

CHARLTON LINK

Village News for the People of Newbottle & Charlton

ISSUE 382 JANUARY 2021

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SHOP NEWS!

Charlton's much-loved and hugely dedicated Keith and Stephanie Wilks are retiring from Shop and Post Office duties after 19 years service!

Having worked in retail for some time, the couple with their two small boys, moved from Leigh-on-Sea in Essex to rent the shop at first and then buy it a year later. Many Charlton residents will not remember the time when Keith and Stephanie weren't running the shop, they have become such a core part of village life.

The family moved to Charlton for a slightly less busy life (!) and became immersed in village activities with Ethan and Adan attending the school, Keith running the Football Club and editing the Charlton Link for many years, and Stephanie being the Secretary of the Memorial Hall Committee. Over the years, they have also been involved with the village fete, Parish Council and many other responsibilities.

Although their presence will be sadly missed, the family will be still living next door to the shop and Keith will be enjoying his 'retirement' with a very long list of DIY jobs to complete!

"We are really pleased that the Rose & Crown Pub family will be taking on the shop and Post Office from the end of January," Keith and Stephanie said. "The shop is the heart of the village and is a lifeline to many people who don't have a car to get their groceries. It's very hard work and very long hours but we've enjoyed being an important part of Charlton for so many years."



www.charltonandnewbottle.com

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Happy New Year!

As this new year begins I suspect many of us have the same thing in mind as we think about 2021. When might we return to a more normal lifestyle, and when will phrases like social distancing start to disappear from everyday use?

It is perhaps a long time since the nation as a whole has begun a new year with the same agenda. That sense of togetherness which, though it ebbed and flowed at times in 2020, has been a feature of the last 12 months, might be something that we hope to carry forward into 2021 and beyond.

What else might we want to keep, what might we decide to let go? Is there now a space, or need, for something new in our lives?

I know that for some people the last 10 months have been a prolonged version of the process of taking stock, or introspection, which precedes the making of New Year's resolutions. If that's you, or if your thoughts are now starting to turn in that direction, then I'd like to encourage you to look in at our parish Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/St James's Church Newbottle and Charlton](http://www.facebook.com/StJamesChurchNewbottleandCharlton)). On it you'll find a number of short films, to which we are adding, called 'Three Minute Church'. This series provides a short introduction to the Christian faith.

There are no instant answers to the big questions in life, like those that the pandemic has posed, because life is complicated and any quick and easy answers simply wouldn't get to grips with that complexity. However, Christianity offers a means to explore and understand that complexity. Our beautiful medieval church building shows that the faith it represents has certainly stood the test of time, and so is worth another look.

If you like what you see, or even if you disagree with some it, then I'd like to invite you to find out more. You can do that by coming along to any of the services in church at 9.30am every Sunday, or by contacting me at the Vicarage.

Wishing you every blessing for 2021.

Father Matthew

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RAIN (Rehoming Animals In Need) Update

I would like to thank Keith Wilks for having a collection box in the village shop and the kind customers who have donated over the years.

This year RAIN has re-homed several cats, assisted with vet fees, raised baby and injured birds, kept and cared for hedgehogs through winter to release. Jill Parr's aged blind terrier Tally is still in our care.



Due to my age, I must slow down and eventually the charity will be taken over by Tess Merry (a registered vet nurse with lots of experience with wildlife and time spent at Tiggy Winkles). She will specialise in wildlife only. This year almost every conceivable wild creature has passed through her hands. The name Nutkin Ward will be added to RAIN.



Tess's telephone number is 07733 220266. She will help you with any wildlife concerns. Thank you Charlton villagers for your support over the years.

Anne Buckingham

More appreciation for Keith and Stephanie:

"Over the years I have worked with Keith in the Parish Plan Steering Group, Parish Council, Community Speedwatch, Charlton Playing Field Association and, of course, Charlton & District Football Club. It was actually Keith who resurrected football in Charlton after a number of years without teams, and this has continued to thrive under his management. I think this shows just how much extra he has contributed to our village. Long may his association with Charlton continue."

Adrian Drewry

"Keith and Stephanie have been so supportive with the village panto, as our only seller of tickets they have both been incredibly patient with the last minute changes of tickets and refreshments. Stephanie has also been a huge asset to panto week, running the raffle, a major part of our fundraising. Hopefully now Keith has more time on his hands he can fulfil his lifelong ambition and be in it?! Oh yes he can!"

Charlton Panto Players

"Unfailingly cheerful for 19 years and many years' Fete service on the bottle stall! What would the Hayter's do without them?!"

Deborah & Paul Hayter

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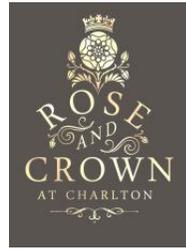


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Newbottle & Charlton School Update

Christmas in school is always a busy time and it certainly was even though we weren't able to carry out our normal traditional events. We were able to have our end of term church service in our bubbles and we had a special Christmas lunch day which included some stalls created by our Year 6s including - guess the name of the Christmas bear and how many objects in a jar.

This year's Key Stage 1 Nativity was recorded and shared with families. It was called 'Angel Express'. It follows the excitement of heaven's host of angels as they hurriedly practise a new song for the birth of baby Jesus. The conductor tried to prepare them in time while many distracting breaking news headlines came up on the TV news channel such as 'Mary and Joseph Leave for Bethlehem', 'Enormous Star Seen in the East' and 'Three Kings Sighted From Afar'.



