

THE POUNDSTOCK PACKET



George and Sara

The Revd George and Sara would like to take this opportunity, through the *Packet*, to express their sincere thanks and appreciation to their many friends all across the area, for all the love and support shown to them over the last four or five years whilst working in and around the Week St Mary Circle of Churches, and, latterly, especially, in the local Church and Chapel at Poundstock and Bangors. Also, many thanks for all the



love, the prayers, the cards and the good wishes given and expressed when the time came for George to retire from his licence.

The official farewell came at a service of Holy Communion in the Church of St Winwaloe on the morning of 19th December, when George shared the celebration of Holy Communion with his friend and Parish Priest, Revd Rob. This was a very special occasion for George and Sara, and, following the service, at refreshments, the most delightful and pleasing gifts, from the parish and from their many friends at Bangors Chapel, were given to mark the occasion. George was presented, by the Parish, with an inscribed wooden bowl, turned by Mike Hammond from a piece of the

old lock gates at Bude. This piece of work was something he had admired at the Pumpkin Festival and Craft Fair back in October, and so to be presented with such a delightful piece of work, something made from a little of Bude's past, was a very special and touching gift which will be always treasured. Sara received the gift of a Camellia which had been chosen especially for the depth of the colour of the flowers, and for its name – 'Anticipation' – of what is yet to come in retirement, perhaps! On behalf of their friends from Bangors Chapel Mrs Gwen Prouse presented George with a generous gift of book tokens to enable him to choose a suitable gift to mark his retirement.

Whilst thanks from both of us were expressed on that occasion, we want to say our thanks to so many friends now for all the good things we have received at your hands, and shared with you over the years. So thank you everybody for all the love and friendship we have enjoyed, for your unstinting support of us as we learned our ministry, and tried to follow the call that we had been given.

However! We are not going away! We shall continue to live our life here in Widemouth Bay, and we look forward to a continuing of the friendships we have established in church, chapel and in the community at large. George will have, from his Bishop, Permission to Officiate, and so there will surely be many occasions in the future years when he will be able to lead and share worship with all his many friends. You cannot get rid of us that easily, though we may be absent more frequently than in the past as we take time to live out some of our dreams, which have been on hold, and to visit our expanding family.

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No. 47 February/March 2011

DIARY DATES

February

- 4 Bude Community Cinema, *Inception* (12), Parkhouse, 7.30 pm
- 8 Marhamchurch WI Cheesemaking Sue Proudfoot
- 10 Jacobstow WI, Handcrafted Soap, 7.30 pm
- 13 Fontanella Recorder Ensemble concert, Gildhouse, 3 pm
- 21 Wildlife Trust, Work of the Gaia Trust, Parkhouse, 7.30 pm
- 26 Bude Metric Brass concert at Penstowe Manor 7.30pm £5, for Air Ambulance & Breakthrough Breast Cancer

March

- 2 Coffee morning, Southfield, 10.30–noon
- 9 Gildhouse Management Committee AGM, Gildhouse, 7.30 pm
- 8 Marhamchurch WI AGM
- 10 Jacobstow WI, AGM and Members' Evening, 7.30 pm
- 14 Lent Lunch 12-2pm Bangors Methodist Hall
- 21 Wildlife Trust, Butterflies of N. Cornwall, Parkhouse, 7.30 pm
- 23 Wholeness and Healing service, St Winwaloe's, 6.30 pm
- 26 Clocks go forward one hour
- 30 Poundstock Annual Parochial Church Meeting, Gildhouse, 7 pm

FREE ADVERTISING HERE FOR YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY EVENT

Just send us the details by 20th March for events in April/May 2011

LOCAL CONTACTS

MP: Dan Rogerson 01566 777123

Parish council chairman: Colin Gilbert 01288 361894 Parish council clerk: Lynn Pluess 01288 361368 County Councillor: Phil Tucker 01288 341617

Jacobstow WI president: Mrs. J. Spettigue 01288 361525 Marhamchurch WI president: Mrs. S. Steward 01288 361556 Poundstock Ladies Skittles: W. Orchard 01288 361653

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Hookways Jennings coaches: 01288 352259

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Tuesday 10.00am–1.00pm Friday 10.00am–1.00pm

MOBILE LIBRARY

Will call at Bangors Chapel on the following Mondays at 11.35–11.50:

February 14, 28

March 14, 28

A cup of tea or coffee and a friendly chat awaits you, even if you don't borrow books.

Why not give it a try?

2nd BUDE SCOUTS

Meet in Wainhouse Scout Hut

Thursday: 6.30–8.0 pm SCOUTS

(Daphne Dowling 01288 352786)

And at Jacobstow Village Hall

Monday: 5-6pm BEAVERS (Sally Grigg 01566 781356)

6.30–8.0 pm CUBS (Pat Moyes 01840 230026)

Wednesday: 5.0–6.0 pm RAINBOWS (Geraldine Skinner

6.0–7.30 pm BROWNIES 01566 781234)

Bangors Chapel Hall is available for hire. Enquiries 01288 361309 or 01288 361775

MARHAMCHURCH W.I.

