

March 2021



Could this be the last non printed copy of the Bugle? There are encouraging signs that we will slowly come out of restrictive measures over the next few months: this time last year we didn't know what was coming and we wonder where we will be this time next year.

As this is being written it is definitely showing signs of better and warmer weather. Last month we were looking at the emerging snowdrops and tentative signs of celandines and primroses. The snowdrops have more or less peaked, the celandines are flowering as are the primroses. This is the first time this editorial is being written outside in the sun with hardly a wind, lambs bleating in the distance with a couple of song thrushes not far away. Spring cannot be far away.

We have some sad news to report. The last of the Bond sisters, Phyllis, has passed away. The three Bond sisters were

part of "old" Bickleigh, having mostly lived in the village all of their lives; indeed we understand their father was the last station master in Bickleigh (or Cadeleigh Station to save confusion with the other Bickleigh near Plymouth).

Thank you Clive for your interesting article. We hope very much that as we emerge from Covid the small team will be able to take forward ideas and projects to benefit the village.

Finally a reminder that the village library is now in the entrance of the village hall; all are welcome to take any book for reading then return it (with any of your unwanted books) for others to enjoy. Donations for food in the CHAT box are always welcome and this is outside Gable Cottage with thanks to Thom and Polly.

Best wishes for the month ahead.

**Your editors
Steve and Michael**

Letter from the Rector

March is the first anniversary of Wendy and I moving here. My institution as rector being on the same evening that the Prime Minister announced the beginning of the first lockdown. As I write, almost a year later, we are in our third lockdown.

There has been much to lament over this last year – loved ones lost to Coronavirus and other illnesses who could not be visited in their last days and for whom we could not gather to remember as we should; closed business and lost jobs effecting the well-being of many – uncertain futures and many who never thought they would ever need state benefits or a food banks. A year of lost schooling and opportunities and postponed weddings and celebrations.

But also a year of gratitude to the many who went the extra mile to care for and serve others. As the daily statistics of the pandemic continue to move in a positive direction and the vaccination programme continues apace, plans are being made for the gradual easing of lockdown. And maybe we can all have a bit of the optimism and hope of the late Captain Sir Tom Moore: "Tomorrow will be a good day".

Spring is bursting out all around us – sign of new life is everywhere. Our summer visiting birds are returning and, along with our residents, their chorus greets us every morning. I recall the words of Jesus: "Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them" – listen all around you, use the example of these creatures to inspire you this day – do not be anxious, concerned or afraid, the Lord will provide whatever you need.

I recall, from many years ago, a management trainer who used an illustration from the life of birds to show how working as a team we can achieve some awe-inspiring results. He showed a video of the flight of a flock of geese travelling over an ocean in an inverted V shape formation. The leaders are out in front, guiding the flock, but when they are tired, they slip back in the formation to refresh themselves in the slipstream of those who have now taken up the lead in front. And in this way the whole flock can achieve great feats of endurance of travel over many hundreds of miles of ocean. If one is unable to carry on I believe others will stay back with it as it rests until they are able to join another formation.

What fantastic communities we are all privileged to live in – all because we are prepared to come together, share our talents and work together to achieve some quite amazing things. As the

seventeenth century Anglican Bishop Hugh Gore once said "God does not want us to do extraordinary things; He wants us to do ordinary things extraordinarily well".

Let us all give thanks for our communities and all we have achieved. We hope and pray we may achieve even greater things in the months and years ahead and this may be an inspiration to how we build all our futures – working together, supporting each other, valuing our differences and the gifts we all have to offer and making our village and the world a better place. In doing so we all help to build God's kingdom here on earth – 'tomorrow will be a good day'.

Paul

Let's Get Walking

Let's face it - what else is there to do? Can't even play golf at the present time - which is my favourite type of walk!

It has to be said though that, in many ways, walking is the perfect exercise - it's free, requires no equipment, with virtually no injury risk and yet has an abundance of benefits for physical and mental health.

An hour of brisk walking has been shown to eliminate the negative effects of sitting down for long periods of time. Even if you've only time for a quick walk around the block, and what amazing 'blocks' we have in Bickleigh, research has shown that even a 2-minute stomp has significant benefits.

I've been thinking of other ways to get the most out of our walks:

1. Vary the route

Choosing a different route gives your brain a workout and varying the terrain to include some bumpy footpaths (easy enough around here), gives more of your muscles a workout and increases your calorie burn. The additional stimulation can even protect your brain against ageing apparently and is more mentally stimulating than most people realise.

2. Walking correctly

I recall as a youngster my father telling me to walk properly and stop slouching. He probably had a point although I didn't appreciate it at the time. Teaching an adult how to walk might seem a bit odd but it's really not as simple as putting one foot in front of the other. Apparently, most people walk incorrectly, being over-reliant on the power of their front foot. Try focusing on

pushing off your back foot and keeping your torso lifted up and your head in line with your spine. By the way, walking whilst starring at your phone will not help your posture - who'd have thought it!

3. Walk to sleep

Not to be confused with sleepwalking, that's something altogether different, but going for an early morning walk helps to calibrate the body's internal clock and keeping its rhythm in sync, making it easier to fall asleep and stay asleep at night. In fact, getting outside in natural light in the morning is thought to be the best thing you can do for good sleep.

4. Walking challenges

If you are looking for something to make your walks more interesting, then try setting

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yourself a challenge. The obvious one is to do it quicker each time but more beneficial may be to spot something you hadn't noticed before or how about taking your camera along and recording the changing seasons for example. I'm sure all us parents will have played I-spy with our kids whilst trying to pass the time and there are other similar walking games such as Alphabet Race, Follow the leader or even a Scavenger Hunt. There are lots more if you look online.

5. Mindful Walking

Some of us like to count our steps (guilty) or set distance goals using a plethora of amazing gadgets - as long as you remember to switch them on of course. For some though, this can only add more stress and takes away the opportunity to use the walk to calm the mind. Try leaving your phone at home (I appreciate this is not realistic for many people who, I'm convinced, would sooner have their left arm removed!) and

really take in the world around you, whether it's the birds in the leafless trees or the early signs of spring. It's recognised that 'awe walks' where you set out specifically to look at something that triggers a feeling of wonder have a powerful effect on your mood.

For those of you looking for new walks in the local area, I feel I ought to mention a great book by Simone Stanbrook-Byrne, a local writer, entitled Circular Walks in Central Devon which features 15 walks around our area (I've completed 5 so 10 more to look forward to!) and really is good value.

At the February meeting of the Bickleigh Parish Council, we agreed to seek membership of the Parish Paths Partnership (also known as the P3 scheme). It's an initiative to ensure that the Rights of Way network is properly maintained and well publicised. It is supported by the National Association of Local Councils and is funded by Devon County Council. We will need to conduct a survey of all the Rights of Way in Bickleigh Parish and their condition and then seek a grant from DCC to undertake any work that needs to be completed. We will seek to upgrade and re-open paths where possible by undertaking vegetation clearance, repairing stiles and waymarking.

Finally, if you're really struggling to get off your sofa, you can always do what I've just done by signing up to walk in aid of a charity close to your heart - in my case I seem to have committed myself to walking 88 miles (fortunately not all at once!) in aid of The Brain Tumour Charity and in memory of a close friend of mine who died recently. Further details are on my JustGiving page.

Until next time – keep walking!!

Clive

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