



Happy Lencten!

Judy bought me a book for Christmas, 'Winters in the World – a journey through the Anglo-Saxon year.' 'This lovely book acts as a portal to an older time' was the Guardian's verdict and I have to agree. 'Lencten' was the Old English name for what we now think of as 'Spring' and, of course, it gave us the name for this period in the church's calendar – Lent, where the term has stuck to name the 40-ish days in the run up to Easter, (another Old English word, with pagan roots). I am able to wish you 'Happy Lencten' because the season began on February 7th. Why the 7th? Because it is roughly halfway between the Winter Solstice and the Equinox. Following the same, logical pattern, *Summer* was considered to begin on May 9th with *Harvest* (which was originally the Autumnal season's name) starting on 7th August and *Winter* on 7th November. So, as an eternal optimist, I am going with this February start to the new season from now on. The snowdrops in the churchyard are already out and birds were singing away like crazy this morning, all around Church Street.

'Road Markings and Traffic Calming' – A Public Consultation – TBC

At the last meeting, **Monyash Parish Council** "resolved to hold a public meeting...The meeting is to take place in January" to quote from the minutes, under "401/2024 ROAD MARKINGS AND TRAFFIC CALMING". This followed a discussion on the wording of a proposed 'one-question' questionnaire to be put to all households on the subject. As reported in last month's Newsletter, "Queries were raised regarding some of the wording on the questionnaire." At which point it was agreed that a public meeting might be a better way of starting the consultation.

Well, for reasons including recent developments at the PDNPA, we *still* do not yet have a date for this public meeting, (or meetings); this will now have to be discussed further and decided upon at February's meeting (3rd February).

St. Leonard's Church

23rd February

at 10.00 am

A Service of Holy Communion

Led by Rev. Sue Bamping, (you will remember from the Carol Service)

EVENTS this month of February:-

- Monday 3rd**
- **IYENGAR YOGA**. 5.30 – 6.45pm, in the Village Hall. To book a slot, email Dave: djs.abbotside@gmail.com.
 - **Parish Council Meeting** 7pm. Village Hall. Anyone is welcome to attend the public meeting, but please note that this meeting is not part of the 'consultation' advertised above, though the item on 'Road Markings and Traffic Calming' will almost certainly be discussed by the parish councillors.
- There is 10 minutes for 'Public Speaking' at the start. See village website and noticeboard for the full agenda.
- Tuesday 4th**
- **Monyash Quilters Group**, Village Hall, 2 to 4 pm, 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. £7. Caroline is a fully qualified yoga and Pilates instructor. If you would like to reserve a place or find out more about Pilates or Yoga, contact Caroline on **07831 720810** or email: carolinewebster2@gmail.com
- Wednesday 5th**
- **Mobile Library** – 11.15 to 11.45, The Square.
 - **Hatha Yoga** 5.30 – 6.45pm, In the Village Hall, with Yoga Nidra meditation. £10. Other details see **Pilates**.
 - **Monyash WI** - 7.30 - 10.00 pm, in the Village Hall, the first Weds of each month, with guest Speaker and competition. A small, friendly group and new members always welcome.
- Thursday 6th**
- **Quiz Night** – The Bull's Head. I think the actual quiz starts around 9pm.