Meetings ary Cheesemakin

8 February Cheesemaking By Sue Proudfoot

8 March Annual General Meeting

JACOBSTOW WI Meetings

10 February Handcrafted Soap Terry Jenkins

10 March AGM & Members' Evening

Bude Community Cinema

Friday is film night in Bude – Top movies
The Parkhouse Centre Bude, doors open at 7pm
Tickets on the door or from the Ark Angel bookstore in Bude

Information www.budecinema.org.uk

Poundstock Gildhouse

can be hired for any event from meetings and parties to meals and receptions. For details, visit

www.poundstockgildhouse.co.uk or contact 01288 341537

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A RARE SIGHT POUNDSTOCK FIELDS COVERED IN SNOW IN THE WINTER OF 2010/2011 ON A BRIGHT, BUT FREEZING DAY.

Garden open

The garden at the Barn House will be open on Sunday 3 April from 11 am to 5 pm, with the additional attraction of delicious lunches and cream teas. All proceeds to the National Gardens Scheme

Handbells

Have you ever thought of joining a group to ring the handbells? A friendly group meets in Marhamchurch on Friday evenings and would welcome new members. Please contact 01288 361235.

THE INTERVIEW

The interview, which has become a regular feature of our magazine, is done by Liz Jones or myself, but we try very hard to use the words used by our interviewees. We are very grateful to those who agree to tell their stories. They always give us a wealth of very interesting material and we struggle to reduce it to fit one page sensibly. We hope we manage to do justice to our interviewees' generous efforts.

I often regret that we have not told their stories in full, but in the end have to balance that with the limited capacity of our magazine. I sometimes wonder if any of our readers approach interviewees and try to learn more about some aspect of their lives, that we have barely touched upon.

We have our own list of potential, future interviewees, but we'd be delighted to hear from anyone with suggestions about who might be interesting and willing.

Dudley Moore

You are invited to a
Daffodil Coffee Morning
at Southfield
on Wednesday 2 March
10.30-noon

Come and enjoy the spring bulbs and watch the birds in this beautiful garden with a cup of coffee and a plate of cakes In aid of St Winwaloe's Church funds

Poundstock Lent Lunches in aid of Stratton Hospital League of Friends

Our Lent Lunches seem to come around faster each year! Oh dear, you know what that means (well I'm 39 this year and 41next).

Dates and venues are as follows:

Mondays 12-2pm

At Bangors Methodist Hall: March 14th, 21st, 28th At Poundstock Gildhouse: April 4th, 11th, 18th

Help will be needed please. This is our 8th year. Last year we sent the grand amount of £1750. I would love to send the same amount this year. With your support, I know we can.

As always, I'm looking for helpers, who can spare just a couple of hours on the dates above. Or, if you could make soup, give bread, butter, cheese, that would be a great help. Please call me on 01288 361525. Come and enjoy a great social time and help give support and comfort to the patients of our much needed hospital at Stratton Thank you *Jen Spettigue*

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What brought you to Poundstock?

We wanted to retire and to finish our work, and my husband's son was the vicar at Jacobstow. He told us there was a house for sale, so we came rushing down to see it and the first thing we saw was the Gildhouse! I said, 'Oh no, I couldn't live there!' But then we came up here and saw this and it's just right for us, it's perfect, we love it. I find Cornish people very courteous and friendly, not pushy but friendly. When we were both ill, people just came out of the woodwork, they were so kind. And this year, with the snow.

What was the work you were doing before you came here?

Perhaps I should tell you the story of my life! My first husband was a detective in Maid-

stone. This was at the time of the troubles in Cyprus and my husband had been in Cyprus during the war and had learned Turkish and Greek, so he volunteered to go. I followed with our three small children. We had four years there and it was delightful. I loved it. Then in 1960 we came home and my husband was offered a job with the Australian embassy in Moscow, and off he went. Moscow wasn't suitable for children, so I stayed at home with them.

When the job ended he came home and a friend and I started a restaurant. We had a barn at the back of the house, so we connected it up with the house, used our own kitchen, and that was our restaurant. We did that for seven years and got into the *Good Food Guide* and *Vogue Worldwide* – we did really well. I had learned a lot about Greek and Turkish cooking, being in Cyprus.

I'd always been questioning in my mind different aspects of Christianity and I had become a Catholic. The priests would come along to the restaurant – they had freebies! – but there was no place for services in our village. So once a month a travelling priest would come, and we used to have Mass in the barn. He would set up the confessional in the ladies' loo! He called it the sin bin. Eventually we left the village, but years later I met the vicar who told me that the Anglicans now share their church with the Catholics, so from tiny beginnings things happen.

