



## St Briavels, Hewelsfield & Brockweir

The "Great Get Together" in St Briavels.  
Photograph by Pierre Jomain, submitted by Alex Vernon.

### VILLAGE NEWS ONLINE – TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Because of Covid-19, we have been unable to print, collate and distribute Village News since late March. There have now been 4 editions available online, including this one. At the moment, we don't know when we will be able to return to a printed version, the production and distribution of which relies entirely on volunteers in our community.

We are thinking about ways forward and we want to hear the views of our readers. So, please tell us what you think.

How have you found reading Village News online? How important do you think it is that we return to a printed copy as soon as possible?

Please send your thoughts to us at [editors@villagemag.co.uk](mailto:editors@villagemag.co.uk).

Many thanks

The Editorial Committee

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## Dear Friends

As I write this, the death has just been announced of Dame Vera Lynn, immortalised in the words of 'We'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when, but I know we'll meet again some sunny day' - a song which helped people to keep going in the darkest days of WW2. The Queen referred to it in her broadcast to the nation at the beginning of the coronavirus lockdown. We have certainly needed to have been kept going during these last few months and I am sure we all look forward to the time when restrictions on our movements and activities are ended.

This time of lockdown has been a real trial, with our normal way of life completely disrupted. People have lost their lives, their loved ones and their jobs. Children have missed their schooling and their friends. People have been isolated, lonely, fearful, perhaps cooped up in tiny flats with no outside space to get fresh air. All these have been proven to be factors in mental health issues, when it is just too easy to think, 'Nobody cares. I'm the only one feeling like this. What's to become of me?'

There has been a lot of advice about how to cope with yet another change of circumstances when we come out of lockdown completely. For example, Katie Piper, the model who suffered an acid attack which led to her needing 250 operations, and is therefore well-qualified to understand trauma, suggests keeping a gratitude journal by writing down every day in your diary or journal something for which you are truly grateful. She says, 'It's not just about doing it at that time, it's about creating the material that you can come back to.' A very positive attitude, rather than a negative one.

Here is another suggestion I have found helpful when going through a bad patch. Being unable to sleep properly at night when suffering a great deal of worry and anxiety, I found it comforting to know that at every minute, night or day, somebody somewhere was praying and thereby letting the power and love of God flow into my life. The more we rely on God's love, the more we are conscious of our own self-worth because we know we are loved.

We can make good come out of this time of lockdown, not only by stemming the spread of this awful virus but also by pausing to re-think our priorities, deciding what is really important in life and what is merely superficial. This is what John the Baptist was preaching about when he told people to have a change of heart and mend their ways.

We will meet again.

Margaret Cooling.

## FROM OUR PARISH CHURCHES

At the time of writing, we are still in lockdown due to the Covid-19 virus. Sadly, this means that our churches are closed for public worship. However there is a ray of **good news**.

Both our churches are now open for private prayer and reflection if you desire somewhere quiet. Please keep an eye on church notice boards as the Government continues to announce further easing of lockdown rules

**St Briavels Church** is open daily between 10 am and noon.

**Hewelsfield Church** is open daily between 9am and 4pm.

Please observe the current guidelines on social distancing.

It is still possible to access the “Little Larders” at both churches.

Thanks to the internet, it is possible to join other worshipping communities all over the country. Below are some suggestions:

**Tidenham Parish Facebook page** – folk from St Briavels & Hewelsfield & Brockweir are most welcome to join.

**Tidenham YouTube channel:** ‘Tidenham Parish Online Church’ with videos and resources to assist you in your devotions. This includes Sunday worship.  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkRjOlvDBT9M9usfhp2722w>

**Daily Morning Prayer** organised by Chepstow Churches together, commencing at 9am Mondays to Fridays via Zoom. <https://zoom.us/j/122778377>

**For those who don't have access to the internet**, many churches, for example St Timothy's Church, Sheffield, offer a telephone link to their worship: “Church by Phone” 0114 303 1731. Ask someone with an internet connection if they could search for other churches offering similar.

**For the latest Church of England Covid-19 guidance**, which covers all kinds of issues, including weddings, baptisms and funerals, go to the Church of England media centre. There are also some really helpful resources for prayer and worship on this website.

**The Little Larder** - These were placed at the churches in St Briavels and Hewelsfield several years ago to provide for those who, for whatever reason, were experiencing difficulties in obtaining essential supplies. The contents are replenished regularly by kind donations from members of the public. These “Little Larders” can be accessed by anyone when the churches are open. They have been used regularly throughout “Lockdown”. Donations to replenish them are always welcome.

**Being a Good Neighbour** - In these strange and unfamiliar times, it is important that we keep an eye on and support our neighbours and the more vulnerable in our communities. (I know many of you are already.) If anyone needs help, wants to let off steam or simply wants to chat, then please ring Mandy (01594 530844) or myself (01594 530443) anytime.

David Rees

## ST BRIAVELS CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

We've seen in recent weeks a renewed expression of outrage against racial injustice. As Christians we look to the Bible to shape our understanding – the Bible tells us that every human being is formed in God's image, bearing a unique, precious dignity. It culminates in “a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language”. Whilst our views, about the best way to respond may vary, we must say unequivocally: Racism is a sin, both against God and against humans who are made in His image.

