



The Friends of St Peter and All Hallows Church West Huntspill

Newsletter No.10 Winter 2021/22

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and peaceful New Year

Dear Members of Friends,

This Newsletter will be the last for 2021 and I would just like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a more peaceful 2022 after what has been a period of almost two years of unprecedented times. The pandemic has affected so many lives and communities not only at home but throughout the World. Looking ahead we are hoping to plan several events in the New Year and I look forward to receiving your continued excellent support without which we would cease to function. I am also supported by an excellent group of people on the Friends Council who have worked very hard towards achieving our goals and to whom I express my personal thanks.

We have as an organisation achieved considerable progress in such a short space of time since our inauguration.

David Hill, Chairman

NEWS

Following the repair of the Reginald Wade window in 2020, our fund was almost exhausted, but through your generosity and that of the community, we hope to soon be discussing with the PCC suitable projects to finance.

When restrictions were lifted and it was safe to do so, we commenced fund-raising and awareness raising activities and that, together with your continued support via subscriptions and donations, has increased the funds held by the Friends from £300 to almost £2300 during the year. For a small organisation in these times, this is a demonstration of just how much this lovely building means to the village community.

From July through to November, we managed to have some activity each month:

July – Table with Raffle at the Church Fete

August – BBQ on the Lawn

September – Table with Raffle at the Car Show

October – Richard Lennox Concert

November – Table with Raffle at the Craft Fair

Sadly, we had to take the decision to cancel the Skittles at the Orchard event that was planned for December, because of the raised risk of Covid at this time. We hope to be able to reschedule this for the spring.

We also continue to receive a steady stream of small donations via the "Friends Table" at the café mornings in the Church on alternate Monday mornings and have passed £50 directly to the Church to go towards their fund for repairs to the fabric of the building. For those of you who have not yet visited the café, it is very friendly, a great way to meet people and of course, excellent cakes are on offer. There is no charge, but if you want to, you can drop a donation into the Church's glass collection jar.

Thank you to all who have supported the Friends throughout the year and if anyone has a suggestion for future events or would be willing to help man a table, please let Janet Hill know, or email us at hello@friendsofspaahc.org.

Richard Lennox Concert

On the evening of Friday 22nd September a number of guests were treated to an evening of organ and piano music by popular local musician Richard Lennox. Those of us who had not had the pleasure of seeing Richard play before were surprised and delighted by his broad and sometimes improvised mix of music. There truly was something for every musical taste in his program.

This event a first for the Friends as we have not staged a concert before, with the associated costs involved. However, the concert was a roaring success and we raised several hundred pounds from the ticket and bar sales which will of course be going towards our next project for the Church building.

Several people have asked if we can bring Richard back again in the future and it is certainly something that we hope to make happen.



CHRISTMAS QUIZ *(Answers at the end of page 4)*

1. What is the best-selling Christmas song of all time ?
2. In which classic Christmas film does Tiny Tim appear ?
3. Which country annually sends a Christmas tree to be erected in London's Trafalgar square ?
4. Which monarch delivered the first Royal Christmas day message ?
5. In which year was the first Christmas card sent ?
6. Which ocean can Christmas Island be found ?
7. Who was crowned King of England on Christmas Day in 1066 ?
8. Why do we eat chocolate log at Christmas time ?
9. Which country did eggnog come from ?
10. Which way is it considered good luck to stir your Christmas pudding ?

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE at HUNTSPILL by Enid Bryant



Coleridge first visited Huntspill in August 1794. He was on his way to visit Henry Poole of Nether Stowey, a fellow student of Jesus College Cambridge. En route he called to see the 18 year old George Burnett of Swell House, Huntspill. George was the youngest son of farmer John Burnett, and a first year student at Oxford studying to enter the clergy.

George's fate was sealed when he met Coleridge who happened to be visiting the Pooles at Nether Stowey. Coleridge was bored with university life and had begun to take Laudanum, a form of opium, to cure persistent colds from living in damp university rooms.

At the time, Coleridge was also friendly with James Jennings of Huntspill. Jennings was a literary scholar. He had become an avid disciple of Coleridge and his developing ideas for escaping to America, where intellectuals could live in a

commune-like existence.

Coleridge knew George Burnett was not his intellectual equal. But the youth had veered off his university course and had become a strong advocate of Coleridge's dreams, and had also started to take opium.

In 1797 Coleridge was visiting Huntspill when an old woman accosted him on the village green. Not knowing who he was, she started to chat and informed him that a vile Jacobite, by the name of Coleridge, had been ruining George Burnett of Swell House. A bemused Coleridge was also told that drunken singing issuing from Swell House had been disturbing the neighbours.

