



COMBWICH, OTTERHAMPTON AND STEART NEWSLETTER

Otter Tales

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Your village hall needs support

From village hall committee

It's been a tumultuous and challenging year for all involved with the Village Hall with many changes facing the committee, so firstly with regret and many thanks we have to say goodbye to some valued Committee members. In no particular order, Sue Barton who after many dedicated years has left as Hall Chairperson, Pete Cashin our treasurer and Nicola Rowland.

This is now going to turn into a bit of a begging prose. We are desperately in need of new Committee members both as Trustees and more importantly we need a new Chairperson and Treasurer. Without these members there is a very good chance that the Village Hall (including Harbour View Bar, Bowls Club, Market etc.) will have to close. This is your Village and we have already lost the Post Office, we don't want to lose this valuable asset, so please, please, please help support us by coming to the OVH AGM on December 11th at 7:30pm in the Village Hall.

Right now then, a massive Thankyou to all of those that do help support and continue to use the Village Hall and it's associated facilities. Talking of which, there will be a Christmas raffle (raffle tickets are available from the bar or any of the Committee members) on December 21st in the Harbour View Bar at 7:30pm.

Other events, Mince Pies and Mulled Wine after the Christmas Tree lighting ceremony in the bar and the ever popular Stoggymen performing February 22nd 2025 (tickets will be available from the bar).

The Village Hall has a new website

<https://otterhamptonvillagehall.co.uk/> where you find details of upcoming events by viewing the online calendar, this is also where you can self book the Hall, Bar or Meeting Rooms.

Otterhampton Parish Council

Otterhampton Offcuts

Snippets from your parish council October to November 2024 meetings

Parish Council Logo/Motif

We are currently working on a new Facebook page for the parish council as well as an Instagram page and hope to launch these in the new year. To establish an online identity, we are looking to have a logo/motif designed and would like to ask if any of our parishioners would like to design something, this is open to all, young and old. For more information or to send in a design, please email the clerk on the address below.

Inconsiderate Parking

We have received a few complaints about vehicles parking on the road near the play area. There have been a few near misses in this area and it makes it unsafe for cars leaving the Anchor Inn car park. There is also a danger that a child leaving the play area will not be seen when crossing the road.

Brookside Road

Please take care when driving along Brookside Road especially where pedestrians have to walk on the road and where there are parked cars.

Wharf Road

We have had the brook side of Wharf Road cleared and will be looking to tidy up the Estuary Park side but it has been noted that a lot of garden rubbish has been disposed of here. It is disappointing that people feel they are not able to take their rubbish to the recycling centre. This also applies to banks of the brook where garden rubbish has been dumped.

Community Groups

If you run a community group and would like the parish council to know what you are doing, please email a report to the clerk, at the address below, by the first Thursday of the month. We can then ensure your report is read at the meeting.



Foster Carers Wanted

Foster carers make a genuine difference to the lives of vulnerable children across Somerset, helping them overcome challenges and achieve their true potential. Find out how you could change a child's story in this rewarding, paid role here: www.fosteringinsomerset.org.uk

Parish Council Meetings

Parish Council meetings are open to the public so if you have a subject you would like to discuss please come along or email the clerk in advance so that the matter can be discussed. Parish Council meetings take place on the second Thursday of the month so the next Parish Council meetings will be on Thursday 12th December, 9th January and 13th February starting at 7.00pm, in Otterhampton Village Hall.

Full details of the decisions taken at parish council meetings are contained within the minutes which are available on the three village notice boards (opposite the Post Office, opposite the Anchor Inn by the play area and on the wall of Ferricies Farm, Steart) or the Combwich.org.uk website

Contact for Clerk (Gina Mear) otterhamptonpcclerk@gmail.com or Tel 01278 652499

Contact details for the parish council

PARISH COUNCILLORS

Lindsey Parsons (Chair)	01278 653700
Tina Gardener	01278 652642
Mike Haycraft	01278 653264
Connie Sanders (Vice-Chair)	01278 653307
Carol Bradbury	01278 652313
Steve Parker	01278 653045
Dave Dodge	david.dodge@gmx.co.uk

Gina Mear (Clerk)	01278 652499
	otterhamptonpcclerk@gmail.com

County Ward Members

Mike Caswell	01278 652043
Brian Bolt	079708 55990



Village Groups and Organisations: Project Development Ideas

Otterhampton Parish Council is able to support local groups to develop projects that promote the Health and Wellbeing of the parish.

The Somerset Association of Local Authorities is able to award grants via the Parish Council to local groups to develop and deliver community health and well being projects.

Health and wellbeing covers a range of areas that have an impact on people's lives. The Health and Wellbeing programme has identified eleven areas, these are quite broad and by no means exhaustive. The common theme is to contribute to the physical and mental wellbeing of people who live in the parish as well as promoting a sense of belonging and community.