We're hopeful that we can gather together again from July 5<sup>th</sup>. We'll be observing social distancing and careful hygiene, taking care to reduce the risk of transmitting the virus. Things will feel a bit different – we won't be able to sing together – but we'll be very glad to see each other face to face.

Some of you, who might otherwise want to attend, are in poor health or elderly and will feel that you shouldn't yet gather with us. As a church we'll continue sharing services on YouTube (<http://tiny.cc/sbser>) so that people don't miss out. We'll circulate details about the services by email and on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/StBriavelsCongregationalChurch/>

We had a good Zoom session recently, thinking about suffering and God. A number of people found it helpful. Following on from that, we're going to hold a second Zoom session, 8pm on Thursday 2nd July. We'll ask “If God, why evil?” We'll look at the subject from the Bible and give you the chance to ask questions and discuss – all are welcome. Contact me for a secure Zoom link.

We're planning to run an online course called Christianity Explored. It's an informal course for people who'd like to investigate Christianity, or just brush up on the basics. It explores who Jesus was, what his aims were, and what it means to follow him. You won't be asked to pray, sing or read aloud, and you can ask any questions you like. Or, if you prefer, you can just come along and listen. You can discover more here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B5W-11Om8ME>

If you'd like to take part in this via Zoom, get in touch so we can coordinate the best times to suit people.

A number of our members are keeping busy delivering prescriptions, providing meals, etc. If you want help, would like to talk to someone or want us to pray for you, please get in touch. We hope that before too long we get to see you face to face – until then we are praying for all of you in our community.

Warmest regards,

Matt Rees, Pastor, St Briavels Congregational Church.  
Phone: 01594 530098 Email: [Stbriavelssc@gmail.com](mailto:Stbriavelssc@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.stbriavelscongregational.org.uk](http://www.stbriavelscongregational.org.uk)

## MORAVIAN CHURCH

### Services in July

Our Church Buildings may be closed but we are still able to worship together and welcome everyone of any denomination to join with us.

At 10.30 am each Sunday, a recorded service prepared by ministers of the British Province is published via a link on the website [www.Moravian.org.uk](http://www.Moravian.org.uk). The services last approx. 30 mins and include, prayers, readings, hymns, and a short sermon. Each week different ministers and members from the British Province and the worldwide Moravian Church take part. So it is a real opportunity to experience the Unity that is the Moravian Church.

At 6.00 pm the Brockweir congregation hosts a live service via Zoom, and this is open to anyone who would like to join us. The service will generally follow an evening liturgy with readings from the lectionary and some thoughts on the readings. This will last approximately 30 mins, and there will be an opportunity for 'conversation' as the Zoom Room will open approx.15 minutes before the service is due to start. We hope you will join us.

For security reasons we cannot publish the joining details but if you would like to join us, please contact Sue Groves ([susangroves@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:susangroves@yahoo.co.uk), Tel: 07803 745913) for instructions. If you don't have access to a computer you can still join in the services via your telephone. Calls will cost between 5p – 10p per minute from a landline and more from a mobile.

**Moravian Women's Association.** We are starting a District MWA group, which will meet via Zoom. This will be open to all ladies in the district; you don't have to be a member of the Moravian Church to join in. Each month we share a devotional paper on a theme set for the year, learn about one of the projects we raise money for or about a current issue, and hear news from around the Province. Please contact our minister, Patsy, if you would like details on how to join in the meeting.

**Offertories/Weekly Envelopes.** As the lockdown continues several people have asked what to do about their weekly offerings to the church. The best method is to set up a Standing Order or send a cheque. Please contact our Treasurer, Philip Ashton, Herries, Underhill, Brockweir, Chepstow, Mon, NP16 7NQ, email [jaap1@waitrose.com](mailto:jaap1@waitrose.com) for more details. Cash envelopes can also be delivered to the Treasurer or left at Brockweir Village Shop for collection.

**Reopening of Church Buildings.** Our church is now open for private prayer at users' own risk. Visitors are asked to use sensible precautions and avoid touching hymn books etc. Use of hand sanitiser and/or sanitising wipes is also recommended. We are still awaiting information from our HQ

as to when we may be able to hold services inside the church again. It is almost certain that initially we will not be allowed to sing, and over 70s may be advised not to attend. Zoom services look like continuing for some time.

We hold all our community in our prayers and pray that God will hold us safe through these unusual times.

Minister:

Rev Patsy Holdsworth, 35 Quarry Way, Emersons Green, Bristol, BS16 7BN.  
Tel: 0117 907 8994 Email: [Patsy.holdsworth@moravian.org.uk](mailto:Patsy.holdsworth@moravian.org.uk)

Please note that Patsy's day off is normally on a Tuesday. Please try to only contact her in an emergency on that day.

Church Committee (usually meets on 3rd Monday of each month)

Jean Green	01594 530 955	Judith Ashton	01291 689 572
Carol Ostler	01291 689 675	Sue Groves	01291 689 804
Mary Harris	01291 689668	Philip Ashton	01291 689 572

### STANLEY SCRIVEN

Rosalind, Elizabeth and Jane would like to say a heartfelt thank you to all of you who came out to give Stan Scriven a wonderful send off from Brockweir.

Thank you for the many cards and memories that we have received.

We hope to arrange a celebration of his life in the future.

