



March 2023

Thank you,

For all the positive feedback about the first Monyash Newsletter, which came out last month. It's really good to hear that such a humble rag is warmly welcomed. I don't think I mentioned that the Newsletter can be emailed to you on request – very useful for people in outlying properties, or for former residents who want to stay in touch; simply let me have your email address and I can add it to our growing list. Many thanks to Chris Woodhouse for publishing a version on the village website, also – February's is there and this will soon follow.

EVENTS this month of MARCH:-

Wednesday 1st – **Monyash WI** - 7.30 - 10.00 pm. Regular monthly meetings in the Village Hall, on the first Wednesday of each month (except August), with guest Speaker and competition. A small, friendly group and new members always welcome.

Thursday 2nd – **HATHA YOGA** Class with Caroline Webster. 6.30pm – 7.54pm in the Methodist Chapel. £7.50. Caroline is a fully qualified yoga and Pilates instructor. If you would like to reserve a place or find out more about yoga, contact Caroline on **07831 720810** or email: **carolinewebster2@gmail.com**.

– **Quiz Night** – The Bull's Head. (And every Thursday). I think the actual quiz starts around 9pm.

Friday 3rd – **Crafternoon**. 2pm – 3.30pm, in the Village Hall. Bring along a craft project – or not! You are welcome just to natter over a cup of tea...

Monday 6th – **IVENGAR YOGA**. 5.30 – 6.45pm, in the Village Hall. £9. Beginners welcome. To book a slot, email Dave: **djs.abbotside@gmail.com**. Looks like this is a regular Monday class,

– **Parish Council Meeting**, 7pm in the Village Hall. Anyone is welcome to attend the public meeting.

Tuesday 7th – A said service of **Holy Communion**, Saint Leonard's church 10.30am; and each Tuesday in Lent – **14th/21st/28th** followed by refreshments. (And, remember, the church is open daily, 10am – 3pm – roughly!)

– **Monyash Quilters Group**, Village Hall, 2 to 4 pm. (And weekly, Tuesdays) A friendly group of ladies with a wide range of creative talent who love making beautiful quilts and anything crafty. Drop into one of our weekly meetings to see what we do and if we can tempt you to join.

– **Pilates**. Class with Caroline Webster. 6pm – 7pm in the Village Hall. £6.50. Suitable for all ages, levels of fitness and flexibility. Caroline is a fully qualified yoga and Pilates instructor. If you would like to reserve a place or find out more about Pilates, contact Caroline on **07831 720810** or email: **carolinewebster2@gmail**.

Wednesday 8th – **Mobile Library** 11.15 – 11.45am in The Square.

Thursday 9th, 16th & 23rd February – **HATHA YOGA** – as above. Seems like a regular Thursday thing.

Tuesday 14th, 21st & 28th – **Pilates**, as above. Seems like a regular Tuesday thing.

Friday 17th – **Crafternoon**. 2pm – 3.30pm in the Village Hall. Bring along a craft project – or not! As above...

Filming at Fere Mere

I was wrong! The film company are not quite done, as I reported last month; they have some final shots involving frogspawn, which they are planning to shoot in March. Looking at the long-term weather forecast, we are in for a chilly month, so this might not be until nearer April. Seems like we could even be in for some more snow, at some point in mid-to-late March, but, well, we are used to that in Monyash. We shall be liaising with the production team, as we have done throughout, about local conditions and, of course, letting them know when our frogspawn appears. An idea is being floated that we have a screening of the documentary in the village hall, when it is completed. Obviously, I will let you know if this becomes possible.

Toad Patrol

And, following on nicely... As most of you probably know, Judy and I lead the **Monyash Toad Patrol**, (the busiest in the county) which normally starts in earnest during March, depending, of course, on the toads, frogs and newts and when they make up their minds to migrate. Frogs get going first, but being swift leapers, they generally make it to Fere Mere and garden ponds without getting squashed. The village toads need an evening temperature of around 8 degrees C. before they stir themselves and there is no sign of this in the March forecast at present. This is good news for them, (and us) as it means most will be on the move after the clocks have gone forward – i.e. at dusk, which will be around 7pm, or later, and not at 6pm when the roads are much busier with traffic. Good for us as we don't have to wolf our food down right before going out. We always welcome new faces to help with the toad patrol, so please let us know if you fancy giving it a try this year. It can simply be a very pleasant stroll on a warm Spring evening and seldom lasts for much more than an hour. On a busy night we will rescue a few hundred toads from the roads and pavements, maybe half a dozen frogs and a similar number of the two species of newt, namely the Smooth (or Common) and the Great Crested. Incidentally, a licence is normally required to handle Great Crested Newts, (and I am now a licence holder) but anyone can pick up a newt that is in imminent danger and place it somewhere safe. What we do is put them in our buckets and take them to a good-sized garden pond that has no fish. The huge numbers of alien fish that have bred from those introduced into Fere Mere mean that it can no longer support any newt populations. Larvae are simply gobbled up – but the adult newts don't know this and continue to head for any body of water they get wind of.

