

Stock & Bradley **Chronicle**

Dec 2020 Jan 2021. Worcestershire



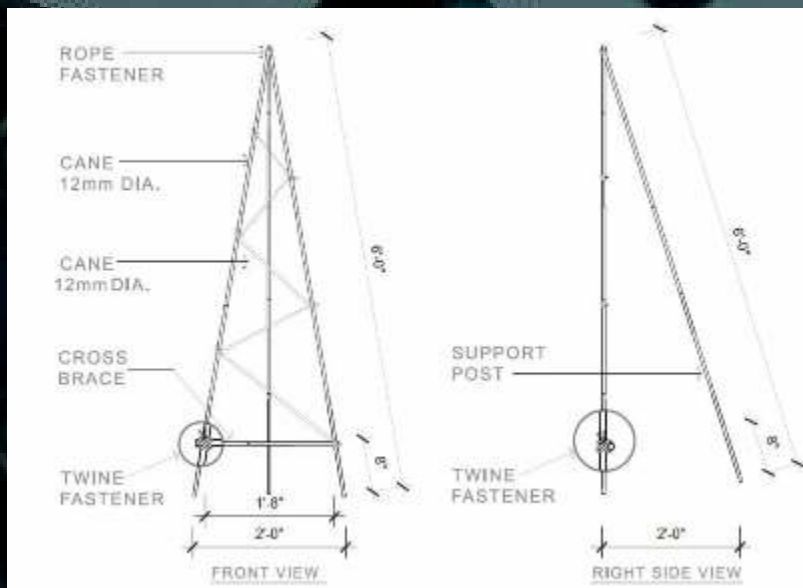
Merry Christmas

Congratulations to everyone who took part in the Scarecrow event in Earls Common Rd.

It was hugely successful, great ideas and it generated a great deal of interest for both the village and passers by. The winners were Marg Fish with her Mother and Child and the Richards family with the Sheep Farmer but the decision making was difficult for the judge as there were so many good characters.

As that suggestion was so well received it has been suggested that it would be good to do something to decorate the village for Christmas, not a competition this time, just again something to cheer every one up during these unusual times.

I have given it a lot of thought because you can't put out anything of value because there is the risk of it disappearing so as an idea, taken from a very upmarket catalogue, to make a Christmas Tree using 3 x 6 ft canes as per diagram. The two outer edges of the tree could be painted or covered with tinsel, foliage, ribbon or artificial garland material and baubles hung from the cross members. If you don't have 6ft canes I can supply them at a cost of 38p, and then use them next year for your runner beans.!



Of course you can put out anything you like in addition to the lights that many people decorate with. Other ideas might be to hang garlands or wreaths on hedges or walls, just a few ideas. This is open to everyone in both Bradley as well as Stock Green this time as there is no judging to do.

Jan Bates 01386 792414.

Editorial



December 2020

Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you are going to get, it is certainly true of this year and we still haven't got to the bottom of the box yet, I hope we like the choice.

Christmas is certainly an unknown quantity this year, as long as we can meet up with family and friends for many of us it will be enjoyable, but as a result of Covid many people will struggle to make ends meet and many of those little luxuries will be missed out. Each year we receive requests for donations to so many charities it is difficult to prioritise them, they are all so needy but you do wonder how much is spent on administration. Perhaps it is the smaller charities that use the donated money to the purpose for which it was given.

I was delighted with the community spirit in Earls Common Rd for our Scarecrow event and we hope to do something again to brighten up Christmas. Although it is for Earls Common Road in particular if anyone else wishes to bring a bit of additional Christmas cheer do join in, details are on the page 'Merry Christmas'

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our readers, keep well and safe.

Many articles in the Chronicle are contributed by members of the public. They remain the responsibility of the writers and neither the production team nor the publishers can be held responsible for the views and assertions contained therein.

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SUNDAY WORSHIP 10.30am for 11am

TUESDAY HOLY COMMUNION 8 for 8.15pm

Fortnightly Contemplative Prayer (First and Third Thursdays) 8 for 8.15pm

Meeting ID: 686 311 6347 Password: 777

CHRISTMAS CHURCH SERVICE

24th Christmas Communion 8.00 pm Wyn



The John Lewis Christmas TV advert has become a bit of a Christmas tradition over the last few years. This year's is quite a sweet little advert which has, nonetheless caused a furore.