A number of people have asked about donations in lieu of flowers. We will arrange a collection when we are able to celebrate his life together, for the Moravian Church in Brockweir.



### MACKENZIE HALL REMAINS CLOSED FOR THE SUMMER

The Trustees of the Hall have regretfully taken the decision to keep the hall closed until the start of September at the earliest.

Hopefully by then we will know more about the coronavirus, its transmission and the ways of keeping the hall completely safe without risking anyone's health. Visit [www.brockweirvillagehall.co.uk](http://www.brockweirvillagehall.co.uk) for up to date information.

Barbara French

## ST BRIAVELS PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council has continued to operate under the 'new normal'. For a while early on in the lockdown there was no guidance as to how meetings might be held, how decisions could be made, so we took the initiative and created our own voting system to ensure time critical matters were dealt with, and accounts paid. Eventually, the rest of the country caught up with us! We are now holding virtual meetings with Zoom and twice a month (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays) rather than just one to try and deal with the backlog of issues which has built up over the past few months.

We have dealt with a few routine planning applications – nothing particularly noteworthy, but now have two relating to **Stowe Hill and Clearwell quarries** which are coming to a head. The long outstanding issue of the proposed expansion of Stowe Hill quarry is due to be considered by GCC on 9 July. The objections to this application and its predecessors, which have been under consideration for 6 years, have been led by Newland Parish Council; we have given strong support to them (along with West Dean PC and Coleford TC) and will continue to do so. Newland PC will be seeking additional support from residents of that parish and St Briavels very soon and will be asking your Councillors to assist in getting the word out to you.

A separate application for the continued use of a **concrete batching plant in Clearwell quarry** (which has been operating without planning permission for 3 years) has also been objected to by Newland PC and supported by us.

Councillors learned very recently that the proprietors of **The Pantry** intend to cease trading soon for personal reasons and have asked that the Parish Council seek interest from residents in forming a community group to take over running the shop. Anyone interested, please email the Clerk.\*

The Parish Council is about to set in motion the process for appointing a **new Clerk** and details will shortly be advertised in the local press and on the newly created Parish Council Facebook page.

Please also have a look at the [new website](#) and let us know what you think.

Richard Crighton – Locum Clerk  
St Briavels PC - [stbriaverlsclerk@outlook.com](mailto:stbriaverlsclerk@outlook.com)  
Newland PC - [newland.glos.pc@gmail.com](mailto:newland.glos.pc@gmail.com)

\*Also see News from The Pantry, page 22.



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## SLADE BROOK RIP

It may well come to pass that the fate of this stream in the parish of St Briavels is decided at a meeting of the planning committee at Shire Hall in Gloucester on Thursday 9th July 2020.

The Slade (often pronounced 'Slad') Brook is the longest series of natural tufa dams in Britain, harbouring species that only live in this rarest of habitats. It is created by a special hydro-geology which creates a flow of water through limestone enabling dam formation to occur. This has been happening here for hundreds of thousands of years.

The application to expand the quarry at Stowe Hill has been objected to by local residents and parish councils for many years, but when it comes down to business then the economic imperative will trump (and I use the word purposefully) all other local health and environmental concerns.

An environmental trade-off has been suggested, in that allowing the quarry company permission, and potentially risking harming the Slade Brook irreversibly, the company should put aside funds to support another environmental project elsewhere which will create what is known as 'net environmental gain'. Putting a market value on nature to allow it to be destroyed is capitalism gone mad. It will see the end of the unique and ancient nature that is our common heritage.

If you want to see what all the fuss is about, and enjoy a wonderful natural treasure on your doorstep, please use the public footpaths to visit the brook. Remember to take a photo for posterity in case the application to extract yet more limestone is approved.

Chris McFarling. [chrismcfarling@phonecoop.coop](mailto:chrismcfarling@phonecoop.coop)



The tufa dams of Slade brook.



Photos by John French taken 25<sup>th</sup> June 2020

## NEWS FROM THE VILLAGE SHOP

**We have started to remove the lockdown restrictions, cautiously...**

...as we know it is important to keep 'safe shopping' for the community. Customers can now come into the shop.

**There is a one-way system** that ingeniously takes you past every shelf. Of course, you must remember what you came for,

otherwise you must go round again! To maintain social distancing we are allowing a maximum of 3 customers at a time, and hand sanitiser and disposable gloves are available. There is a sneeze screen at the till, as well as baskets on wheels that you pull behind you.

**We are continuing the phone and collect service**, as well as the email and collect service; and for those self-isolating the 'Yelp for Help' group of volunteers will collect the order for you. Having the shop open for customers means we have to segregate by time. Phone and email orders are processed in the morning and customers are allowed in the afternoon. This gives a lot of choice for safe shopping.

**It has been really encouraging** to see people return as customers in person, and we hope everyone feels safe. We hope to expand the takeaway service in the next few weeks, but the café refurbishment will not be complete until July. Fortunately, the coffee machine is reconnected temporarily, so takeaway coffee is available most of the time.

**We are very grateful** for the continued support of so many volunteers with the large number of changes in the way the shop operates. Continuing to come out of lockdown will continue for some time yet, and planning is underway for resuming a socially distanced café service, but this must wait until we can design a safe environment for volunteers and customers, and government restrictions allow it to re-open.

