ventilate the house, then close to seal the house with the heating on low.
- Don't overfill the kettle - add just enough water for what you need.
- If you have PV panels, only run appliances when the sun is up, and charge electricals in daylight hours.
- Fit energy saving light bulbs - these last up to 10 times longer than traditional bulbs and use around 80% less energy, saving you up to £60 over the lifetime of the light bulb.
- 90% of a washing machine's energy goes to heat the water, so washing at 30 degrees will save money.
- Limit the number of washes you do per week - and wait until you have a full load before washing.
- Swap your bath for a 4 minute shower: doing this just once a week could save you £20 a year.
- If using a tumble dryer (and it's cheaper not to) ensure that it is full before you set it off, but don't overload it. Fast spin your washing before drying to remove more of the water.
- Fill your dishwasher completely before setting it off—a half load uses the same amount of energy as a full one. If possible, stop the cycle when it gets to the drying stage and open it, allowing the dishes to dry naturally.
- Buy energy efficient appliances, with the Energy Saving Recommended logo. This could save up to £37 a year.
- Reduce your bill and avoid emitting CO2 by not leaving electrical products on stand by. You can save around £65 a year just by remembering to turn your appliances off properly.



HILLTOP HAPPENINGS...

On 6th December, Hilltop Gardening Club held the last of the year's meetings in Eastcombe Scout Hut (our winter quarters).

There was a good turn-out for this Christmas event, with a stalwart party arriving early to decorate the hall. Tablecloths, candles and winter floral decorations bedecked the tables, and mulled wine and mince pies were served.

Members, old and new, and visitors were then treated to a fascinating lecture, as botanist Dr Michael Jones spoke about *Mistletoe - Fact, Myth & Legend*, leaving it to his audience to sort out which was which.

Michael's enthusiasm for his semi-parasitic subject was backed by a lifetime's personal, wide-ranging research, international university teaching and plenty of astonishing, tenacious fieldwork, much of it in the Gambia. His botanical introduction was both fascinating and accessible, laying the ground for a better understanding of such a familiar plant, which has its social history in ritual, medicine and folklore.

Michael also gave an interesting account of the famous mistletoe auction at Tenby Wells and the global spread of the plant, which is originally endemic to Australia.

The well-illustrated talk was peppered with humour and insight - according to comments, it was one of the best talks we have ever had! An excellent way to end the year.

For more information, visit www.hilltopgardeningclub.org.uk

Time to get walking again!

At this time of year we think about getting out to walk in the beautiful English Countryside, but where to find new and interesting walks?



Walking in Gloucestershire (www.walkinginengland.co.uk/glos) has hundreds of walks to download and print, free, plus books of walks, details of all the walking groups in the county and much more. Whether walking on your own or with a group, you will find all the information here.

John Harris (custodian of the website) says, 'There is so much walking information on the web, but *Walking in Gloucestershire* (part of the *Walking in England* website) brings the information together in one place. So, whether walking from home, or away on holiday, you will find a walk suitable for you'.

With walks ranging from half a mile to 12 miles +, some suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs, everyone can find a walk to enjoy. Check out the website and get walking!

John Harris

www.walkinginengland.co.uk
john@walkinginengland.co.uk

COUNTING THE CURRENCY—AND THE CALORIES!

Overdone the Christmas chocolates? Need to tighten your belt (in more ways than one!)? Here are a few easy ways to use up calories - and save money!

Park further away from the supermarket door.

Use a trolley so you don't have to carry your shopping. Visit in the evening when products are reduced.



Take the stairs rather than the lift. This isn't possible for everyone, but many of us take the lift because we're feeling lazy.

Get there on foot. Many car journeys are less than 2 miles. With the average walking speed being 3-4mph, allowing just a few minutes extra to get there and back means you can use energy and calories rather than petrol.

Go for a walk. Studies suggest that a brisk 45 minute walk daily can help you to lose half a stone over 6 weeks. It's also good for your mental health to have fresh air and light at the darkest time of year.

Cut out the calorific drinks. Fizzy drinks, milkshakes etc add a huge number of unneeded calories to a diet.