To access the funds the Parish Council, village groups and organisations need to engage and work collaboratively with each other.

Seed Grants of £1500 are available to develop project ideas and small project grants of £2500 are available to take your ideas forward and turn them into reality.

It is important to consider the long term sustainability of any project to ensure that any project will have a long term impact of life in the Parish.

The Parish Council would like to encourage village groups to consider how they can develop projects and ideas to benefit of the community. The Parish Council will offer all the support it can to explore and develop your project and apply for the funding to get your ideas off the ground.

Please get in touch with the parish council email: otterhamptonpcclerk@gmail.com



Otterhampton Parish Recreation Association (OPRA)

Registered Charity Number 1124017

Chair Tina Gardener 652642 - Secretary Carol Bradbury 652313

On the 21st October we held our AGM at the Anchor Inn, after a brief meeting where all the committee were re-elected, we enjoyed a glass of wine and cheese and biscuits. Thank you to those members who attended, it would be really great if more people attended. As soon as you mention an AGM, people tend to shy away as they are concerned, they will be coerced into joining the committee. This is not the case we would love to hear your views and ideas for new events and activities that you would like us to put on. We are very fortunate to have the income from the 100 Club which pays for all the activities that OPRA undertake. A huge thank you to all our 100 Club members, we really appreciate your contribution.

Next year we will be celebrating our 25th Anniversary, which is quite a milestone. We would like to mark the occasion with a number of events for all ages of the community. If you have any ideas on how we could celebrate then please get in touch with any committee member. We will consider any suggestion.

The village fireworks held in conjunction with the Parish Council, literally went off with a bang! Special thanks as always to Simon Briggs, Paul Cadmore and Steve Lang for setting off the fireworks. The fireworks which cost £1,146 including VAT were over in a flash. Simon and Paul have been doing it for a number of years and they would love to have a chance to watch them. If you would like to help in future years, please let us know and we can get you trained up. Along with the fireworks our now legendary BBQ chef Ray Bollen was hard at work again this year and we sold out before the fireworks had even started! We did buy more than last year but the crowd of people who turned out was the most we have ever seen. Thank you to everyone who gave so generously, along with the profit from the BBQ we took about £720.



It isn't too late to donate, you can find donation boxes in the Anchor and the shop.

Our next event will be the senior's Christmas dinner to be held on 7th December in the village hall. The invitations have all gone out now, but if you have got to the magical age of 65 and you would like to go on our list for next year then please let any committee member know.

The 100 Club draw usually takes place every month at the Coffee Morning in Otterhampton Village Hall. The winning numbers are displayed in the Post Office and the parish website www.combwich.org.uk

If you want to join the 100 Club or become involved in OPRA activities please contact Tina on 652642 or Sue 653663 or any committee member.

This will be followed by the switch on of the Christmas tree lights at 5.00pm on Sunday 8th December 2024.

Finally, we would like to thank you for supporting us this year and wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.



Garden Club

Derek Dexter from the British Fuchsia Society paid a visit to Garden Club in November. Derek brought with him a selection of prize winning fuchsias.



He went through all things to do with Fuchsias, including how to take a variety of cuttings, from hardwood and what can only be described as bordering on micro-propagation.



Importantly Derek also explained how fuchsia gall mite has become a major issue and how best to deal with this problem. If you have fuchsia gall mite on your plants, cut back the diseased material and dispose of it in your general household rubbish. Do not put it in the green bin or your compost bin. It is unclear if the composting process will destroy the mites. The gall mite may survive the composting process and remain in the new peat free compost manufactured using recycled garden waste. Garden Club has previously highlighted issues with peat free compost.

Christmas Wreath Making

On the 10th December Garden Club will be holding a Christmas Wreath making session. This year it will be in the Village Hall to enable everyone to have more space. Please bring your own tools and a selection of materials, and foliage to use and share.

Free to members. £3.00 to non members.

Christmas and New Year

There will be a Garden Club Christmas Social on the 17th December and Garden Club's annual new year quiz will be on the 11th January 2025.

Garden Club meets on the second Tuesday of the month at Harbour View Bar. Gardeners, would be gardeners and non-gardeners are all welcome. Next year we aim to have a number of garden events including plant swap and sale, a village garden trail of open gardens, garden visits, expert speakers and the flower show. And as we all know, gardening and caring for our environment is also great for our health and well being.

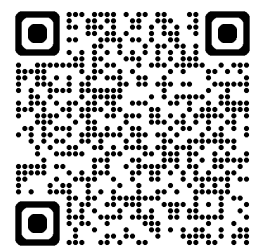
Otterhampton Parish Recreation Association operates a parish emailing service providing information about local events and other information about the local area.

If you wish to be included, email barry.leathwood@btinternet.com

Boiler Upgrade Scheme

Government Grants of £5000 are available to replace fossil fuel heating systems with a Biomass Boiler burning wood pellets.