One priest became a great friend. He was a manic depressive and I was able to help him, quite intuitively, but it did help him. He began bringing people to me who were broken down a bit. It became a family joke that the last one to bed, especially around the weekends, didn't get a bed because someone else was in theirs. Strange people, some of them, but it worked into our general feeling that this is what we should be doing. I talked it over with my family and my husband and Father Geoffrey, and we went round looking for the right place to do this. We found a beautiful house in Wadhurst, East Sussex, lived in by Xaverian fathers, and they wanted to sell. I went over to see it and I thought it was absolutely perfect. But there was the money: £25,000. It may not sound much now, but then [1969] it was a huge amount. So we went round all the religious houses, everyone we knew, and said, 'On your knees, please!' I'm pretty good at charming the birds out of the trees if I have to!

So that was that, we'd got the house and the Brothers had moved out, and it was *filthy*. I said to my son (who was in the fifth form at the time), 'Right, get all your friends together, and I'll make a big paella or something every night.' 'Right, Mother!' he said. So the local teenagers came and did the cleaning and we had such a lot of fun. We were so hard up we moved ourselves – two priests came with vans! It was a very long way from luxurious living. There was lots of sleeping on floors, that kind of thing, while we were getting each room ready. Then we ploughed up the big lawn to grow vegetables and built stables and a pig pen. Eventually we had cows, sheep, pigs, chickens and horses. My father and my sister-in-law helped, and after my husband died Joe came and within two years we were married.

I used to go to the mental homes to see people. I never used to read the paperwork, because to me they were people and I wanted to assess them myself. The county used to ask us to go and see them, and then they would come to us for a fortnight. Then after a fortnight, the arrangement was that if they didn't like it, they went, and if I felt I couldn't take them, they went. But nobody ever went.

There were several hundred of them, over the years, and I am still in touch with some. One man comes to see me every year: he always kisses my hand. One girl has recently told us she would have committed suicide if it hadn't been for us. I'm a committed Christian and it just seemed to me to be what I should do.

What happened to the house when you retired?

The work moved to other places. We put the house on the market and the first person who came to see it was Spike Milligan! It was too big for him, but we sold it and then we came here and lived happily ever after.

The thing that people always say is that I'm a very empathetic person, and I do know I am, but that's by the grace of God. From the time I was about five, I've always said thank you to Him, and He's given me the grace to see other people's point of view. Our school song was Bunyan's 'To be a pilgrim' and that's what I am, a pilgrim.



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Our Night Sky in February 2011

Jupiter is setting in the South West earlier every evening, but is still a bright object after dark. Saturn is rising ever earlier, and soon will be in the South East at a more reasonable time in the evening. Venus, meanwhile, shines like an arc lamp in the early morning sky, and is quite unmistakeable in the South East for those who rise about 5 am.

In 1977, NASA launched a 'message in a bottle' towards the stars. After a 10 billion-mile journey that traversed the paths of Jupiter and Saturn, the hardy little Voyager I spacecraft approached the edge of the solar system last week, poised to carry humanity's greetings to the universe beyond. During its 33-year flight, Voyager I and its sister ship, Voyager II, captured the imagination of millions of people with the first detailed pictures of Jupiter and Saturn, along with stunning images of their mysterious moons and intricate rings.

What do you think is the likelihood of finding life elsewhere in the Universe? First of all, we have to find a planet that lives in the so-called Goldilocks zone, where the conditions are such that water can exist as a vapour, liquid and solid, since we think that life as we know it needs water to develop. (Note the caveat – 'life as we know it'!) The recently launched space satellite Kepler has the task of detecting planets orbiting stars in our galaxy, and it has already discovered over 500, peering at just one small fraction of the sky. So planetary formation is commonplace, although so far Kepler has not been able to detect a rocky, as opposed to a gas giant, planet in the Goldilocks zone.

However, another survey has detected what appears to be a planet just three times the size of Earth, orbiting a star in the habitable zone, although the star is a red dwarf and the planet is uncomfortably close to such an unstable type. Given that there are over one hundred thousand million galaxies like our own, at the last count, and each one contains over one hundred thousand million stars, some very like our own Sun, it would not seem unreasonable to think that there could be a planet orbiting one of these stars which would have the right conditions for life to evolve. And then, of course, who knows if some life form could be based on silicon, and happily swims about in a bath of liquid methane? There has to be a Nobel prize here somewhere!

The weather in Poundstock during 2010

Time for another look at the weather over the last twelve months in Poundstock as recorded two miles inland in the north-east corner of the parish. As I always point out, our weather station is inland and slightly sheltered from the full force of the gales.

The year just finished has been the driest and coldest of the three years that I have been keeping weather records in Poundstock. Comparing 2010 to the 30-year averages for Bude published by the Met Office confirms that it was very atypical in several ways.

We all know that the most striking thing about the weather in 2010 was the cold! The overall average minimum temperature was 4.8%, which is 2.7% less than the 30-year average. The 2010 average maximum temperature was 13.4% (0.4 % less than the 30-year average). December was, of course, the month that was the coldest. Christmas day saw the lowest temperature of the year (-10.4% at 8.00 am) and that was towards the end of a 10-day spell when the temperature did not rise above 5%.