It suggests that there's a bus service number 222 to Tooting. Bus buffs and nerds have taken offence as there is no such bus service.

As an ex Routemaster bus driver I am more concerned that the bus is obviously a plywood replica of a generic bus. Should such liberties be allowed with omnibusial truths?

It has been suggested that this is not Tooting in London but the Tooting between Roofing and Hifalutin, which some son of a gun told me is in Arizona.

It certainly would explain the technical inaccuracies.

It's odd what we get serious about, and the things that people have strongly held views about never cease to amaze me. Such is the marvellous diversity of human nature, and despite the edges tending towards lunacy it is still something very much to be celebrated.

As we move into a New Year carrying some kind of lockdown with us and with the high probability of a Covid third wave in the coming months we might do worse than to ponder what lessons we might have learned?

Covid was not the great leveler. The elderly, poor people and certain ethnic groups are far more at risk in general, as well as those with particular illnesses. We are not the same and our attitudes, needs, desires, wants and pleasures are myriad and diverse. And we are not the same in vulnerability to disease.

So why is it that we find ideas different to our own challenging? I suppose the reason is that anything that is likely to disturb our peace, prosperity or security will worry us. Anything that suggests that our way of life or freedoms are in some way at risk by those with different views, or who just look different, is a primitive and common reaction in most human beings. That's not going to change any time soon, and there are thousands of years of evolution ahead before that is bred out of us... if it ever is.

Into a world of difference, variety, contrasts and contradictions Christmas comes as an annual reminder both of life giving power of diversity, and at the same time of the life denying power of prejudice against that which is different.

The story of the Christ Child is always a story of similarity and difference. Jesus is another baby like all babies. But Jesus is a Jew. That has consequences. Jesus's birth caused the powerful to lash out in a frenzy of killing.

Power and control, the need to be right (even when we're wrong) and the need to succeed at all cost. These are human failings that Jesus grew up amongst and which are still a backdrop to our lives.

The future of the human race and the well being of life on this planet depend on us being willing to celebrate difference as a gift and a joy.

That is just one of the consequences of Christmas, of the God-with-us story of identity and diversity. By spring of 2021 we might be pulling out of the pandemic. I hope so. But what will have changed for good?

My prayer would be that we have learned to enjoy everything and everyone for who they are, and that they might enjoy us for who we are. Difference is good.

Happy Christmas and a Peaceful, Healthy and Different New Year!

Wyn

November

by Harley Coleridge

*"THE mellow year is hasting to its close:
The little birds have almost sung their last,
Their small notes twitter in the dreary blast -
That shrill-piped harbinger of early snows; -
The patient beauty of the scentless rose,
Oft with the morn's hoar crystal quaintly glassed,
Hangs a pale mourner for the summer past,
And makes a little summer where it grows; -
In the chill sunbeam of the faint brief day
The dusky waters shudder as they shine;
The russet leaves obstruct the straggling way
Of oozy brooks, which no deep banks define,
And the gaunt woods, in ragged, scant array,
Wrap their old limbs with sombre ivy-twine"*

STOCK AND BRADLEY GARDENING CLUB

Garden Club cancelled until further notice

If you require any further information, ring Dinny Pynsent (Secretary) on 01527 821355 or Rob Cole (Chairman) on 01527 821156.



PLANTS FOR WINTER EFFECT

Rob Cole

We tended to specialise in hardy perennials at Meadow Farm, nearly all of which are now preparing to hibernate well below soil level until the warmer months of April and May, but there are some which manage to look good early in the year, as well as in their main flush of growth.

For foliage effect, *Heuchera* 'Amethyst Mist' is hard to beat. It is one of the constantly growing band of purple leaved types, but is dwarfish in stature and virtually evergreen (everpurple?) with a very tidy habit. It is a wonderful foil for snowdrops. The darker flowered forms of *Helleborus x hybridus* fulfil a similar role in showing up snowdrop flowers, and some forms have bronzy new foliage too, which adds to the contrast. The Hellebores, of course, are the mainstay of the late winter garden, and flower from December through until April in some cases. As a point of interest, my records for the last twenty years show that I have always collected seed from my Hellebores between 26th May and 6th June, the 2nd June date being the most frequent. No global warming in Feckenham !