Further information is available from



www.gov.uk/apply-boiler-upgrade-scheme

Traffic Concerns - *Maureen Lloyd-Williams*

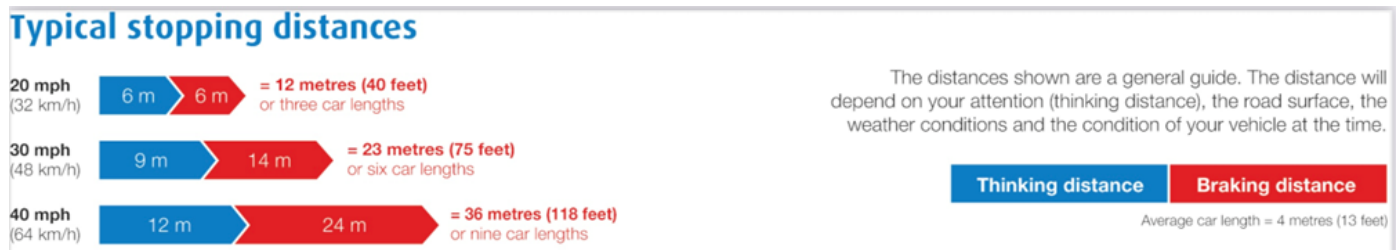
The traffic driving around Comwich seems to be busier than ever and it is becoming increasingly difficult to walk around the village safely.

Cars, delivery vans and lorries are an inevitable aspect of modern life and as the roads become busier there is a need to be aware of the safety of pedestrians.

Between the shop and the post box is particularly dangerous. The pavement is narrow and even the most sure footed need to step back to avoid feeling the air move as a vehicle goes past. People using mobility equipment or with young children in push chairs don't have the luxury of fitting on the pavement and often need to walk in the road. Ship Lane, School Lane the Junction and parts of Church Hill have no pavement.



The vehicles may be keeping to the speed limit, but the perception is different. Standing on the narrow strip of pavement on Brookside Road as a car or van rolls past at thirty miles an hour and just a couple of feet away can feel quite daunting. At particular times of day the road is quite busy with pedestrians. Walking the dog, going to the shop, going to catch the school bus or coming home from school. These seem particularly hazardous.



The typical stopping time of 12 metres or 40 feet, at thirty miles an hour would not be enough if someone slipped of the pavement.



Government research (2018) supports the official guidance that a 20 miles per hour speed limit would have a positive effect on road safety. The research also suggests that the majority of residents regard 20 mph as being beneficial with pedestrians and cyclists feeling safer, and children playing out more. The research also suggests that a 20 mph limit would improve the health and well being of the local population.

Safety may also be improved if there was traffic calming measures along Brookside Road.

A new Village sign with imagery, asking drivers to take care and thanking them for doing so as they leave would also help.



Comwich Community Shop Project *Steering Group Update November 2024*

Four members of the Steering group recently visited the community shop at Roadwater near Washford. We were welcomed by the staff and shown around the shop which includes a small café area where we had coffee. A representative of the staff gave us a talk on the history of the shop since the previous owner resigned in 2015. She also gave us advice on how to proceed in starting up and running a community shop.



We found the shop very well laid out with lots of produce on sale from local suppliers such as butchers, bakers and greengrocers. The shop also has a post office and sells newspapers. There is also a prescription collection service.

The shop is very successful due to the dedication of the many community volunteers and a few paid staff. If the project goes ahead we will use some of the advice that we were given.

As reported in September we have registered with the Plunkett Foundation who provide practical advice and business support to help communities to establish and run community shops. The parish council supports the group by paying for this service. The Chairman of the steering group, Gary Perrett, has recently attended a Plunkett foundation conference. His main comments from the conference were: Understanding the community, progress reporting and encouraging active participation from the community.



Carol Birkenhead Gary Perrett Julie (manager) Paul Thornell Bob Birkenhead

The members of the steering group are Gary Perrett (chair), Paul Thornell (vice chair) Sue Aherne, Carol Birkenhead, Carol Bradbury, Aly Prowse, Baz Juniper, Pete Rawlings and Bob Birkenhead. If you have any comments or queries, do get in touch with us; comwichcs@gmail.com

Email: otter.tales@aol.com

www.comwich.org.uk/about-otterhampton/otter-tales

Reverend Jan Church – Profile

Jan has become a familiar figure in the parish, always a friendly face, eager to support her community, but her interesting life has not always been easy. She was born and spent her early life in Kent where her father was an electrical engineer and worked at Littlebrook Power Station.

Tragically her mother was diagnosed with cancer when Jan was 12 years' old and the family moved to Merley, near Wimborne in Dorset. She remembers wonderful times 'mirror dinghy' sailing in Poole Harbour and riding her pony, Rupert.