The record for the number of days with an air frost was smashed in 2010: 84 compared with the Met Office average number of air frost days between 1971 and 2000 of 24. The last day of frost was 4 May (22 days later than in 2009) and the first frost of the autumn was on 25 October.

The spring and summer months of 2010 did their best to compensate for the cold of the winter. The months of April to August saw mean high temperatures greater than the 30-year average. The June average in particular was 2.8℃ higher. The highest temperature of the year was 26.1℃ at 3.40 pm on 23 May.

June was the sunniest month of the year with 276 hours of bright sun and December was the gloomiest with only 65.5 hours.

Not only was December 2010 the coldest for many, many years, it was also the driest for a long time. There was only 1.5 in (38.4 mm) of rain in the month compared with the 30-year average of 4.2 in (106.2 mm). The total annual rainfall was 32.2 in (817.4 mm), and that is 86% of the average. Only July and August had rainfall figures that were above average. In July we had nearly three times the average amount of rain; the wettest day of the year was the 22 July with 1.4 in (34.5 mm) and most of that fell between 11.00 and 12.00 in the morning and 4.00 and 5.00 in the afternoon. For the fourth year running, July was far and away the wettest month of the year but in November we had the highest number of days of rain (18).

At least the wind during the year was about the same as in previous years. Yet again November was the windiest month with an average of 5.1 mph and the highest wind gust of 47 mph at 3.00pm on 11 November.

Graham Jones

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ST WINWALOE POUNDSTOCK

Parish Priest: Revd R. Dickenson 01288 341134

Wardens:

Peter Marfleet 01288 361233 Graham Jones 01288 361147

1st Sunday 9.45 Holy Communion 2nd Sunday 11.00 Family Worship 3rd Sunday 9.45 Holy Communion 4th Sunday 9.45 Morning Prayer

Lent course at Eden Chapel

Starts Monday 21 March at 7.30 pm, then each Monday for five weeks. DVD presentation and discussion produced by CWR publications.

Subject: Jesus, the wounded healer.

Everyone is welcome.

CHURCHES

OUR LADY AND ST ANNE WIDEMOUTH BAY

Warden: Judy MacDonald 01288 361664

Services:

1st Sundays 11.15 am 2nd, 3rd, 4th Sundays 8.15 am Wednesdays 8.30 am

Fridays 5 pm Evensong

BANGORS METHODIST CHAPEL

Circuit minister: Rev. Neal Street 01288 352404

Services 11.00 a.m. Sundays FEBRUARY

6th Cox 13th Neal Street United Service with

United Service with St. Winwaloe 20th Mrs J Turner 28th Bryne

MARCH 13th United Service at St. Winwaloe

DIMMA METHODIST CHAPEL

Lay pastoral assistant: Brian Parkman 01840 212736 Contact: Audrey Wickett 01840 230268

Feb. 6	9.30 am	March 6	11 am
Feb. 13	11 am	March 13	9.30 am
Feb. 20	9.30 am	March 20	9.30 am
Feb 27	9 30 am	March 27	9 30 am

Please can you help?

St Winwaloe's Church needs someone willing to act as church treasurer, beginning in April. You don't need to be a member of the PCC or even a regular church member, just good with figures and able to compose a balance sheet. The churchwardens will be very happy to give further information. We would be so grateful if you can help.

Henry Francis Lyte who lived in the early 19th.century wrote that beautiful prayer which we often sing, Abide with me. Within this prayerful hymn are the words, Change and decay in all around I see; O thou who changes not; Abide with me.

Change is one of those experiences of life that many of us find difficult to cope with. But why? Life is one of continual change. We have changing seasons that bring changing scenes. Changing fashions that bring changes in the wardrobe! Changing neighbours who give us the opportunity to meet new people. In Methodist circles we have changes to Circuit structure. The Week-St-Mary and Camelford and Tintagel Circuits have now united and are now known as Camelford and Week-St-Mary Circuit.

Already I hear voices coming back to me saying; 'We don't like change.' OK, then. What in life's experience does not change? The Bible has the answer to that. The Old Testament speaks of our God who says; 'I the Lord do not change' (Malachi 3:6). James the Apostle in the New Testament (James 1:17) echoes the same truth and tells us of 'The Father who does not change.' Yes, I know, life is full of change and much of it disturbs and even upsets us at times. How good it is to know that within this disturbance and upset we can know the stability and experience the One who does not change.

Brian Parkman, Lay Pastor, Camelford and Week St Mary circuit

Professional Recorder Concert – an opportunity not to be missed!

Fontanella

one of the UK's leading recorder ensembles will play a varied and attractive programme of music, from medieval to present day, on Sunday 13th February at 3.00 pm

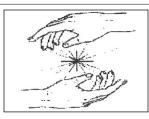
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Jacobstow Community Primary School

Every Child a Writer at Jacobstow Primary School

These are examples of writing across all ages of children at Jacobstow School. We are working very hard to improve the standards of writing across the school and use a range of storytelling and picture planning to help children to develop their writing skills. Each piece has been typed exactly as the child wrote/told it.