Key Stage 2 recorded a beautiful Cringle service at school using a Green Screen to share the story leading up to Jesus' birth and sharing the messages and symbolism of Cringle. They were able to all light their candles outside and get into the cross shape we usually do at church.

This term we will start 2021 with our whole school topic called 'Emotions' looking at emotions expressed through writing, music and art. Children will look at how to manage their emotions and think about how they can support one another.

We wish you all a happy year as we pray that 2021 will be a positive one for all!

Mr Smith, Interim Headteacher

Nature Notes

We are writing this before Christmas - it's a good thing that we actually remembered to cut a lot of the holly with all its berries: we put it in buckets in a cool shed in good time. We noticed a few days ago that the birds had moved onto the holly and stripped the trees of berries in the space of 24 hours. We don't know what sort of bird it was, but it must have been quite a number of them as they had managed to eat a lot of berries in a short space of time. We have one tree next to the road and that still has berries: there are too many interruptions from the traffic so the berries often last quite well there.

Still on a Christmas theme: we were surprised to notice some large clumps of mistletoe in an old apple tree along the Jetty. Mistletoe is a rare sight in this area, and history doesn't relate whether someone in the past had deliberately made an effort to get it growing there. Of course it is easier to see it in winter when all the leaves are off the trees and the mistletoe clumps become visible. It is much more common over towards the west, in Wales, and in the south of England. We've seen lots of it in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, but it is rarely seen in eastern and northern England or in Scotland. It grows in the branches of trees such as hawthorn, poplar and lime, but likes apple trees best in the UK.

Interestingly, it appears that in recent years mistletoe has begun to spread over towards eastern areas of England. Some have attributed this to the influx of continental blackcaps from Germany, many thousands of them, that have begun to spend their winters in Britain and which are very partial to mistletoe berries. Blackcaps are migratory warblers that some of us might be lucky enough to see visiting our bird tables. Berries are essential to them, and when they eat the white flesh of the mistletoe berry, they wipe their bills on twigs and branches, leaving behind the seed. If this happens on a suitable tree the seed might manage to get going. Apparently blackcaps are more efficient spreaders than other birds, such as the native mistle thrush, which is named for its particular fondness for the berries.

Mistletoe can only grow on other trees as it is a semi-parasitic plant which once established on its host plant absorbs nutrients from it; though it can also photosynthesize through its green leaves and get energy that way, as other plants do.

The RSPB has produced a report depressingly showing a decline in the numbers of woodland birds. Apparently the willowtit (a sub-species unique to the UK) has declined by 94% since 1970. They have almost vanished from south-east England and now survive mainly in post-industrial sites, such as former coal-mines, north-east of Derbyshire. As is often the case, this is largely to do with loss of habitat: the growing deer population is eating out the scrubby under-storey of many woodlands, at the same time as woodland habitats are being eaten into by housing developments.

Here's hoping for a greener and healthier New Year.

Deborah and Paul Hayter

Christmas Crossword Winner!

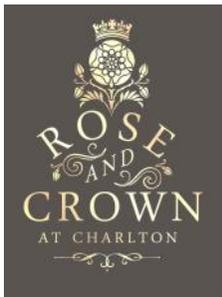
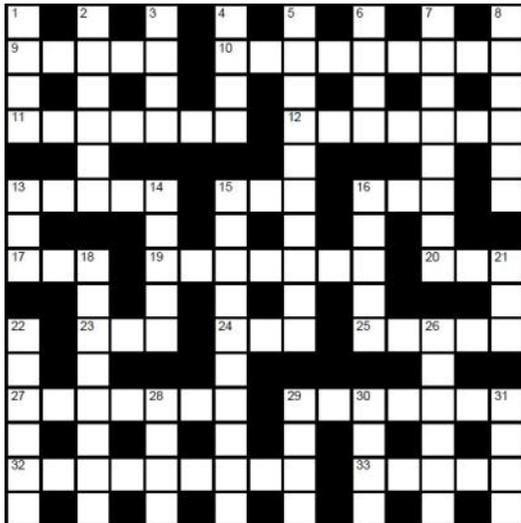
13 crossword entries were received in December and the winner was picked at random. The winner of the £25 voucher for the Rose & Crown Pub is IAN JONES of Jetty Cottage - congratulations Ian, enjoy your meal!

Thanks again to Nick Grandage of Greystones for setting the crossword and providing the prize.

If the crossword left you puzzled, here are the answers:

Across: 9 Crown, 10 Horseshoe, 11 Matchup, 12 Inferno, 13 Swept, 15 Boa, 16 Cot, 17 New, 19 Uranium, 20 Nap, 23 Dip, 24 Jug, 25 Tinge, 27 Tendril, 29 Village, 32 Landslide, 33 Melee.

Down: 1 Scam, 2 Bottle, 3 Inch, 4 Shop, 5 Irrigating, 6 Leaf, 7 Charlton, 8 Heroes, 13 Son, 14 Trump, 15 Beaujolais, 16 Comet, 21 PPE, 22 Cattle, 26 Nearly, 28 Rose, 29 Veer, 30 Limo, 31 Ever.



The Rose and Crown Family would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have supported us throughout 2020. It has certainly been our most difficult year yet and without your support we would not have got through it.

We will continue to serve our takeaways on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings from 5.00pm – 8.30pm. We will stick to our current opening hours in the restaurant and pub but will remain closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Rhona, Alvin, Struan and Emma are delighted to announce that they will be taking over the running Charlton Village Stores and Post Office from Monday 25th January.

The shop will be closed for the day on Sunday 24th January 2021. Read more about the village shop in February's Charlton Link.

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