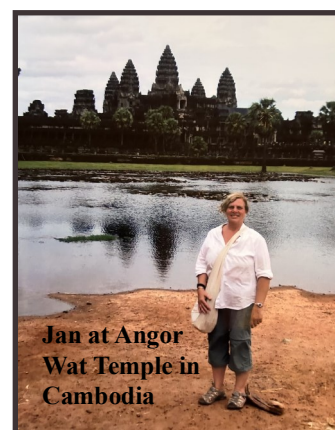
Sadly her mum died when Jan was only 14 years' old and it wasn't long before her father remarried. Jan felt increasingly unwelcome in the family home. At 16 she left to return to Kent and became a Police Cadet where she spent the next 2 years. This experience led her to successfully apply for a post as a police officer with the Dorset Police where she spent the next 4 years.

At 19 years of age, she married a police officer. They had four children, one of them had 'special educational needs' which were not met by the education system. This experience led to a lifelong interest and campaigned for young people and others with special educational needs.

After completing a theology degree at Bristol University in 2003 she went to Exeter University to take a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and became a secondary school teacher, specialising in religious education and special needs teaching. She started working in mainstream secondary schools, but it wasn't long before her interest in special educational needs led her into alternative provision education. She worked in various settings, including working for several years with the Bristol branch of the charity Kids Company, founded, and led by the charismatic Camila Batmanghelidjh, until sadly it was closed after financial irregularity accusations were made in 2015. After two years Camila was exonerated, but this came too late to save the charity. After losing her job as a teacher and SENCO with Kids Company Jan worked at Lloyds Pharmacy as a dispenser.

When she was 22, Jan became a Christian and served in the church which she increasingly felt was where her future lie. Sadly, her marriage ended in divorce after thirty years, which she felt, for a time, disqualified her from applying for the clergy.

Neil came into her life, and they were married in Cheddon Fitzpaine church in 2015. It was during this time she felt the time was right to apply to become a Priest and started a one-year part-time discernment programme, followed by Ordination training which concluded with a 3-day residential course, where Jan was assessed by the Bishop's Advisory Panel (BAP). After being successful in passing the BAP assessment she began a two-year part-time and residential course at Sarum College, Salisbury and gained a Post Graduate Diploma in Mission and Ministry.



Jan at Angkor
Wat Temple in
Cambodia

In 2020 she was ordained as a Deacon and a year later ordained as a Priest. She became a curate in Cannington benefice and earlier this year, after completing her curacy, was licenced to the higher office of Associate Priest.

Throughout her life she has had a passion for travel and experiencing different cultures and has holidayed in several countries including backpacking through Cambodia. She often takes her children and grandchildren on holiday with her. She would love to do more traveling.

Living in Ship Lane, Comwich, she feels completely at home, working part-time as a carer and as a vicar to this, and surrounding villages. She has joined the OPRA committee and helps to organise community events, and her ambition is to make St. Peter's Church more of a community space where all are welcome.



Revd Jan Church with
Michael Beasley, Bishop of
Bath and Wells .

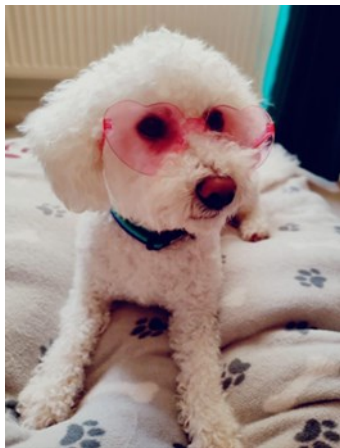
The 'Tails' Of Teddy

- by Katy M

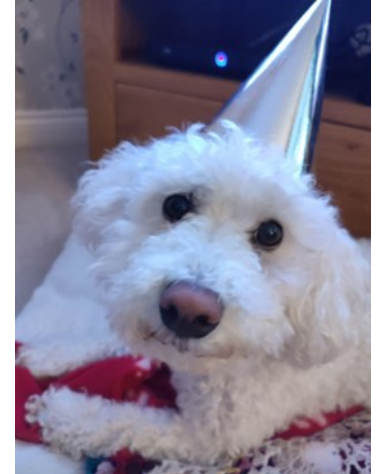
Once upon a time there was a Pup called Teddy. Teddy is a Bichon Frise and has the fluffiest fur. You've probably spotted him, trotting around the village, and you have probably heard him as well! Teddy has the warmest brown eyes, like chestnuts roasting on an open fire. He loves other dogs (especially Bonnie and Taka!) and I'm going to tell you some of my dog's funniest moments!

Pond catastrophe!

Back when our garden was getting re constructed, we thankfully had all the water of our pond taken out. This story starts on a windy afternoon when we were all inside the house, and no one was looking after the dog. That spells trouble! He somehow got outside in the garden and a couple minutes later we heard a bark. We all ran outside, thinking Ted got hurt. We looked all round the garden, wondering where he was, when my mum looked over the pond.