Drink lots of water. Some 'hunger pangs' are actually due to thirst. Drinking water is good for you—and will also temporarily fill you up!

Don't snack between meals. Christmas is terrible for grazing, with so many tempting treats about. You'll appreciate meals more if you're properly hungry - and you won't miss the extra calories or the money you pay for them.

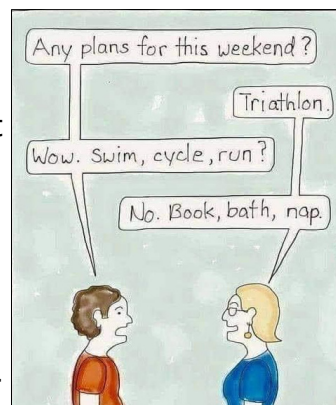
Exercise while you work. Have you got an exercise bike that you never get round to using? Too much work to do? Combine the two! Buy or make a frame for your laptop on the handlebars of the exercise bike and pedal away as you work. It's a great way to get regular exercise into your day.



Exercise while you wait! Dance or do exercises while waiting for the kettle to boil or the dinner to cook. Walk round and round the kitchen!

REMEMBER: although it's tempting to start a new year with grandiose plans about how this year you really **WILL** get fit (and spending lots of money on that new pair of trainers is **really** going to help) it's the small habits that fit into your life that are more likely to stick.

And, over time, these habits **will** make a difference...



CHRISTMAS QUIZ

ANSWERS

- Germany
- Eggnog
- 4 ghosts
- White
- Hansel and Gretel
- St Nicholas put gold coins in the stockings of 3 poor sisters
- Feliz Navidad
- 27.2 °C
- 15 years
- From the Germanic 'wintar' & 'wed' meaning 'wet' or 'water'
- Join in any reindeer games
- Macy's
- A Blue Christmas
- An angel got his wings
- Christian bishop, St. Nicholas
- Pig's head & mustard
- The Beatles
- Edward Johnson, in 1882
- Dresden's Striezelmarkt
- 364
- Poinsettia
- 113 feet
- 25 million
- Norway
- London confectioner Tom Smith
- Servants received a 'Christmas Box' from their employer.
- 6th century
- Twelfth Night: 5th/6th January
- The Romans
- The Druids
- An orange
- Candles
- 25th December
- 1843
- 60 million

CAROL'S COOKERY CORNER: COQ AU VIN

SERVES 4. A delicious French winter warmer. It freezes well so you can make it in advance.

INGREDIENTS:

4 skinless chicken thighs and 4 skinless chicken drumsticks
4 rashers smoked back bacon, chopped
Tablespoon olive oil
Large knob of butter
3 large onions/6 shallots, peeled and chopped
250g chestnut mushrooms, peeled and halved
2 cloves of garlic, peeled and crushed
5 sprigs fresh thyme, stripped and chopped
300ml chicken stock
Heaped tablespoon plain flour
450ml red wine
Salt and pepper to season



METHOD:

1. Prepare all the chicken and vegetables.
2. In a large, lidded saucepan or large skillet frying pan, heat the oil and butter until hot but not smoking.
3. Add the chicken and fry for about 10 minutes, turning frequently until the meat is beginning to brown.
4. Add the bacon and onion. Fry until soft, then add thyme, garlic and mushrooms, frying for a few minutes.
5. Reduce the heat and stir in the flour.
6. Add the chicken stock slowly and continue stirring until mixture begins to thicken.
7. Add the red wine a little at a time. The mixture will look very runny, but most of the liquid will be reduced. Season with salt and pepper and put the lid on.
8. Simmer for 45 minutes, stirring now and then. Check chicken is cooked.
9. Remove lid and bring to a slow boil, stirring occasionally. Reduce liquid until it is the consistency of a sauce (40+ minutes). The volume will shrink but this will be reflected in the flavour.
10. Serve with mashed potatoes or other vegetables to balance the richness.

Wishing all the Carol's Cookery Corner readers a Happy New Year. I hope you enjoyed last year's recipes as much as I enjoyed researching, testing and passing them on.