Learning objective: to write a descriptive piece based upon a familiar story

The Apple Who Spoke

Once upon a time there was a farmer who felt hungry so he went to pick an apple.

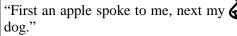
He bit into the apple, "Ouch." said the apple.

"Did you say that?" asked the farmer to his dog.

"Not at all" barked the dog.

"Aaahhh!" said the farmer and he ran and he ran and he ran until he came to a monster truck fayre and met a monster truck driver.

"Why are you running so fast when the sun is shining so brightly?" asked the monster truck driver.



"That's impossible!" the driver said.

"No it isn't," roared one of the monster trucks.

"Aaahhh" said the farmer and he ran and he ran and he ran until he came to a fisherman.

"Why are you running so fast when the sun is shining so brightly?" asked the fisherman.

"First an apple spoke to me, next my dog, after that a monster truck."

"That's impossible!" said the fisherman.

"Are you sure?" squealed a fish.

"Aaahhh!" said the farmer and he ran and he ran and he ran until he came to Jacobstow Primary School.

"Why are you running so fast when the sun is shining so brightly?" said Mrs Roberts the teacher.

"First an apple spoke to me, next my dog, after that a monster truck and finally a fish."

That's impossible!" said Mrs Roberts, "Get out of here you silly man!"

So the farmer walked slowly home.

Mrs Roberts walked slowly around the classroom, there was long silence until the pencil sharpener spoke, "Who ever heard of a talking apple, hah, hah, hah!"

Told by Joe aged 6

Learning objective: to write a biographical piece

Blondin

Blondin was one of the greatest tightrope walkers in the entire world. But one day, Blodin decided to carry a brave man over the tightrope. At three o'clock, Blondin was getting worried that he wouldn't be able to find a brave enough man. Harry, (Blodin's best friend) turned to him, Blondin asked if he could be the man to be carried across the tightrope. Harry went white with shock and frightened. He knew that Blondin was his best friend but he was terrified of the tightrope. Blondin was feeling quite confident and knew they would be able to do it. Harry, with doubts, agreed to put his life on the line. They were in the middle of the tightrope, Blondin was nervous because Harry was getting heavy. Harry got off; with Blodin holding his hand they slowly, carefully walked to the other side.

Amber aged 10

Learning objective: to write a descriptive piece based upon a familiar story

Daisy and the lost tooth

Once upon a time there was a little girl called Daisy. But yesterday she had lost her shiney tooth. But she was still happy because she was going to the fair. When she got home she looked under the crooked sofer and on the dusty window sill. Still no tooth. That night she kreped down the stripy stars and on the table was her tooth. She kreped back upstars and put her tooth under her pink pilo and jumped back in her cumfy bed. Then went to sleep. In the morning there was some money she

Tia aged 6

Learning objective: to make up some independent writing and spell tricky words correctly

The Jungl

one day I wet to the jungle I met a lion and then I fan a lion cub then we played then I said good bi then I wet

home. **Grace aged 5**

broght some makeup.



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Railways and Steam Engines

I found the Revd.Tucker's article about steam engines in Issue 45 of *The Poundstock Packet* very interesting. From the few conversations I have had in the past with the Revd.Tucker I was aware of his great interest in steam engines and their preservation. His 'hands on' experience with steam engines seemed to start at the early age of 12 or 13 when he rode on the platform of a shunting engine. I was going to school in Plymouth at that age and I recall my interest in railway engines was limited to buying a book that listed the classes and numbers of engines operating on the GWR. When time allowed I would join a group of 'engine spotters' hanging around at the end of the platform of North Road Station; as a train came in we would check off the number of the engine in our railway engine book.

It was thrilling seeing the Cornish Riviera Express arrive at North Road Station; having completed the journey from London to Plymouth non-stop in its usual record time. It was normally pulled by a King class engine. There was something majestic about the appearance of the engine as it came into sight around the curve and into the station. When it came to a stop some of the Spotters would race up to the front of the train to indulge in a sort of hero worship of the driver and crew. Being non-stop, the train did not stop to take on the extra water necessary to generate steam. This was solved by water troughs that would allow the engine to scoop up water as it raced along. At one time, passengers wanting to go to places where the train did not stop would be accommodated in slip coaches. These were slipped off at predetermined places and picked up by an engine waiting to take them to the required destination. When I was at school in Plymouth a GWR viaduct could be seen from where I lived and every day at 12:20 p.m. the Cornish Riviera would rush across the viaduct on its way to London from Penzance. It was as reliable as a clock and was known as the Up Train. The train going from London to Penzance was known as the Down Train.