“Oh my goodness!” said mum, laughing. I ran over and was in complete shock. There was Ted, toy under his claw, tongue out...IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL THE RUBBLE IN THE POND!!



The pond wasn't that deep, so we picked him up and got him out of the pond but his toy was stuck. Somehow the wind had picked up his toy (his toy was a mini blanket) and flew it into the pond! Ted must've seen this and hopped on in! Still makes me giggle to this day.

Treats galore!

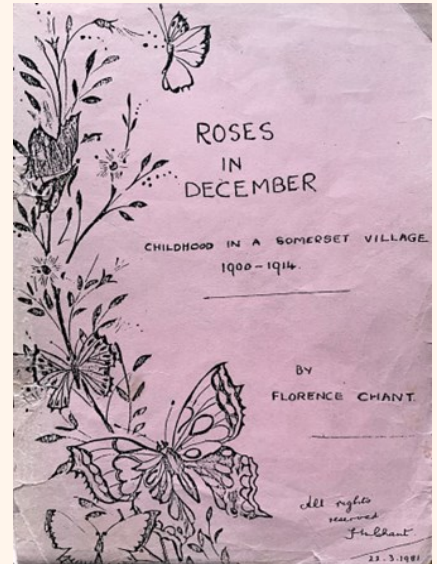
One sunny day, I popped into the shop to buy some sweets (totally not for me...) When I got there, I bought my sweets and spotted some dog treats. I brought them for Ted because I had some extra change leftover. I got home and showed him. I put them next to me and started to watch some TV. I had to go and do something so I left the treats on the sofa... UNOPENED. When I got back, I saw Ted sniffing at something, so I walked over. That's when I realised, he had ripped the bag open and ATE ALL THE TREATS. Every last one of them, in the span of 2 minutes! Let's just say he didn't have any dinner that night. If there was an eating competition for dogs, he would definitely come in 1ST place!

Hear disappear!

Me and my family wanted to go to the Bridgwater Carnival, so we dropped Teddy off at my Grandad's house and waved goodbye. Ted has been at my Grandad's house before with no troubles, but this time not so much! The first few hours were alright, Teddy was as good as gold. But as the hours went by, he got quite hungry. So when Grandad went upstairs, this was Ted's time to strike. He climbed on Grandad's armchair and when he came back downstairs, guess what had happened? His hearing aid mould was missing! He looked over at Teddy and guess what he was chewing on? Yes, you guessed it! Let's just say we had to shout when talking to Grandad for a while...

Roses in December by Florence Chant. (1900 - 1914 Edited and Abridged)

Within a week or two [of winter being upon us] the mud in the roads was frozen stiff and hard in ruts. The weather was unsuitable for outdoor pursuits as evenings drew in, the family would gather in our cosy living-room where my parents managed to afford to have a fire in the range. Soon chairs were drawn to the table and there in the lamplight we played endless games of "Tip-it", "Snakes and Ladders", "Ludo", "Happy Families", "Snap" and various games with ordinary playing cards including "Beggar my Neighbour" which we called "Beat Jack out of Doors".



The lamp had to be trimmed every day in readiness for use in the evening. It had a large reservoir to be filled with paraffin. There was a circle of wick in the middle which, when lit, was covered by a tall, transparent glass chimney; then came a fat, round translucent globe exuding a soft, comforting glow. Every now and then there would come the cry, "The chimney's smoking" and for a moment or two the air was filled with smuts. The light had to be turned off and a candle was lit so that the lamp could be allowed to cool. As soon as possible the globe and chimney were removed, the wick cleaned and straightened, the chimney cleaned with a soft duster, the wick relit and the lamp reassembled. Games would then be resumed.

Early in December we children had the approaching season of Christmas in mind. A few of us met in the wash-house at the top of our garden to practice some carols. My favourite was, "It came upon the midnight clear".

When we felt confident enough we decided it might be profitable on our way home [from the village hall] by singing carols to bring joy to the inhabitants. In early days the only profits gained by us were mint humbugs from the landlady of the "Anchor" Inn. Later in the month if we were lucky we obtained a few precious coppers as rewards.

About a week before Christmas we knew that the grocer from Cannington who called on Saturday evenings would be bringing a Christmas-box containing raisins, currants and mixed peel. The butcher gave Mother a large lump of beef suet and now she had most of the vital ingredients for the making of the Christmas puddings. These were cooked in the wash-boiler. Of course long boiling was essential. One Christmas my two elder brothers undertook to stoke the fire to keep the water boiling. Late in the evening when they proceeded up the garden-path to attend to their duties one of them remarked, "Someone seems to be cooking beef- steak". Alas, the boys had forgotten to replenish the water in the copper. It had all boiled away and the basins were red-hot. Fortunately the puddings proved to be edible and were much enjoyed.