Restored Dewponds

Good news, then, that in the wider countryside around Monyash, more and more dewponds are being restored. A fantastic example can now be seen on Milkings Lane, on land belonging to Summerhill Farm, restored in the past few weeks. There were once hundreds of these ponds, (which collect rain, not dew) in fields all across the White Peak, for cattle and sheep to drink from, but as piped water and troughs became the trend, most fell into disuse and are now simply shallow, dry pits. I know from first-hand experience, joining DARG's night-time surveys last year, that newts are very quick to recolonise a restored dewpond; ones at the top of Fern Dale/Fere Dale near Derby Lane had good populations of both Smooth and Great Crested Newts, as did those on the National Nature Reserve in Lathkill – though some of these are now getting a little silted up. Chatting with the dewpond restorer, Dan Spencer, the other day, he tells me he has been asked to tackle another two ponds on the National Trust land in Fern Dale, but he probably won't be able to start on these until later in the Summer.

'Biodegradable' Dog-waste Bags

Since the first newsletter appeared I regularly 'get my ear bent' on certain issues. One of these is the build up of 'biodegradable' dog-poo bags in thorn bushes up Milkings Lane. The truth is that these things take many years to break down and so can make an unsightly and unhygienic mess if left in the environment. I have been asked to point dog-walkers in the direction of the made-for-purpose bin at the bottom of Milkings Lane, or, if you are 'doing the round' into Lathkill, the one at the carpark by the Bakewell Road. The sight of bags dangling from trees is only attracting others, many not biodegradable.

Nature Notes

Nature has taken up a fair chunk of the newsletter already and I can see space is getting short, but a highlight for me recently was witnessing a Goshawk being chased through, or over the village by our local crows. This is a fierce bird, like a giant Sparrowhawk – as big as a buzzard and very rare nationally, but the Peak District is home to a few pairs. I was alerted by the caws from the crows at first, as I made my way over the fields to Milkings Lane, and then by the uproar from every Jackdaw in Monyash – and you know what a racket that can be. On a softer note, the first Curlews have already been spotted or heard on farms around the village, which seems very early...perhaps March is going to be kinder than predicted? Oh, and don't miss our wonderful snowdrops in Saint Leonard's churchyard...more abundant than ever and out now!

The Parish Council: The agenda and minutes for the PC are always on the village notice board, as well as on a dedicated page on the Monyash.info website. There is not space to go into all that is covered here, but at February's meeting there was an energised discussion over the twin issues of car parking and of speeding traffic through the village, with input from Councillor Spencer (Derbyshire County Council) and District Councillor Graham Elliot. The general consensus on parking, by the end of the meeting, was that the village should look at enlarging existing public car parks and/or create new ones, before any other measures are considered. I think we are going to look in more detail at the speeding traffic thing during the March meeting. These two traffic issues took up so much of the meeting that much of the official agenda had to be postponed into March; but there was one planning decision that needed more urgent attention and so the members of the PC met on the following Monday to formalise a position on this, (construction work at Monyash House Farm to cover and enlarge slurry storage facilities and create a new access track to the farmyard, off Tagg Lane). The PC have given their full support to the application, (there are a number of good environmental gains for the village if the work goes ahead) but with the following comment added – “The construction of the access road is an absolute priority and [is supported] with its construction guaranteed as part of the overall project. The Parish Council would also like serious consideration to be given to the renovation/renewal of the overgrown pond area to the left of the Rakes Road entrance of Monyash House Farm as part of the overall project.” – To quote from the minutes. ***N.B. Check out Derbyshire Dales' all new website for all your district council questions: derbyshiredales.gov.uk***

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