Penstemon is not a genus that springs to mind as a winter subject, but *Penstemon hirsutus pygmaeus* is almost evergreen and if tidied of old flowering stems in November gives a good account of itself as a foliage plant during the winter and is entirely hardy. The variety 'Purpureus' with a plum purple flush to the leaves is even better.

I have often extolled the virtues of the many forms of *Erica carnea*, the winter flowering heather, and make no apologies for plugging it again. The newer cultivars particularly are such wonderfully coloured and long flowering plants that they richly deserve a place in every garden where they will give a bold display for all of the winter months. Their other virtue is that they don't require acidic soil as other heather species do.

I have already mentioned Snowdrops, and will merely add that they give a much better effect in large random clumps. With the price of some of the cultivars going ever higher, this is a pipe dream if you are a collector, but ordinary *Galanthus nivalis* is cheap and cheerful and can readily be used in this way.





Whilst on the subject of bulbs, *Narcissus* is mainly March and April flowering, but there are some varieties which show earlier colour. 'Tête-à-Tête' usually flowers at the end of February if planted in a sunny open position. It was raised by Alec Gray in Camborne in 1949 as a seedling, and has gone on to be reproduced in hundreds of millions. 'Rijnveld's Early Sensation' and 'Grand Soleil d'Or' are also naturally early flowerers, and 'February Gold' is good for mass planting and is widely available. The little species *Narcissus cyclamineus* opens at the end of February, and bravely shrugs off any frost or snowfall, but is difficult to obtain as it will not suffer being lifted and dried for sale as a bulb. Consequently it is fairly expensive to buy if you find it offered as a growing plant, but is still cheap compared to most snowdrop cultivars.

Another bulb which flowers in early February, or even earlier, is *Ipheion uniflorum*, with short, lax foliage and star shaped flowers to about 150mm (6"). The main species has a pale blue flower, but darker violet-blue forms are available such as 'Wisley Blue' and 'Froyle Mill', whilst 'Charlotte Bishop' is pink flowered, and 'Album' is a clear white. 'Rolf Fiedler' flowers later than most and is a beautiful rich light blue. All have the advantage of being summer dormant, so can be overplanted with subjects which will fill the gap they leave as they die back.

Crocus tommasinianus in its various forms always gives a good show in mid February, although they can be invasive through self sown seedlings. We deadhead them as a control measure, a bit fiddly but effective in keeping them in check. The early colour, which can range from pale lilac to a deepish purple, is so welcome that it is worth the effort. We have a bed in a fairly shady position which we devote to these early flowerers, and include *Scilla tubergeniana* and *Scilla siberica*, *Cyclamen coum*, snowdrops, and primroses. The effect from January to mid March is stunning.

If you have a moist spot in the garden, *Primula denticulata* obligingly opens its first flowers in late February. Colours range from pale blue, through various shades of mauve and red, and there is a white form too. We grow them in association with the cultivated forms of the Celandine, *Ranunculus ficaria*, which likes the same conditions and begin flowering at the same time.

Emerging foliage, without flowers, is sometimes sufficiently bold to make a significant contribution to the otherwise thin months of late winter. *Lysimachia punctata* 'Alexander' has spectacular shrimp pink young growth, but changes to green with a white variegation as it matures. The pink colouring lasts for several weeks, though, and is always a talking point. The emerging leaves of the Oriental Poppy, *Papaver orientale*, are also early to arise and are a sign that things are on the

move. Pulmonarias, too, are beginning to show, and whilst the flowers do not begin to open for a few more weeks, the leaves are neat and colourful as they expand.

The various cultivars of *Chaenomeles speciosus* and *C. x superba* (commonly called the Japanese quince) are by far the earliest of the flowering shrubs with strongly coloured flowers, and begin to open in mid January. Colours range from orange and red, to pale and dark pink, apricot, and white and some have very prominent bright yellow anthers which add greatly to the overall effect. From seed sown from the white form 'Nivalis' in February 1996 one of our seedlings turned out to be a flamingo apricot and has flowered regularly every year from January to the end of March since it first flowered in 1998.