On Christmas Eve, we hung our stockings at the ends of our beds. While we lay in bed, with sleep eluding us in our excited state someone would say, "Hush, the carol singers have come". After a certain amount of scuffling of feet and whispering of instructions there would come the cheerful singing of carols from a party of grown-up people, many of them members of the church choir. It was their custom to visit the homes of the squire and the farmers. They also rendered] two or three carols outside our home, the singers were mainly my Father's fellow-workers in the brickyard. They certainly did not do this with any anticipation of monetary reward. When my Father went out to thank them there were hearty cries of "Happy Christmas, Henry" followed by my Father's heartfelt reply, "And a Happy Christmas to you and yours".

On Christmas morning there could no-where have been happier children than we were. In the dim light of dawn we crawled to the bottom of the bed and felt the interesting bumps in the legs of our stockings each of which contained an orange, a rosy apple, a bag of nuts, another of sweets, one containing dates and another, figs. In the very toe was a bright, new penny. Our happiness and contentment were complete.

Early in January it was the custom to hold a Wassail ceremony in some of the larger apple-orchards in the parish in turn. I think it must have been in 1911 or 1912 that my Father took part in the last Wassail ceremony to be held in the next-door orchard belonging to Mr. Clifford Hunt - it was a bright moonlit night when I watched from a bedroom window a procession of men proceed up the wide garden-path, with guns under their arms. Mr. Hunt carried two large pails of cider and someone else two-handled pint cups and a lump of bread. Later I heard sharp reports of gun-fire and a sound of singing.

When my Father came home he explained to me what had happened. Some bread soaked in cider was placed in the fork of a tree for the robins to eat; this would bring good luck and plenty of apples in the coming season. The guns were then fired into the branches, the Combwich version of the Somerset Wassail Song was sung, and a good deal of cider consumed.

The song went like this :-

"There was an old fox out in a green copse,
Devouring the chickens and licking his chops,
And Granfer's gurt bulldog he burnt his long tail,
And this is the night we go singing Wassail.

Chorus

Sail me boys, sail. Sail me boys, sail,
And this is the night we go singing Wassail.

There was an old man, he had an old cow,
And how for to keep it he didn't know how,
So he built up a barn to keep his cow warm,
And a little more cider 'ull do us no harm.

Chorus

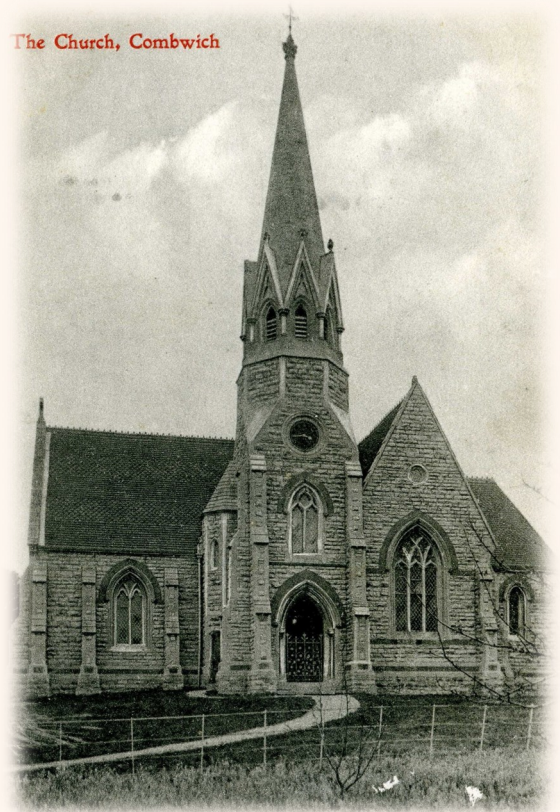
Harm me boys harm. Harm me boys harm,
And a little more cider 'ull do us no harm".

A few more weeks of winter must pass, usually with very severe weather. Once, just after Christmas, days of frost resulted in thick ice covering every pond and even, most unusually, the brook running through the village. The big boys, led by my brothers, made rough sledges on which they gave rides to all the younger children up and down the brook. Most of us were tipped out more than once but we did not complain since the older children did not often exert themselves to give us so much pleasure.

Before it was time for us to return to school at the end of the Christmas holiday there was a heavy fall of snow which filled some of the roads to the tops of the hedges and we were confined to the house. When the snow thawed the school was flooded and the holiday had to be extended to allow the premises to be dried.

Winter at last gave way to Spring and the daily round of the developing year began once again.

The Church, Combwich



Art Group

Combwich Art Group has an artistic ambition for 2025 to contribute to the health and wellbeing of the parish.

Drawing, painting, scribbling, sketching, making, creating or splashing paint around as if your last name is Pollack is great fun. Art has the power to relieve stress and is good for our brain health. The increased levels of dopamine makes us feel good. And all that is good for our health and well being.