**And the shelves are still well-stocked**, there is plenty of flour.

**Please keep sending us your shopping lists:**

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Peter Stickland

### ART IN THE CAFÉ.

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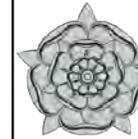
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## NEWS FROM 1st ST BRIAVELS BEAVERS, CUBS AND SCOUTS

### SCOUTING FROM HOME

As restrictions surrounding group gatherings continue, we don't know when Beavers, Cubs and Scouts will be able to meet in person again. However, it's been wonderful to see so many of our members and volunteers getting on with Scouting from home.

Section leaders have been busy thinking up activities and keeping in touch with our young people. Here are some highlights from the past few weeks.

**Scouts** - Our Scout Troop is a little smaller than the Cub Pack and Beaver Colonies, so leader Tom Ovens has been able to continue weekly meetings via Zoom for all members. We even had our first ever remote investiture when a new Scout joined the Troop and made their promise via video link.

**Cubs** - Cubs Akela, Emma Carey, is encouraging her Pack to continue doing a good turn every day and to work towards their Personal Challenge Award. This is an important award, tailored to the individual young person and focused on them taking on new responsibilities or overcoming challenges as part of growing up. Emma has sent the Cubs some challenge ideas that could be completed during lockdown, and is speaking to Cubs individually if they need support or guidance.

**Beavers** - The boys and girls from our two Beaver Colonies have got leaders Jill Howes and Victoria Edwards super busy keeping track of all the badges and activities they're completing at home. All the Beavers are being encouraged to work towards their Emergency Aid Stage 1 Activity Badge. They watch an online video, complete a worksheet and learn how to take care of somebody and seek help in an emergency situation.

**Water Activities Day** - The annual Forest of Dean Water Activities Day at Mallards Pike Lake is usually a highlight of the year for Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. Sadly, it couldn't take place this year, but the organisers prepared an 'At Home' version, with activities such as egg rafting, whacky bubbles and mini bridge building. Feel free to try some of the ideas at home yourself – you can download an activity pack and watch videos here: <https://gloucestershire-scouts.org.uk/water-activities>.

We're all missing our weekly sessions and regular summer activities, but we are determined to make up for lost time when we can meet up face to face.

In the meantime, take care of yourselves and the people around you.

Best wishes,

Emma-Jayne Williams 1st St Briavels Group Scout Leader  
[stbriavelsscoutgroup@outlook.com](mailto:stbriavelsscoutgroup@outlook.com) 07807 068 29

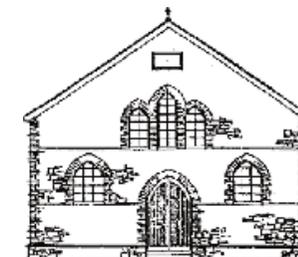


**Scouts** 

*Beavers are completing their Emergency Aid badge at home*

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#### JULY 2020

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**BROCKWEIR EVENTS AT MACKENZIE HALL**



The whole area of live events is very much in the air at the moment across the country and indeed across the world. Many theatre and music companies are likely to collapse unless they receive some form of support. Actors and musicians are unemployed and many are struggling financially. Audiences are naturally concerned that they could contract Covid 19 in enclosed environments and will seek reassurance that they will not be put at risk before they return in any numbers. I would welcome the views of audience participants on what they would require to ensure their safety.

Air in G are having another Zoom meeting on 26th June with village hall promoters to discuss the way forward out of lockdown and looking at plans for the autumn and next year. They are also collaborating in a national cultural survey with an organisation called Indigo.

The information collected is being added to responses from all over the UK to help produce a national picture. This will inform government policy. Responses are completely anonymous. If you're able to complete it yourself and then circulate the link to others in your community who attend events it will really help us. It's an opportunity for your voice to be heard. The questions apply to any type of performance you might attend and not just AIR in G. It should only take you about 5 minutes to complete. Here's the survey link:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/3S5L7D5>

Adrian Birch  
[adrianbirch1@gmail.com](mailto:adrianbirch1@gmail.com), 01291 689812

**BADGER CULLING UPDATE**

As anticipated, there is very little substantiated news about the future of the 2020 badger cull in our area or anywhere else in the country.



For readers who like to keep informed of the debate on the subject you may like to look up

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTewoGrc38M> and find Brian Jones's thoroughly independent and unbiased 24 minute video, 'Bovine TB & the Badger Cull'

Keith Childs, 01291 689 319, [madgettsbadgers@gmail.com](mailto:madgettsbadgers@gmail.com)

**UPDATE FOR JUNE 2020**

We have now missed 4 monthly meetings due to the crisis and although lockdown is easing it still seems that it will be some time before we are able to meet again.

Although the lockdown has had negative outcomes for many, as it has started to ease we have reflected on some of the benefits, notably the time to enjoy and notice our beautiful surroundings without the pressure of meeting deadlines. Lots of people have commented on the crystal blue skies; how green the trees appear and generally how much friendlier and community minded everyone has become during this crisis.

One of our members has continued to set a daily quiz which is very popular. By the end of lockdown some members will be such competent quizzers that they will be able to apply to be contestants on The Chase or Pointless. The monthly virtual book club has continued and between us we seem to have read a lot of books. We have continued to provide a monthly contribution to the Forest Foodbank, which is gratefully received. In these uncertain economic times there has been an increased demand for food parcels.