George became a drifter, sponging off friends to satisfy his need of opium. In the 1790s high tides had caused disastrous floods at Huntspill. All Farmer John Burnett's land was under water. This shock, together with George's dissipation and the death of his eldest son John in military action abroad, caused Farmer Burnett to die. He was buried in Huntspill churchyard.

Meanwhile Poole and Coleridge subsidised George until he died of poverty and drug addiction and was buried in Marylebone Workhouse Cemetery. Some years later, Coleridge died, bereft of friends and still addicted to drugs.

For a while the entwined destinies of the great poet from Ottery St. Mary in Devon and the clever youth from Huntspill, merged. The destinies of both are an integral part of West Huntspill's history.

WHY NOT MAKE THESE GOODIES FOR CHRISTMAS?

Traditional Gingerbread – makes 2 cake tins

1lb/450g wholemeal flour

8oz/225g light brown sugar

½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda

1 teaspoon ground ginger

1 teaspoon mixed spice

½ teaspoon salt

8oz/225g organic margarine

8oz/225g black treacle

8oz/225g golden syrup

3 eggs beaten

½ pint 330ml milk

Grease and line a 12 inch/30cm cake tin. Put all the dry ingredients into a large bowl and mix together. Warm the milk. Melt the margarine with the golden syrup and the black treacle in a saucepan over a low heat. When they are runny and melted together, take the pan away from the heat and add the milk and beaten eggs. Stir well. Tip this mixture into the bowl of dried ingredients and mix well. Pour the mixture into the prepared cake tin and bake in the centre of the oven at 150°C/Gas Mark 2 for about 1 hour. Check to see if the gingerbread is cooked by pressing the top. (Keeps well if wrapped and kept somewhere cool in an airtight container)



THE CHURCH BELLS, WEST HUNTSPILL.



What can be more seasonal than hearing the peal of the Church Bells at Christmas? We are grateful to the Bell Tower, Captain Richard Tiley, for this insight into the bells and how they are rung.

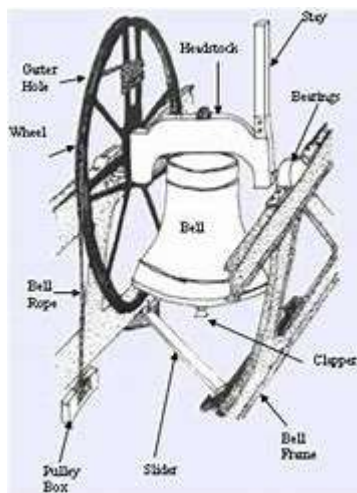
Before 1877 a mixed ring of 5 bells were hung in the tower. These 5 bells were recast in 1877 but after a disastrous fire on December 9th 1878 the heat was so intense that the bells melted. There are now 6 bells in West Huntspill tower which were cast by Taylors of Loughborough in 1879.

We ring methods which are numbered sequences all starting from what we call rounds being the sequence 123456 each bell moves one position at a time. A simple sequence is:

123456; 214356; 241536; 425136; 452316; 543216; 534126; 351426; 315246; 132546; 123456

Each ringer rings just one bell so we need 6 ringers.

Bell in the down position

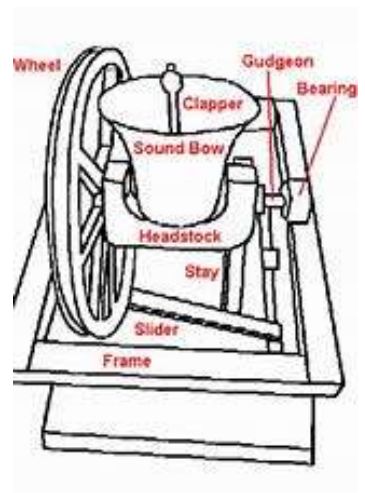


When we arrive for ringing the bells are in the down position and we raise them into the up position.

This is done by progressively swinging the bell back and forth.

The bells are then rung in the up position for services.

Bell in the up position




Answers to Christmas Quiz

- 1) White Christmas by Bing Crosby,
- 2) A Christmas Carol,
- 3) Norway,
- 4) King George V,
- 5) 1843,
- 6) Indian ocean,
- 7) William The Conqueror (William 1),
- 8) There was a pagan tradition of burning the yule log – a special log for the fire,
- 9) England,
- 10) clockwise

Want to contact us?

Telephone the Membership Secretary, Janet Hill on 07840 072351 or email: hello@friendsofspaahc.org

See our website: <https://friendsofspaahc.org> for more information, the latest news, new membership and renewals, ticket purchases and more. Follow us on Facebook  for news.