Another train that was a reliable time-keeper was known as the Atlantic Coast Express. It left Waterloo week-days at 11 a.m., arriving at Bude in just over five hours. In the distance, across the low-lying ground from our house on Pridhams Hill, the train could be seen proudly puffing its way along the last few miles to Bude.

When the wind was our way we could hear its plaintive whistle as if to remind us to put the kettle on for tea. Once I took afternoon tea in the dining car and my elderly waiter had forgotten to include the milk. In his absence I reached across the aisle and took the milk from a vacant table. On his return he stared suspiciously at my table so I mentioned where the milk had come from. Sarcastically he said, 'Well done, sir, you hardly need a waiter, do you?' When the Beeching Report came out in 1963 it recommended many branch lines be closed. Sadly, the Okehampton to Bude line was one of them.



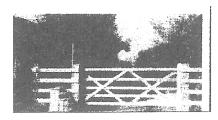
A local train leaves Bude for Okehampton

The Revd. Tucker describes his ride on the footplate of his troop train in India and mentions that the gauge of the track was 5ft 6in. I had an uncle who had been a railway surveyor in India and Ceylon. He told us a few stories of different rail gauges. It seems tea planters in the hill country preferred narrow gauges. They were less costly and more suited to the curving terrain found in the hills. At one time Australia had quite a problem with different rail gauges. A coast to coast trip on the Trans Australian Railway back in 1917 required about six train changes.

The standard gauge originated in England and is 4ft 8.5in. One version of how this odd number came about is that during their 400 year occupancy of ancient Britain the Romans had built many roads to accommodate moving their legions and war-chariots around. Their chariots were pulled by two war-horses and the spacing of the chariot wheels was determined by the width of the two war-horses' rear ends, hence the odd measurement. Many of the roads used by the Roman chariots developed ruts and, later, people who built wheeled carts and wagons used the same spacing to avoid breaking their wheels in the ruts made by the Roman chariots. The makers of the tramways and trains used the same jigs and tools they used for the carts and wagons.

I doubt if many train travellers realize what they owe to ancient Rome and the rear end of their war-horses.

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Wild about Poundstock

It's that time of year when there are mixed feelings about the garden. On the one hand there is a feeling that it will never become attractive or tidy again, but this is easily outweighed by the signs of rebirth and spring edging its way forward. This winter especially, the destruction that the severe cold managed is quite depressing, with several shrubs looking as if they will have to come out, and the top growth of quite a few bulbs and herbaceous plants leaving me wondering if they will sprout again. Many will: nature plays this game with us every year. And the ones that don't reappear – well, it's my own fault for thinking that things from frost-free South Africa will be fine! However, gardening should be about experimenting and having faith.

It's much harder to come to terms with nature deciding that the garden is just an extension of the countryside beyond. I'm talking about the rabbits that think they need extra grazing in the garden, especially the first shoots of crocus or tulips. Voles and mice shouldn't know that crocus, hyacinth and tulip bulbs taste good. Shouldn't they be chewing the roots of the couch grass or creeping buttercup?

Most years the mole decides it needs to check the garden for worms. Why, I don't know, I have 10 acres outside the fence where it is welcome to burrow. But this year it has decided to create a new range of mountains down the lawn. Normally I can repair the odd hill as it appears but this range of hills happened when the ground was frozen, then covered in snow and now too wet. I know that the earth mounds will be like mud if I try to remove them. And because my soil is quite shallow over the rocks, their tunnels are just below the surface as well and so you are at risk of twisting an ankle as you sink into the lawn.

But in spite of all of this, I wouldn't be without my garden, and I know that it will still be a place to enjoy as the year goes on. And what the heck, I garden in a way to encourage some wildlife. Not all of it is planned. Towards the end of the cold spell, I glanced out of my window one day and had the thrill of seeing three waxwings feeding on an apple on the lawn. After a while, we realised that there were more up in one of the apple trees. These beautiful birds are rare in Cornwall but some come to Britain if the berries have a poor year in Scandinavia. So, sometimes I get more than I bargained for, but that's nature.

Tim Dingle

The weather report

Since the last *Packet* report our weather station in the north-east corner of the parish, two miles inland, has recorded:

Decemb		er January (o 25th)
Wettest day	13.0 mm	(4th)	17.3 mm	(12th)
Total rain	38.4 mm		107.5 mm	
Days of rain (>1 mm)	8		14	
Highest temp	12.6 °C	(28th 14:00)	12.9 °C	(13th 17:00)
Lowest temp	-10.4 °C	(25th 08:00)	-5.9 °C	(21st 05:40)
Average max temp	5.5 °C		8.9 °C	
Average min temp	-2.4 °C		2.4 °C	
Max wind gust	38 mph	(18th 1:50)	36.0 mph	(10th 12:00)
Windiest day	12.1 mph	(16th)	11.9 mph	(12th)
Total sunshine hours	65.5 hrs		38.7 hrs	3
Sunniest day	4.0 hrs	(8th)	5.7 hrs	(20th)

These two months have shown great contrasts in the weather: December was very cold and January has been wetter and warmer than average.