We participated in British Flowers week, where people were encouraged to put an arrangement of flowers in the window. We posted pictures of our bouquets on our Facebook page to ensure everyone could share and enjoy them.

At a National and County level, the Women's Institute continues its work and campaigning.

At a county level we have been asked to provide photos and details of experiences to be included in the county archive. At a National Level the WI has been active. From the 15 to 21st June it was Cervical Cancer Screening Awareness Week, in which the WI supported Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust to help ensure that everyone who had questions or concerns about screening knew where to get answers and support. On Tuesday 2 June, the WI participated in #BlackOutTuesday, a social media campaign in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Members were encouraged to contact their MPs in support of the Istanbul Convention which was agreed and signed by the UK on the 8th June, eight years ago. It is a legal framework that exists to tackle domestic violence against women and girls, and covers other forms of violence, such as sexual assault and rape, but it is not legally binding until the UK has ratified it.

In non-corona virus times, St Briavels WI meets on the 3rd Wednesday in the month at 7.30pm in the Pavilion. New members are always welcome.

We wish all the community well. Stay safe and healthy.



Sue Smith



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## WYE VALLEY MUSIC SOCIETY

### Ever Hopeful

Dear Members and Friends

At the time of writing, there has been some relaxation of the Covid-19 restrictions on social gatherings, and further announcements – particularly around social distancing – appear to be imminent. These, together with other dates for the re-opening of non-essential shops, restaurants, hairdressers and even cinemas, give us hope that the autumn may well see the return of live chamber music and recitals to the Wye Valley!

During recent weeks, WVM committee members have been exploring a variety of ways in which we might present our autumn programme safely for both audiences and for the musicians themselves. Much will obviously depend on how the situation develops in the coming months. We can assure you that, however we decide to organise our future concerts, we will adhere rigorously to the guidance that is in place at the time.

The first two concerts, scheduled for 26th September and 17<sup>th</sup> October, are due to be held in St Briavels Church. At the moment, the church is open only for private prayer, but it is likely that before too long, albeit with appropriate measures in place for distancing and additional hygiene, it will soon be able to open for worship and other social gatherings.

### Treats in store

With all that in mind, it is worth having a brief look at the treats we have lined up for the autumn and winter programme. This kicks off in September with a concert featuring the two most beautiful works written for the combination of oboe and string trio: the oboe quartets by Mozart and Benjamin Britten. We are fortunate in having **Joseph Sanders, principal oboist of the English Touring Opera**, and an international line up of string players coming to perform these works.

This is followed in October by a Beethoven-themed recital by the distinguished **Japanese pianist Reiko Fujisawa**. Beethoven is such a giant of the keyboard repertoire, and Reiko's current programme explores some of the music that influenced him as a composer and also some pieces by later composers that in turn owed much to his influence.

In November, **the Salomé String quartet** returns after their impressive performances last summer as part of the Wye Valley Chamber Music summer residence concert series. In December, especially for Christmas, we have another quartet – this time of four saxophones! **The Ebonit Quartet** are based in Holland and will be performing a programme packed with unusual pieces and arrangements for us as part of their forthcoming British tour. Finally, In January, we have yet another international line-up; this time a recital by **Italian pianist Emma Abbate** and duo partner **violinist Michał Ćwiżewicz**. More Mozart is promised!

All in all, this could be the most international line-up we have ever brought to the Wye Valley with performers from about ten different countries – award winners all! One way or another, we will do our best to get the show up and running – we very much hope to see you there!

Mike Haines

## NEWS FROM THE PANTRY

If there has been one very obvious national effect of the Pandemic, it is that local producers and retailers have come into their own as the communities they serve have re-discovered how vital they can be in a time of crisis. For Diana and I, the loyal support of St Briavels has really helped us cope with the pressures of transforming The Pantry into a virtual shop, and we really want to say a sincere thank you to one and all for your custom – and your understanding.

However, lockdown has been accompanied by a list of other unexpected pressures on Diana and me, and we are very sad to announce that, due to a pressing need to devote more time to our family, we will not be able to continue running The Pantry beyond the next few months, and are now looking for ways to secure its future as a business. Rest assured though that we won't be closing in the near future, and we intend making a planned exit from the business at an appropriate point. As some of you will already know, we let the St Briavels Parish Council know of our decision at the meeting on 22/06/20, and are fully supportive of their resolution to look at the future of the shop.

In many ways, this was a call for action; we and the Council would like to hear from individuals, businesses, or groups that would be interested in taking over this vital, and highly functional business; it could perhaps become a community enterprise, or be re-imagined as a local producer's retail base, but whatever it becomes, its position at the literal and metaphorical heart of the village is at the core of its potential. Please let the clerk of the Council know if you may be interested in helping the Council to shape the way forward, but also, come and talk to Diana and I if you may be interested in taking it on as a business.

However, we aren't going anywhere right now! Diana and I, along with our amazing colleagues Adele and Jill, will be carrying on as before, and as the Covid crisis evolves, we'll be making sure that all our customers continue to have access to the supplies they need, whether that's by coming into the shop or having items delivered if they are still isolating. Please check our Facebook site for updates, and we'll carry on filling the shelves with all the goodies we know you love us to stock!