'WARM WELCOME' at The Lamb Inn

Join us to share warmth, company and free refreshments

Every Tuesday & Thursday 2-5pm
(starting Tuesday 1st November)

ALL WELCOME!

Don't forget: you are also welcome to join us at the Community Coffee Morning, 11am every Wednesday at The Lamb Inn – coffee, tea and drinks on sale.

Are you interested in local history?

If so, you might be interested to know that a local history group for Eastcombe & Bismore has been created on Facebook.

If you'd like to know more, search for **Eastcombe and Bismore Local History Group** & answer the quick question. You don't have to live in Eastcombe or Bismore to join.



If you have any questions, or know someone who is not on Facebook but who might be happy to share photos or answer questions, please get in touch on EBLHG@btinternet.com.



WHO'S WHO ON THE HILLTOP? We asked Sophie Carabine...

I co-ordinate the *Friends of Frith Wood*, which looks after the part of the ancient Bussage wood owned by Chalford Parish Council. When some trees were felled due to ash dieback, we were spurred into action, using some of the branches to line the paths and help guide people off the woodland and its bluebells.

Our aim is to protect the wood for the future. Lots of people love it and that means it's heavily used. It's a balancing act, essentially - humans, dogs, nature, bikes!

My role is to run volunteer sessions and put on other events, like a get-together on the longest day, and a 'Moth Breakfast' where we looked at the moths living by the wood (and we ate things that weren't moths).

I have secured funds for the wood, for example an attractive wooden fence and bird boxes, to create a nature sanctuary. Apparently I am sometimes known locally as the 'wood woman'.

What are my insights on having a community role?

- As best I can, I try to empathise with how life really is for most of us here. We're not thinking about trees all the time: we have kids to look after, our own stresses, income worries. I try to find a way in that is sensitive to how life really is. It's all about relationships. I try to help people feel safe, at home, with friends. I link up with generous people and find allies.
- I look after my own energy and time. I work and have a bit of Long Covid, so I need 'time away' to focus on myself and other things. I treat the role as a part-time job, in that respect. I use social media but keep it in bounds (loud voices aren't the only ones).
- I try not to beat myself up if something doesn't go brilliantly: we put lots of effort into a weekend event and got low numbers - lessons learnt and well done us for offering something. I find having my own spiritual practice helps me with this, letting things flow through.
- I think long-term. What will happen when I'm not around? This helps prioritise our activities.
- I say be brave, keep your eye on the big prizes (often found in the little things), be kind to yourself and others. If you get challenges, it's a sign that you're up to something real and good. Keep hopeful!



VILLAGE HISTORIES: THE HARSH WINTER OF 1940...

from 'Oil Lamp and Candle' by Phyllis Gaston 1926-2007

The Gaston family originally lived at The Red Lion, Eastcombe, but by the time Phyllis was born, in 1926, the family were living at Hilltop, opposite the driveway to St Elizabeth's, where Mr Gaston was gardener. Phyllis attended Eastcombe Primary School, Stroud High School, St Augustine's Church, Eastcombe Girl Guides, the Women's Institute and the British Legion. Phyllis died in 2007, but her writings live on. One was her enduring memories was of the ice during the winter of 1940.

'It began on the last Saturday of January. It had been raining all day and as we walked home from our Sunday School party we noticed ice forming on the road. There was a bitterly cold wind blowing... The next morning we could not get out of the back door... everything was encased in ice.'

The clipped yews by the front gate [at Hilltop] looked as if an inch-thick glass dome had been placed over them. Paths and roads were covered in ice one inch thick. Icicles, feet long, hung from everything. Electric and telephone wires encased in inch-thick ice were snapping—as each broke there was an audible ping and the wire snaked about as it fell. Looking down the Chalford road, all the branches from the east side of the trees in the recreation ground were stripped away almost to their trunks [from the weight of the ice]. Yet, within a number of years, those trees had regained their symmetry. Cameras were few, so, unfortunately, few pictures were taken. Stroud Museum had one of the signpost at Fourways crossroads with icicles from the fingers to the ground.