For ten days from 17 December the temperature did not rise above 5℃. Contrast this with the five days from 12 January when the temperature did not fall below 10℃ – and that includes the night-time readings!

So far in January we have had nearly 30 mm more rain than the same month last year. Even though the 12th was the wettest day, the most spectacular day for rain was Monday 10th. There was a very heavy downpour in the late morning and again in the evening and at about 7.40 in the evening the rain rate was 31 mm/hr. However, it soon cleared up: the next day the sun was shining and I saw honey bees collecting pollen from some early flowering snowdrops – spring is on its way.

Graham Jones

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Widemouth Bay Residents Report

We rounded off 2010 with a very successful Fish and Chips evening at the Beach House. Over 50 people attended and a fun time was had by all. The Beach House did us proud with a delicious supper and pretty decorations in the room. Thank you to all who gave donations of money or raffle prizes – £150 was raised for the Air Ambulance.

The first meeting of 2011 was poorly attended – due to the pouring rain, we hope! The main item of discussion is the ongoing problem of the dogs in Leverlake Road which are being kept in a corrugated iron shed, and causing a barking nuisance to many people. The RSPCA are involved, but apparently unable to act because the animals are being fed and watered. The Council dog warden is also involved, so we're hoping for a satisfactory conclusion, out of concern for their welfare as well as the noise nuisance.

Our next meeting will be Wednesday 13 April at the new time of 5 pm. Please come along – we can't hope to represent the views of the community if people don't come along to tell us what they are!

Nicky Vereker

SHALLOW GRAVE AT WIDEMOUTH

In 1959 a skeleton was found in a shallow grave at Salt house, Widemouth Bay. It was estimated to be 200years old. At first it was assumed that this was a victim of the sea washed up and buried nearby to save the expense of a formal burial. However, Mr. Dickenson of Shebbear came to hear about the skeleton and had a different explanation. His mother had often told him a story about the time she was on holiday, as a young woman (around 120years ago). She had walked form Bude to Widemouth one day and met an old woman, who from her description, must have lived in the Salt House. The old woman got to talking about her younger days, when she had helped to run smuggled cargoes onto Widemouth beach. She confided that once her father had killed a customs officer on the beach. If this story is true, it was in the 1700s, when North Cornwall beaches were often used for smuggling and illegal seizure of shipwrecked cargo, that an unfortunate customs officer tried to enforce the law, single handed, and came to a violent and untimely end. His body was hidden in a shallow grave near the site of the crime and his fate discovered some 200 years later.

Changing the accountability of policing - Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill This month the Government has introduced the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill to Parliament. The key points of the Bill relating to police authorities and Police and Crime Commissioners are:

- Police Authorities are to be abolished
- ♦ Each Force area will have a Police and Crime Commissioner who will be elected by the public to serve a 4 year term.
- ♦ The Police and Crime Commissioner's duties will be to produce a Police & Crime Plan, secure that the police force is efficient and effective, hold the chief constable to account and appoint and, if necessary, dismiss the Chief Constable
- Each police force area will have a Police and Crime Panel consisting local authority members from the police force area. The Police & Crime Panel will question the Police & Crime Commissioner and make recommendations prior to the Commissioner making decisions.

The Association of Police Authorities Chairman, Councillor Rob Garnham said of the Bill:

"At a time of budget cuts and public concern, this Bill is the wrong response to people"s priorities. The public understand the need to tackle the deficit. They also want to be kept safe. But where's the evidence that the public want more elections, or more politicians? Where s the evidence that bringing in Police Commissioners will cut crime?

"Independent estimates suggest that new elections for Police Commissioners could cost the equivalent of 700 police officers. The government proposals for putting the police into the hands of a single elected individual could cost £101m over 4 years. People tell me they want to see costs cut and criminals caught, not expensive contests for new police chiefs".

From Devon and Cornwall Police Authoruty Newsletter December 2010



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Councillor's report

National Auditing

The council is being audited by Ofsted at the moment as well as other government organisations. Following the criticism during the County Council days, Children's Services, Adult Care and the Fire & Rescue Service are particularly under scrutiny. It will be some time before we have the full results of this but early signs are favourable. Indeed some practises we are using have been recommended to other councils.

Waste collections

No doubt you have read many articles in the paper about collection of household waste. I want to reassure readers that nothing has been decided. We have asked contractors for quotes for the next seven-year contract period. There were a number of options being discussed: bins, fortnightly and weekly collections and the separate collection of food waste. I am on this panel and can reassure readers that not one Conservative Councillor chose the option of fortnightly collections to use as an option for the new tendering. Unfortunately some of the other political party people *did* want fortnightly collections as an option. One has to wonder why because they then blogged that the Council were considering fortnightly collections but that they would oppose it. As I said, if they had supported tendering for weekly collections, then there wouldn't be a case to fight. Or perhaps that is why they didn't!! I am confident that when this comes to a full vote there are enough independent councillors to support any Conservative opinion of weekly collections.