See you soon,

Diana and John

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## BADGER LORE

### 'A Tale of Two Setts' - a true story of local badgers

The five regulars at East Sett were often recognisable from either their personalities or their physical features. So there was the pale one, the shy one who often stayed at home emerging after the others had departed, the pointy tail, the grumpy old boar and so on. But one that is caught on my trail cameras after dark has a special feature. Filmed after dark badger's eyes shine like jewels and, sadly, this badger has only one eye to shine, and he has been part of the East Sett clan chasing and playing with the others.

Desperate to find 'my' badgers, I visited several local setts to look for signs of fresh occupation and one of these was West Sett. Incidentally, most of my walks find me heading for one sett or another so that was nothing unusual for me. West Sett had been inactive for several years except for spells of brief temporary use, perhaps when cubs were leaving their birth sett and looking for a home of their own. 'Old One Eye' turned up there, caught on camera, and there were sightings and evidence of other badgers there as well.

So had the clan gone to West Sett for a summer gathering? It seemed possible, but if so, it was certainly a half-hearted event compared to other gatherings witnessed.

It was near the end of August before tell-tale signs of badgers returning to East Sett started to appear. There was fresh soil outside some entrances and fresh dung pits nearby. Then, late on the evening of September 14th, my phone was busy with messages saying something strange had happened on the B road that runs through the area. There were several badgers all killed in road traffic accidents in the space of about two hours. At first light I was out to find four young badgers (possibly yearlings), three bore the typical signs of a head on collision whilst the fourth was more intact. Of course regular readers will know that they all now rest in peace in my badger graveyard.

The pieces of the puzzle started to come together. Were these youngsters part of a group returning to their home at East Sett? Badgers were certainly migrating between the two setts! For a while that seemed to be the end of the story of the badgers' adventures in 2017; but there was one more twist to come, offering an altogether different explanation for their abandoning East Sett for one summer. We had to wait until October 2019 before that last twist was seen and I will hope to reveal that next month.

Keith Childs, 01291 689 319, [madgettsbadgers@gmail.com](mailto:madgettsbadgers@gmail.com)

## NATURE NOTES by Moucher (JJ).

**First, an Apology:** It very nearly didn't get written this month, since I came within a whisker of annihilating vehicle and self at that deadly Coldharbour corner where every driver adopts EU International Waters Protocol and fishes his neighbour's lane.

I'm usually rather cautious at Coldharbour, but I was briefly distracted by two large Ash trees, about 20 yards apart. One was a picture of leafy health, while the other was a tangled mess of dead twigs and limbs. Now that I've flagged it up, many of you will notice examples of the

dreaded Ash Dieback in every hedgerow locally. But Cheer up everyone! My latest number of "Woodlouse Monthly" assures me that, in Norfolk, a trial plantation of Ash has been found to contain 90% healthy trees, bucking the Norfolk trend

for 90% fatalities. Conclusion? Our well loved native broadleaf – bringer of bright log fires and Morgan sports cars – will probably return in strength long after this Covid nonsense has faded to a small scar tissue in our Island Story.

Now remember, in "Life of Brian" the Python team urged us to always look on the bright side of life? Well, the nation seems to be responding in spades. Letters to the Editor punters write in droves to rejoice at the clear skies, the brightness of the stars, the deafening volume of birdsong which they can now hear thanks to the absence of traffic volume. Blackbirds and thrushes rule the airwaves, and one bird above all since March has sung ceaselessly and tunelessly. The

Stormcock Mistlethrush, reminding me of that Megaphone Maniac in Whitehall who regularly drowned the 10 O'Clock News during the Brexit kerfuffle.

My Welsh tree wizard chum from Hewelsfield told me a stirring tale of a furious confrontation between a Mistlethrush and a Cuckoo on his property recently. Now, what can that Cuckoo have had in mind? Importantly, how many of us can honestly say they've not heard the Cuckoo this Spring?

I had an epiphany (whatever that may be) two weeks back while raiding Speedy Tweed's lake in search of Water Mint for my pond. I found myself wading through a swarm of Bonsai frogs. Tiny, perfectly formed jet black froglets, no bigger than large Bluebottles. I tiptoed away, wondering

possibly have done to deserve such a biblical Plague. I know for a fact that his gleaming Asti Spumante monster has been laid up in the garage since last Summer. Speedy's response? "No Comment!" Investigations continue.

So, here we are, emerging like Sleeping Beauty from 3 months' slumber. More reasons to be cheerful? Well, the roads are still fairly quiet. Petrol costs £1 a gallon (Sorry! Litre!), and for the icing on the cake? Just try parking in Coleford, and you will find that all the parking meters are wearing face masks! Enjoy!

**Oh, yes! The apology:** The car I missed at Coldharbour belonged to my Teeny Weeny Land Girl neighbours. Sorry, Gels. Mea culpa!



The ash tree - or *Fraxinus excelsior* what Speedy could



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We are not yet able to make decisions about when meetings will restart. We hope to soon.

In the meantime, if you have room to add some plants to your borders or your vegetable garden, you'll find [a list to browse here on our website](#).

### **IN MY GARDEN**

#### **Bee neighbourly**

Whenever I'm out in the garden, I always feel the need to be doing something, finding it hard to just sit. But I must try harder because it's in those quiet, still moments that we actually appreciate just how much other activity there is and notice what's going on around us. It's remarkable how industrious animals are and none more so than the wild bees. They have to be, I suppose, to cram their life's work into one short summer.