- Friday 7th** – *Crafternoon*. 2pm – 3.30pm, in the Village Hall. Bring along a craft project – or not! Tea and natter is fine!
- Monday 10th** – *IYENGAR YOGA*. 5.30 – 6.45pm, in the Village Hall. Other details as above.
- Tuesday 11th** – *Monyash Quilters Group*, Village Hall, 2 to 4 pm, other details as above.
– *Pilates*. Class with Caroline Webster. 6pm – 7pm, Village Hall. Other details as above.
- Wednesday 12th** – *Hatha Yoga* 5.30 – 6.45pm, Village Hall, with Yoga Nidra meditation. £10. Other details see above, *Pilates*.
- Thursday 13th** – *Quiz Night* – The Bull’s Head. As above.
- Friday 14th** – *Messy Church is back!* 3.15 – 4.45pm. At the Methodist Chapel & Hall. Messy Church is straight after school, and it is £2 per child.
- Monday 17th** – *IYENGAR YOGA*. 5.30 – 6.45pm, in the Village Hall. Other details as above.
- Tuesday 18th** – *Monyash Quilters Group*, Village Hall, 2 to 4 pm, other details as above.
– *Pilates*. Class with Caroline Webster. 6pm – 7pm, Village Hall. Other details as above.
- Wednesday 19th** – *Hatha Yoga* 5.30 – 6.45pm, Village Hall, with Yoga Nidra meditation. £10. Other details see above, *Pilates*.
- Thursday 20th** – *Quiz Night* – The Bull’s Head. As above.
- Friday 21st** – *Crafternoon*. 2pm – 3.30pm, in the Village Hall. Bring along a craft project – or not! Tea and natter is fine!
- Sunday 23rd** – *Church Service*, 10am. See above.
- Monday 24th** – *IYENGAR YOGA*. 5.30 – 6.45pm, in the Village Hall. Other details as above.
- Tuesday 25th** – *Monyash Quilters Group*, Village Hall, 2 to 4 pm, other details as above.
– *Pilates*. Class with Caroline Webster. 6pm – 7pm, Village Hall. Other details as above.
- Wednesday 26th** – *Hatha Yoga* 5.30 – 6.45pm, Village Hall, with Yoga Nidra meditation. £10. Other details see above, *Pilates*.
- Thursday 27th** – *Quiz Night* – The Bull’s Head. As above.

Nature Notes – To feed or not to feed?

We were having an interesting discussion in the Bull’s Head the other evening about whether we should be feeding birds in the garden *at all*. A friend was saying she had heard someone on the radio saying that, by providing garden birds with ‘artificial’ help, we are increasing the numbers of some common birds, which are then out-competing other, rarer species. She mentioned the Willow Warbler. The Willow Warbler is faring badly over much of England, this is true, but it does very well around Monyash and the Peak in general; but this is because we still have the right kinds of habitat. I am not aware of vast numbers of Blue Tits, having survived the Winter, venturing into the dales to deplete the caterpillar numbers. My response was “There probably needs to be some research done on this.” The RSPB website seems only to encourage *responsible* feeding of birds in the garden, while the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) carries a blog post by Dr. Kate Plummer, their Senior Research Ecologist, no less. It turns out that she has indeed been carrying out studies into the effects of garden feeders, over a number of years. One statistic that jumps out is that Blue Tits, even in Winter, were found to get only 20% of their food from garden feeders. A significant help, but they are in no way becoming ‘dependant’ as some people claim. Now, I stop feeding birds at all, (beyond a few crumbs for our sparrows) towards the end of May, as I know that, in Summer, disease is easily spread between birds at feeders – and this has particularly effected Green Finches in recent years. They should not need any help once wild seeds and insects start to become abundant. I have noticed, however, when the Blue Tits in our nest box have their first brood, the parents will forage for caterpillars in the trees to feed their young ones with the *very best* protein, while they themselves will fly to the last of the peanuts for a quick snack. I have seen actual research also noting this behaviour in Tits. They are not daft.

All the research suggests that garden feeders are not *massively* helping birds get through the Winter – though the Big Garden Birdwatch, which we are about to take part in this weekend, has revealed that Goldfinch numbers are significantly up in recent decades, since more people have taken to putting out sunflower hearts and other seeds – I am in total agreement with Dr. Plummer of the BTO: ‘*On balance, given the scientific evidence as it currently stands, I have made the decision to feed birds in my own garden... For me, all birds are worthy of a helping hand and the knowledge that my small intervention is playing a part in supporting our national bird populations is very rewarding. The joy I get from watching the birds zipping back and forth through my garden while I eat my breakfast each morning is an added bonus.*’

If you *are* going to help birds by putting up a feeder in the garden, then Spring is the most important season for seed-feeders, such as the finches. They should be helped all the way into May, as it is when their natural sources of food begin to run very low. This is why we nearly always get Siskins and Redpolls visiting our garden in March, very rarely before. These tiny, colourful finches rely on the seeds of trees, such as Alder, for most of the Winter and it is only as these seeds become difficult to find that they start to explore further afield. Siskins are like smaller Green Finches, but as if streaked with charcoal, while the brown Redpoll is easily overlooked, unless you catch the smudge of pinky-red on its crown.