Starting in the new year Combwich Art Group will be hosting a number of open Art Events, culminating in a village Art Exhibition held later in the year. We aim to put on subject based themed art sessions including Still Life, People, Life Drawing, Landscapes, Portraits and Abstract.

If you would like to draw, paint, make and create come to Art Group. Art Group meet on Monday at 2.00pm until 4.00pm in the village hall. We create together in a mutually supportive space offering each other constructive feedback.

Drawing and observing is a fundamental place to start. Bring a soft B grade pencil (3B - 6B is a good selection to start with), some sketching paper, something interesting to draw and let's draw.



Art Group also talks ART. The Vincent Van Gogh Exhibition at the National Gallery, Yoko Ono's 'Music of the Mind' at the Tate Modern and the work of Gilbert and George provided some thought provoking discussion over the past couple of weeks.

If you would like to be a part of Art Group's ambition for 2025 come along with your ideas, and have a chat. You could bring pencils, paper and paints and have some fun.

Book Club

Book Club will be reviewing 'Otter Tales' in the new year.

Date to be confirmed on 'all things Combwich'

Book Club meets at the Anchor Inn on the 4th Thursday of the Month



Harbour View Bar News

You will find us in Otterhampton Village Hall, opening times Friday 7-11pm Sunday 3-8pm. All welcome! Harbour View Bar is a great place to meet up with your friends and have a drink. Getting together, meeting others, having a chat and getting involved with a range of activities and events is great for the health and wellbeing of the community. Individual membership is £6 until the end of July and guests can accompany a member at £1 per visit.



A huge Thank You to all of those who supported the Macmillan Coffee Morning. We were blown away by the number of cakes baked and prizes donated for the raffle. An amazing £430 was raised. Thank you to Beverly Lang for co-ordinating the event.

The Harbour View Bar recently hosted a Race Night. A lot of fun was had on the night, with bets rolling in making it a competitive evening. Harbour View Bar would like to



thank all of those who supported the evening, with particular thanks going to our sponsors:

Garden Club

Mike Narraway – Gardening and handyman

John Wake - Monument Investigation Ltd

Harbour View Bar Committee

Kane - Twin Tower Scaffold

Steph Juniper - VA Solutions

Jim Juniper - JC Roofing Specialist



October saw our first ever Oktoberfest. An Oompah band played some traditional and modern songs to get people dancing. German beer flowed, traditional fayre was enjoyed and a competition took place for the most authentic male and female costumes.



Upcoming events

Quiz Night



Our next quiz nights hosted by our Quizmaster Richard Navoy, will be taking place on **Saturday 23rd November 730pm start. £1 per person.**

Saturday 14th December 7pm – Late 60's 70's 80's Disco
£6 per person. Tickets available from Harbour View Bar & the Village Shop

Committee members required

Your support is greatly welcomed to keep this valued community space functioning. We are looking for additional committee members to support the on-going functions for the community. Come along and contribute to our monthly meetings and regular event organisation.

Contact Steve Lang 07875 149826 clubber64@icloud.com or Bruce Barton 07584 502019 bartonbs@btinternet.com



WWT Steart Marshes & Bridgwater Bay NNR

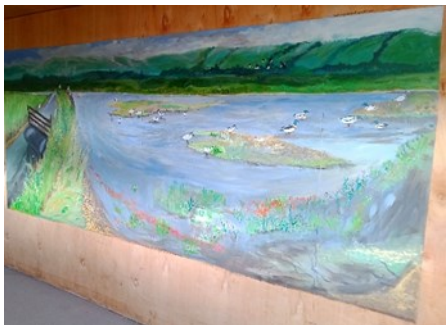
Works have been underway since September at WWT Steart Marshes as part of the Species Survival fund project, **Wetter for Waders: Enhancing Somerset's Coastal Wetlands**. This project is funded by DEFRA and delivered by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency. The project encompasses a variety of capital works to enhance, restore and create habitat across the reserve, alongside engagement activities intended to connect more people with nature.

Since September we have constructed a variety of wetland features. This work involved the creation of two new



scrapes, almost 2km of gipes, ditches and muddy margins, the creation of a ghost pond, the restoration of 12 existing ponds and the creation of a large pond at Stockland Marshes. We hope that these features will encourage breeding waders this winter and ensure that long term, we retain more water across the reserve in the drier summer months. As some visitors may have noticed, we have also constructed a new predator fence around one of the new scrapes as well as upgrading some of existing fencing. We had a very high number of avocet nests lost to predation in 2024, so we hope that this fencing will protect nests and encourage breeding waders to continue to return to the reserve in the future. In 2025 we will focus on restoring the saline lagoons around the Quantock hides and intend to create a boardwalk across the saltmarsh to allow more people to get closer to this unique landscape.