I have a brilliant bee identification book to help me put names to them. The solitary ones which, as their names suggest, don't live in colonies but lay their eggs in individual holes in walls or in the ground; like the tawny and ashy mining bees I watched in the spring disappearing down cracks in the lawn's bare patches. The white bottomed ones with the fluffy boleros I discovered to be tree bumblebees, the black ones with bright orange bums are red tailed bumblebees and the shaggy looking ones are common carder bees.



*A carder bee gathering pollen*

I always feel more affinity with something when I know what it's called, like being on first name terms with the neighbours. Just like any good neighbours, we help each other out. I leave my lawn uncut so they have big patches of clover, birds foot trefoil and bush vetch in which to forage, and from the densely packed fruit along the branches of the plum trees they were very busy pollinating for me this spring.

A very fair exchange. I do hope we stay on good terms when the runner beans are in flower!

Cheryl Cummings

### **WHAT TO DO THIS MONTH**

It was a truly amazing Spring. However, by early June we were desperate for rain! When it did come, it was enough to really soak into the soil, and vegetables, fruit and ornamental plants have appreciated it. The forecast shows temperatures rising as we go into July. So watering could become a major task again. The ornamental garden reaches its peak this month and you can relax a little. Although there's plenty to do in the vegetable garden, if you have one.

- Deadhead repeat flowering roses and perennials to keep the show going
- Prune shrubs that flowered in June, to encourage new fresh growth for next year's flowers
- Keep weeding!
- Keep the surface of your pond clear of algae and weeds
- Keep your greenhouse well ventilated and the air moist – shade it if necessary
- Cut back strawberry plants after harvesting. Feed and let them re-grow for the rest of the summer, keeping them watered
- Time to get your leeks and winter brassicas in the ground and to sow carrots, spring cabbage, autumn/winter salads.

Find more detailed guidance notes for July, our annual programme and more on our website: [www.wyegarden.com](http://www.wyegarden.com)

Christine Haines



*Blanket weed on ponds spreads quickly in summer and can harm aquatic life*

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Pavilion/Playing Field, St Briavels	Jill Skidmore	01594 530035
School Hall, St Briavels	School Office	01594 530428
The Loft, Village Shop, Brockweir		01291 689995

## DOCTORS' SURGERIES

### WYE VALLEY PRACTICE

St Briavels Surgery (including out of hours)	01594 530334
Trellech Surgery (including out of hours)	01600 860302

### WYEDEAN PRACTICE

Tintern Surgery (including out of hours)	01291 689355
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## USEFUL WEB ADDRESSES

Brockweir & Hewelsfield Parish Council	<a href="http://www.hewelsfieldandbrockweirpc.org">www.hewelsfieldandbrockweirpc.org</a>
Brockweir, Hewelsfield & St Briavels Garden Society	<a href="http://www.wyegarden.com">www.wyegarden.com</a>
Brockweir Village Shop	<a href="http://www.bandhvillageshop.co.uk">www.bandhvillageshop.co.uk</a>
Brockweir Youth Club	<a href="http://www.brockweiryouthclub.co.uk">www.brockweiryouthclub.co.uk</a>
Mackenzie Hall, Brockweir	<a href="http://www.brockweirvillagehall.co.uk">www.brockweirvillagehall.co.uk</a>
Parish Grasslands Project	<a href="http://www.parishgrasslandsproject.org.uk">www.parishgrasslandsproject.org.uk</a>
St Briavels Assembly Rooms	<a href="http://www.st-briavels.com">www.st-briavels.com</a>
St Briavels on Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/StBriavelsWatch">www.facebook.com/StBriavelsWatch</a>
St Briavels Parish Council	<a href="http://www.stbriavels-pc.gov.uk">www.stbriavels-pc.gov.uk</a>
St Briavels School	<a href="http://www.stbriavelsprimaryschool.co.uk">www.stbriavelsprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
Wye Valley Music	<a href="http://www.wyevalleymusic.org.uk">www.wyevalleymusic.org.uk</a>