If you have a space for another shrubby plant, *Prunus* 'Okame' is a marvellous late February flowering small cherry, and is a hybrid between *P. campanulata* and *P. incisa* raised by Captain Collingwood Ingram. It received an Award of Garden Merit in 1947 and has masses of carmine rose flowers and good autumn leaf colour.

For most gardeners, the flowering year cannot start too soon, and an area close to the house, planted with some of these early performers, is a joy to behold during the gloomy early months.



My Last Contribution

Rob Cole

My first article for the Chronicle was in April 2016 and since then I have written 50 garden related articles culminating in this month's final contribution.

Diane and I have now retired from our life at Meadow Farm in Feckenham and have bought a new house in Salford Priors, with no nursery, no meadow, no one acre garden, but with an empty, manageable sized garden to begin anew - perfect for a retirement project.

Although living in Feckenham for twenty-two years, we have made many friends in Stock Green and Bradley Green. One of the first things we did when we arrived was to join the Gardening Club and we have attended almost every meeting since we joined. I am currently Chairman, although the Covid pandemic has curtailed our meetings for the foreseeable future. I also belong to the Stock and Bradley Art Class and intend to continue with both groups when we are allowed to meet again, as they are so enjoyable and we will be only about 25 minutes away.

So, thank you to all in Stock Green and Bradley Green for allowing Diane and me such a rewarding time in your friendly neighbourhood.

Thank you Rob

As Editor of the Chronicle I would like on behalf of our readers to say a very big 'thank you' to Rob Cole who for a number of years has written about so many interesting aspects of gardening. He has been our gardening guru, his extensive knowledge of plants, the ways of cultivating them and their idiosyncrasies has helped us to grow things we might perhaps not have tried before.

Rob and Diane have now moved from Meadow Farm and we wish them well in their new home.

It does however mean we now have a gap in the Chronicle, is there any one who would like to write a gardening article, not necessarily every month, maybe once a quarter. It can be on any gardening topic, perhaps a garden that you have visited or a plant or group of plants that have particularly caught your eye. You don't have to be a gardening expert!

Please contact SB Chronicle to discuss it.

Sudeley Castle

The beautiful new night-time trail around Sudeley Castle's stunning gardens and grounds are almost ready to be lit up in spectacular fashion. The garden illuminations run after lockdown until Wednesday 30 th December under the stars. It's the chance to discover the magical characters of the Nutcracker as you progress around Sudeley's garden and woodland.

Booking is on line and is for timed slots, adults £20.00 but 15% off if booked in advance. No purchase at the gate.

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and Wendy Ralphs

Village Hall



At the last Village Hall Management Committee Meeting on 14th September 2020, the Chairman Mel Bates and Member Janet Bates both announced that they would not be standing for re-election at the Village Hall AGM in April 2021. By then both Mel and Jan will be octogenarians and believe it is important that younger members of the community should be responsible for taking the Village Hall into the future. Mel has been a member of the Committee for 15 years and Chairman for at least 10 of those years and Jan has been a member for several years. Both Mel and Jan wish to express their very best wishes for the continued success of the Hall and to sincerely thank the other Members of the Management Committee for their help, support and friendship over these many years.

Mel Bates Chairman

100 Club ...The November monthly draw for the Stock & Bradley 100 Club was made by Mr Scott Newton on 1st November 2020. The results were as follows:

November 2020:

1st Prize: - No: 127 Mr Brian Holmes

2nd Prize: - No: 75 Mrs Frances Hackett

3rd Prize: - No: 107 Mrs Linda Drew



FLYING THE FLAG

Stella Wallis 01386 793350



News from Stock & Bradley Parish Council

Speed Checks in Stock & Bradley

AT 07.45 on Monday 7th September the Clerk met with PC's Warren Edmunds & Joe Brooks and PCSO Brain Joshua, to conduct speed checks in Stock & Bradley, fortunately it was a bright and dry day.

PC Edmunds monitored 85 cars in Bradley Green and 34 in Stock Green which would suggest that almost 60% of the cars going through Bradley Green are coming from the Inkberrow direction.