On that Sunday morning my father had to take an axe to the clipped yews to allow roosting birds to escape. Sadly, many birds perished as their feet were iced to the trees where they perched.

My brother and I donned our skates and skated to Bisley to take a pair of shoes to Mr Lardner for repair. He was surprised to see us! Has anyone else skated that road, I wonder? All the telephone poles...had broken off about four feet from the ground with tangled, ice-covered wires everywhere. People tried to walk on the verges, but each blade of grass was an upturned icicle, pinching your feet. On the Saturday night... a foot and a half of snow came down. It did offer a little purchase – though little else.

No school, so we hauled the broken branches from the recreation ground home on our sledges for valuable firewood. The rest of the day we spent sledging. We discovered that the Old Hill, then a yellow road [ie, unsurfaced] made a marvellous sledging run. Skill, plus luck to negotiate the left fork at the bottom and you could run right down to Swilley bridge! Someone told our parents next day—we got a right rollocking!

Near The Ram Inn... large lumps of the ice on tree branches were falling off. One landed on my brother's head. Luckily Father loomed out of the darkness by the Co-op (now Windwhistle) looking for us.

It was almost two months before telephone and electricity was restored. For us it was 'no big deal', only high income folk could afford phones and it was only three years since we had electricity into the village anyway. So the oil lamps were dug out and we carried on!

With thanks to www.eastcombearchive.org.uk/

A WINTER ECHO

BISLEY COMMENTS

"There were grand and stately trees in the parish that had witnessed by the beautiful symmetry of their branches that for more than a hundred years they had never known so piteous and destructive an onslaught of wind and snow and ice as that which was experienced this winter. They had stood up strong and defiant, unyielding and unbowed. It was lamentable to see these fine old trees at last bowed down and falling under their tremendous weight of ice. But when they crashed beneath their burden, they gleamed with the brightness of a most marvellous beauty—which was their witness that the life which is God-given has a spirit which can refuse to be broken by the bludgeoning of adversity."

"The 'Stroud News' has written in a very interesting way about our beauty spot of Bismore."

"The people who live in Bismore Valley cannot be expected always to appreciate the loveliness of their surroundings. During the weeks of storm the destruction wrought in the valley was sublimely beautiful. But the residents of the place had no water, no telephone communication with the outside world, and no electric light, and no one to repair burst pipes, and all their paths were sheets of ice."—Bisley Parish Magazine.




HILLTOP CAFÉ CHURCH
Christian Worship for those of all faiths and none.
Sunday 15th January
2.30pm
EASTCOMBE VILLAGE HALL
Future Dates:
Sunday 19th February
Sunday 19th March
BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE PARISH OF BUSSAGE AND EASTCOMBE



Erin's Wish
Raising awareness of SUEP
Birthday Race Night
Saturday 4th February 2023
Eastcombe Village Hall
7.30pm start
BYO Nibbles and Alcohol




COULD YOU CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEXT NEWSLETTER?

- An update on your group?
- An article on local history?
 - An upcoming event?
 - A book review?
 - Anything else local!

Please send contributions to:
eastcombenewsletter@btinternet.com
by noon on 20th January.

WHAT'S ON in JANUARY?

3 Jan: Longfield Christmas tree recycling registration closes, 10am

2-15 Jan: Christmas card recycling for Cobalt, Eastcombe Village Hall

14 Jan: Screen on the Green: Fisherman's Friends One & All, 7pm for 7.30pm, Eastcombe Village Hall

15 Jan: Hilltop Café Church, 2.30pm, Eastcombe Village Hall

17 Jan: WI Talk: Chatsworth & the Cavendish Family 1550-1850

20 January: Deadline for contributions to February newsletter/

applications close for SDC Bicycle Mayor

21 Jan: ChalCAN Community Walk, 10am, Chalford Sports & Social Club

23 Jan: EVG meeting, Eastcombe Village Hall annex, 8pm

NAME THAT VIEW!



How well do you know our villages?

December's photo was of Eastcombe Baptist Church, at sunset.

January's photo is a historical one, but still taken in or around the 3 villages.

Can you identify its location?

The answer will be revealed in the February issue.