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS and EMAIL ADDRESSES**

<b>POLICE (non emergency calls)</b>	<b>(UK dialling only)</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>POLICE (Coleford)</b>		<b>01452 753797</b>
<b>NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH Field Officer (Chrissie Parkes)</b>		<b>01452 753784</b>
<b>ELECTRICITY</b>	<b>(Power cuts)</b>	<b>08006 783 105</b>
<b>GCC HIGHWAYS</b>	<b>(for potholes etc.)</b>	<b>08000 514 514</b>
<b>GRASS ROUTES BUS SERVICE</b>		<b>08000 858 015</b>
<b>MP (Forest of Dean):</b>	<b>Mark Harper</b>	<b>01594 823482</b>
<b>COUNTY COUNCILLOR (Sedbury)</b>	<b>Patrick Molyneux</b>	<b>01594 529174</b>
<b>DISTRICT COUNCILLOR</b>	<b>Chris McFarling</b>	<b>01594 531225</b>
<b>(St Briavels, Hewelsfield &amp; Brockweir, Alvington) <a href="mailto:chris.mcfarling@fdean.gov.uk">chris.mcfarling@fdean.gov.uk</a></b>		
<b>PARISH COUNCILS:</b>		
<b>St Briavels</b>		
Chair: <b>Piers Chivers</b>		<b>01594 530552</b>
Clerk:		<b>TBA</b>
Snow Warden: <b>Mike Smith</b>		<b>01594 530332</b>
Footpaths: <b>John Hurley</b>		<b>01594 530890</b>
<b>Hewelsfield &amp; Brockweir</b>		
Chair: <b>Adam Sinfield</b> <a href="mailto:handbpcadam@outlook.com">handbpcadam@outlook.com</a>		<b>01291 689213</b>
Clerk: <b>Lyn Skuse</b> <a href="http://www.hewelsfieldandbrockweirpc.org">www.hewelsfieldandbrockweirpc.org</a>		<b>01291 680053</b>
Footpaths: <b>Mary Harris</b>		<b>01291 689668</b>
<b>ACTION4OURCARE</b>	<b>Pam Plummer</b>	<b>01594 530008</b>
<b>BADGER CULLING CONCERNS</b>	<b>Keith Childs</b>	<b>01291 689319</b>
	<a href="mailto:madgettsbadgers@gmail.com">madgettsbadgers@gmail.com</a>	
<b>B.A.D.S</b>	<b>Immy Lee</b>	<b>01291 689512</b>
<b>BROCKWEIR BOWLS CLUB</b>	<b>Bob Broughton</b>	<b>01594 530003</b>
<b>BROCKWEIR EVENTS</b>	<b>Adrian Birch</b>	<b>01291 689812</b>
<b>BROCKWEIR EVENTS SOCIAL TEAM</b>	<b>Cath Baker</b>	<b>01291 689331</b>
<b>BROCKWEIR TABLE TENNIS</b>	<b>Jean Green</b>	<b>01594 530955</b>
<b>BROCKWEIR VILLAGE SHOP</b>	<b>Peter Stickland</b>	<b>01594 530882</b>
<b>BROCKWEIR YOUTH CLUB</b>	<b>Barbara French</b>	<b>01291 689327</b>
<b>CHURCH BELL RINGING</b>	<b>Paul Bergdahl</b>	<b>01594 530623</b>

<b>COMMUNITY WELLBEING AGENT</b>	<b>Richard Skinner</b>	<b>01594 812447</b>
	<b>(Village Agent)</b>	<b>07927 051328</b>
<b>GARDEN SOCIETY</b>	<b>John Gooder</b>	<b>01291 689979</b>
<b>HEWELSFIELD against Quarrying</b>	<b>Bob Brown</b>	<b>01594 530147</b>
<b>HISTORY GROUP</b>	<b>John Norman</b>	<b>01291 689418</b>
<b>HOBOS HEDGEHOG RESCUE</b>	<b>Rosie Bishop</b>	<b>01594 531439</b>
<b>MACKENZIE HALL TENNIS CLUB</b>	<b>Ayse Rugg</b>	<b>07766 719950</b>
	<b>Rosalind Eaves</b>	<b>07854 676526</b>
<b>NOSH &amp; NATTER</b>	<b>Pauline Siddons</b>	<b>01594 530524</b>
<b>PARISH GRASSLANDS PROJECT</b>	<b>Sally Secrett</b>	<b>01594 530539</b>
<b>PLAY AREA COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Sarah McLellan</b>	<b>01291 680092</b>
<b>ST BRIAVELS ASSEMBLY ROOMS</b>	<b>Karen Cockfield</b>	<b>01594 530950</b>
<b>ST BRIAVELS LITTER PICKERS</b>	<b>Paul Lounds</b>	<b>01594 530573</b>
<b>ST BRIAVELS MOAT SOCIETY</b>	<b>Sue Davis</b>	<b>01594 531460</b>
<b>ST BRIAVELS PANTRY</b>	<b>Diana and John</b>	<b>01594 530740</b>
	<a href="mailto:stbriavelspantry@hotmail.com">stbriavelspantry@hotmail.com</a>	
<b>ST BRIAVELS PEOPLE'S CHOIR</b>	<b>Louise Greening</b>	<b>01594 530421</b>
<b>ST BRIAVELS EARLY YEARS</b>	<b>School Office</b>	<b>01594 530428</b>
<b>ST BRIAVELS SCHOOL headteacher</b>	<b>Sarah Helm</b>	<b>01594 530428</b>
<b>School bell ringing out of hours contacts:</b>	<b>David Rees</b>	<b>01594 530443</b>
	<b>Chris McFarling</b>	<b>01594 531225</b>
<b>ST BRIAVELS SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB</b>	<b>Sheila Brown</b>	<b>01594 530676</b>
<b>ST BRIAVELS W.I.</b>	<b>Betty Bennett</b>	<b>01291 680018</b>
<b>WATER EMERGENCY</b>		<b>0800 7834444</b>
<b>WILD BOAR / DEER problems:</b>	<b>Tim Hill</b>	<b>01452 830389</b>
<b>WILD BOAR / DEER problems</b>	<b>Barry Hutchinson</b>	<b>07773 332467</b>
<b>WYE VALLEY MUSIC</b>	<b>Mike Haines</b>	<b>01594 531050</b>
<b>WALKING FOR HEALTH</b>	<b>John Hurley</b>	<b>01594 530890</b>
<b>YHA</b>	<b>Linda Harrison</b>	<b>01594 530272</b>
	<b>Emergency out of hours number 03006 660132</b>	