We have already had some good news regarding bird sightings after the wetland feature works with teal, pintail and water pipits making an appearance on the new scrapes. Bearded tits have also been sighted around the wetland walkway where some of the project's pond restorations have taken place.



SPECIES SURVIVAL FUND



Funded by
UK Government

Heritage
Fund

Two new murals were created in the Quantock hides this summer by local artists Alison Jacobs and Margaret Micklewright with the help of local people and volunteers including Blossom in Somerset, My Day Care Services, and the Mind Art Group. The murals are designed to capture the spirit of the marshes and we received positive feedback from those who got involved with their creation. We have also delivered two demonstration days which promoted wetland feature creation across the local landowner and farming communities. Watch out for more coming soon!

Keep an eye out on X, Facebook, Instagram and www.wwt.org.uk/steart for news and events.

Reserve Office: 01278 651090 info.steart@wwt.org.uk

Site Manager: Alys Laver 07717 505966 alys.laver@wwt.org.uk

Engagement & Learning Manager: Nicole Turnbull 07717 342061 nicole.turnbull@wwt.org.uk



Christmas Services

Christingle Service
8th December at 4.00pm at Combwich Church

Carols by Candlelight
15th December at 6.00pm at Stockland Church

Eucharist on Christmas Night
Christmas Eve at 9.00pm at Combwich Church

Family Communion
Christmas Day at 11.00am at Stockland Church

Christingle & Tree Lighting

Sunday 8th December

The Bell Ringers play a medley of Christmas carols and tunes at 3.45 pm

The Christingle service will be at 4.00pm at St Peter's Church followed by the lighting of the Combwich Christmas tree at 5pm.

Mince Pies and Mulled Wine after the Christmas Tree lighting ceremony in the Harbour View Bar.



Prayer Group

Please come and join us

every **THURSDAY** morning at **9.00am**

to

Pray

At

St Peter's Church

Combwich

From Rev Jan Church
Contact no: 07733433526

Otter Wheels



Your volunteer car scheme is here for you.

Is lack of transport a problem? Want to visit a friend or family, or go to the dentist, doctor, hospital, then maybe we can help.

Ring Otter Wheels on 07925154216— to book a trip, but please give as much notice as you can before you need to travel. You will need to register (if you have not already

done so) on this number before you can book a trip

This not for profit car scheme has been running for several years with well over 1,600 trips completed. If you haven't tried us give us a go. Door to door service with friendly experienced drivers, all DBS checked and happy to help. Typical return journey prices are: -

	With bus pass	Without bus pass
Cannington Health Centre	£1.75	£3.50
Bridgwater Bus Station	£4.00	£8.00
Musgrove Hospital Taunton	£9.75	£19.50
Blackbrook Business Park	£8.25	£16.50
<i>Plus booking fee</i>	50p	£1.00

Please note, when you renew your bus pass you must let us have your new number.

Feedback

Email, comment, feedback, and suggestions to the editor please.

Stories, articles reports, events and other items for publication in the next edition of Otter Tales need to be received by Thursday 9th January.

Email The Editor:
otter.tales@aol.com

Birthday Bells

If you would like to have 'Happy Birthday' played on the church bells Email

combwichbells@outlook.com

Otter Tales:

Editor: Barry Leathwood. Assisted by Steven Parker.
 Distribution: Bob Birkenhead email:
Birkenhead.bob@gmail.com

Articles for publication: email otter.tales@aol.com
 Published with the generous support of the Parish Council
 Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of information published in Otter Tales, the views expressed are those of individuals or organisations.

Articles for the next issue by Thursday 9th January

Mobile Library: Dates and Times.

Thursday 28th November. 9th January, 6th February

Combwich Harbour TA5 2QU 10.15 – 10.50

Combwich Shop TA5 2QW 10.55 – 11.20

Stockland Bristol Club TA5 2PY 11.30– 11.55

Defibrillators can save your life.

The Combwich defibrillator is positioned in the telephone box.

The Steart defibrillator is positioned at Ferrices Farm.
 Dial 999 to call for an ambulance then follow the simple instructions. **NO TRAINING NEEDED**



To keep up to date with all that is happening in the parish check the various village noticeboards, log onto www.combwich.org or visit the "All Things Combwich" Facebook page. For information about the village hall go to

www.otterhamptonvillagehall.co.uk

For local history visit Combwich, Steart and Otterhampton Memories Facebook Group

To be notified of events and local information by email contact: barry.leathwood@btinternet.com.

Your favourite Jam, Marmalade and chutney and also plants are still available.

Proceeds from the market will be donated to charity.

Ring Liz on 01278 652687



Village Shop Open - Shop local - Use it or lose it

Opening hours

Monday to Friday 9.00am to 1.00pm and 2.00pm till 6.00pm

Saturday 9.00am till 1.00pm