A bit of success

Cornwall Council has been shortlisted in the challenge to identify the 'Most Improved Council'. This is a real accolade for the county. There have been a few people buzzing around the different offices talking to staff and partners of the council in the final stage of judging. Along with the Ofsted auditors and other Councillors/staff from other councils, who are keen to learn from some improvement plans in place, the offices have had a real vibe about them. When the result is announced I will let you know the outcome.

Cllr Phil Tucker

If you have concerns, as with <u>any</u> issue whatsoever, please give me a call on 01288 341617 or philip.tucker@homecall.co.uk

A MESSAGE TO ALL WHO HELP TO PRODUCE AND DISTRIBUTE THE POUNDSTOCK PACKET

It was good to see some of you at our social evening in December. It was a most enjoyable evening. However, a number of you were not able to attend, so once again, our committee would like to say a wholehearted 'Thank You' to all contributors, distributors and others who help us in so many different ways. We could not do it without you. *Jen Spettigue, Chairman*

POUNDSTOCK BELLRINGERS

We have 7 regular members of our team, ringing the 6 bells at Poundstock tower. This means that if more than one person is absent, we don't have a full band, and can't ring all the bells. We will warmly welcome anyone who'd like to find out what bellringing is all about and maybe learn to ring with us. You don't have to be a churchgoer, have musical knowledge or be especially strong; just willing to learn and have some fun. We meet to practice every Tuesday 7.15—8.30pm and also ring on Sundays, normally 9.15–9.45am. If you are interested call our Tower Captain, Trevor Hadlow, on 01288 361837 for a friendly chat.



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OVERPAYMENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

In December the Supreme Court gave judgment in an action brought by the Child Poverty Action Group against the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. The appeal was about the Secretary of State's right to recover certain Social Security benefits. As everyone knows, a large amount of public money is spent upon a whole range of such benefits. Entitlement to these in all cases requires first a claim and then an award. Inevitably on occasion overpayments occur. Sometimes more is paid than the sum awarded. For example, following an award, say, of £60 a claimant may be sent by mistake a cheque for £120 or two cheques each of £60. These cases present no difficulty.

Everyone agrees that unauthorised payments of this kind are recoverable by the Secretary of State as money paid by mistake. However, the problem arises when overpayments are made in accordance with an award, but the award itself is higher than it should be. It is common ground that before any question can arise as to recovering the sums overpaid in such cases, the mistaken award must first be revised. It is common ground too that following such revision, the Secretary of State is entitled to recover any overpayment resulting from misrepresentation or from non-disclosure of a material fact.

In the case brought by CPAG, the issue was whether in other cases of mistakenly inflated awards – most obviously in cases arising from "clerical error" – the Secretary of State is entitled to recover the sums overpaid. An example would be where a claimant has notified a change of circumstances (such as giving notification that the claimant has begun full time work or that their child has left the household) and by mistake the Department overlooks or delays actioning the notification and continues making benefit payments at the same rate. Also, the appeal dealt with the question of where there is simply an erroneous calculation of the award and too much is paid out. Should the Secretary of State be permitted to claw back benefits overpaid?

The Supreme Court heard learned argument and mulled over all the complex regulations and the relevant Acts of Parliament. The Judges took the view that the Secretary of State's powers of recovery are limited by what it says in the statutory provisions. The statutory scheme only allowed the Secretary of State to recover payments where there was misrepresentation or failure to disclose any material fact. Simple error on the part of the adjudicating authorities was excluded.

Most of the advisory services such as the CPAG and the CAB have welcomed the clarification of the law. I think most people would take the view that it is unjust to enable government departments to recover monies paid out by them and spent by the innocent claimant when the fault has been entirely that of the government department. If they have made the error when they have had all the facts available to them, why should an innocent claimant have to suffer?

In my experience I have many times come across cases where claimants have made contact with government departments and told them of change of circumstances. They have been told that the telephone call has been properly logged, and that nothing further needs to be done. Safe in that knowledge, clients have then been horrified when many months and sometimes years down the line a letter drops on the hall carpet advising of substantial recoupment of monies paid in error. I have seen clients having to repay many thousands of pounds at huge personal cost to themselves. The Supreme Court has now taken the decided view that this should not be allowed to happen on the construction of the statutory provision as it presently stands.

If you are a victim of overpayment made as a result of administrative error, do consider making representations not to pay or to get the money back if you have paid. I have no doubt that the government will look at this judgment, and we may well seek amending legislation allowing recoupment to be made in all circumstances. As I think that is a likely scenario, I would urge you to act now if you think you are entitled to take advantage of this Supreme Court decision. I wish you well. *John Busby*

We regret that we do not have any Parish Council minutes to include in this issue. Ed.

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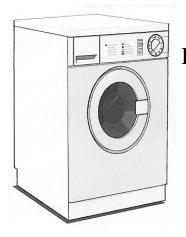
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