PC Edmunds was very impressed by the VAS as it recorded exactly the same speed as his speed gun and commented that he believed that it was "a major contributor in reducing the overall speeding through the village" and was the "most advanced he had seen".

The Parish Councillors would like to thank PC Edmunds for making Stock & Bradley a regular village for his speed checks.



Second VAS to be installed in Stock & Bradley

The Parish Council are now in the process of ordering a second VAS for the village, this means that Stock & Bradley will each have a VAS permanently situated in their 30 mph area. We will also be erecting two more posts which will enable the VAS's to be moved to different positions in both Stock & Bradley, as we were informed this also helps reduce speeding.

RogertheClerk@outlook.com



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It's that time of year again when the Chronicle seeks your help to continue providing copies free to residents. Your support, however large or small, is very much appreciated.

Donations to 'Stock and Bradley Chronicle' should be sent to
The Editor

Mrs Jan Bates, 'White Cottage', Stock Green, Redditch B966SZ
or Treasurer

Mrs Mary Waring 'Staddle Stones', Stock Green, Redditch B966TB

Many thanks to the following who have donated to this year's Chronicle Appeal
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Rush Farm



November 2020

Well, I said we needed rain and we have certainly had plenty.

Midweek the weather changed completely and suddenly we were plunged into colder, if brighter conditions. All this after a fair amount of rain. Interestingly though the water level in the Bow Brook was raised no more than just under an inch, it was sufficient to fill the scrape which I suspect in the not too distant future will need some dredging. The Brook by the way is regarded by the Environmental Agency as a river, which makes sense since the Brook runs some thirty miles before joining the Stratford Avon.

This means the bulk of the rain was absorbed by the pastures. Splendid in many ways but also meaning that the cattle must be brought in soon if they are not to do damage. Also we are already putting out hay for the young stock though there does remain grass for grazing.

Driving rain or bitterly cold weather often provokes concern in visitors for the sheep. Understandable, but not really a cause for concern. The fleece of a sheep is full of lanolin which repels rainwater, external infection and cold. For the animal it is a real blessing, for

the farmer and in particular for the wool merchant or would be user of the wool, not quite such a blessing unless you actually sell products based on lanolin.

For the farmer, shearing needs to wait until warmer conditions to reduce the amount of lanolin in the fleece. For the buyer of the wool, extracting the lanolin, so the wool becomes something a customer would recognise, is not straightforward. For the individual, one interesting approach is called 'suint fermentation' for which all that is needed is a dustbin full of water, time and an ability to live with bad smells.

It had been hoped that the lambs could be weighed this week but that proved impossible. The rams, who have been cossetted in recent weeks, will join the split breeding flock within the next two weeks. Each flock will have two rams allocated to it.



There was a great deal of tension on Friday as we waited for the vet to come to complete the test for TB. And a great sense of relief when all animals were declared free of the disease.

Work on the erection of the barn once started was rapid. Erecting the framework took two days and the roofing was completed before the end of the week. At this stage the sides are entirely open. Before the barn can actually be used, the ground under the roof has still to be prepared. This could not be completed until the erection was over because the machines used would have caused great damage. Next week hopefully that and also the concreting in the left-hand side of the main barn can be done.



With the arrival of a new 1000 litre spraying machine and dry weather this week, hope has risen that the third spraying of the

whole farm with preparation 500 may be possible. Our existing sprayer can only hold 450 litres.

The dry weather has allowed some hedge cutting to take place in one of our smaller fields. Work needed to enable the existing tired fencing to be replaced.

We were delighted to hear from Daniel who is now in Spain enjoying the relative warmth! Delighted also that he spoke as warmly about his time with us as we felt about him. He has not been replaced, and while the virus persists it is not easy to see when we can welcome woofers again, though we are already being approached from undergraduates studying at ISARA in Lyons for placements next summer – a nice reflection on the past experiences of their students here.

To be closed to woofers as we are at the moment causes me great sadness but at least correspondence continues with past woofers.

On Friday Rosie and Paul collected from Pershore College 240 bottles of apple juice pressed from the apples of our very ancient tree which fruits only every other year. The unit at the college, which we have used for years is very busy at this time of year since many local fruit growers also use their facility.





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- Leave no trace of your visit and **take your litter home**
- **Keep dogs under effective control**

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