

FREE

Issue12, May 2020

MONACHORUM MATTERS

The newsletter for Zeal Monachorum and St Peter's Parish



A new notice board in place on the green by the church to provide information about local help and support available during the coronavirus crisis.

This was made and erected by David Bowyer

EDITORIAL

Well what a difference a month makes. When I was preparing the April issue Covid-19 was in its early stages and we had little idea of the impact it would have on our lives. A month on we are confined to our homes and, for some of us at least, having to rely on the kindness of friends and neighbours to get our shopping. I have been so impressed by the nature of our community and how people rally round to help and support others during a crisis. This one is no different and I have no doubt that we will get through it and come out stronger than before.

A quick glance through this newsletter will reveal that, for this month, there is no advertising. This is because most of our advertisers are unable to operate as normal at present but details of those that are able to offer a service have been communicated through our recent bulletins.

A visible symbol of our response is the new bulletin board, pictured on the front cover, which has been placed on the green by the church; it has up-to-date information about local suppliers and who to approach for help. The story of how the Community Support Group was set up is told on Pages 4 and 5, along with a picture of those involved. Details of the Community Support Group and who to contact if you need help are shown below:

If you find yourself unable to leave your home because you are ill or self-isolated with COVID-19, and you need help with shopping or getting prescriptions or with something else – or if you'd like to chat with someone - please contact one of the following people. They will try to find someone to help you.

Anne & Tony Hubery 01363 82683
Sally Rowden 01363 82531
Mandy Smith 07855 830668

Jan Summers 01363 82571
Jackie Watson 01363 82263

Coordinators: Karen Hunt: karenhunt1962@outlook.com

Jackie Watson: jacquelinewatsondevon@gmail.com

For up to date general advice on COVID-19/Coronavirus, please go to the Government web site:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

STAY HOME PROTECT THE NHS SAVE LIVES

Some of our younger residents have been doing their bit to cheer people up by painting pictures. The two shown here are by Naomi and Jocie Harvey.



CHURCH FLOWERS

I love the stillness of the flowers in church, a sacramental beauty of their own.
For they have known the beauty of the earth, the winds, the sun,
danced in the moonlight, slept beneath the stars,
heard the wild chanting of the storm-tossed trees,
and the quiet whispering of the little leaves,
have grown to the full perfection that man does not know,
of which he only dreams.

Anon

ZEAL MONACHORUM COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUP

On Monday, 23rd March 2020, Karen Hunt, Jan Summers, Sally Rowden and Jackie Watson met at the Village Hall, sitting several metres apart and washing down the surfaces as we left. It seems a lifetime away now! We had already started gathering up volunteers and offers of help, and we have now officially registered with Mid Devon and Devon County Councils as the Zeal Monachorum Community Support Group.

By that point, Had (Hadewy Sint) had set up the ZM Facebook page and Mike Bostock had resurrected the ZM Webpage. Volunteers had come forward to answer calls for help, and volunteer drivers were already coming forward too. We met in the village hall to firm up guidance for drivers – for instance, in the absence of DBS checks, we needed to make sure we knew who the drivers were – and we wanted to make sure they would be safe, especially with collecting and handling money.

The newsletter was about to be distributed, but things were changing so fast we already needed to put out a bulletin with news of the Website, Facebook, and which shops were doing local deliveries. Erica Eden was enlisted to find out about deliveries and, by Tuesday, she had found that the usual delivery systems were collapsing or evolving, but that the Copplestone Hub had been set up by Cllr Stuart Penny and was available for our use too. The draft bulletin was swiftly changed.

David Bowyer was enlisted to make a new Notice Board for the centre of the village, so that rapidly changing information and advice could be easily available for everyone going on their daily walk through the village. Jan was determined to continue with the newsletter but, by the end of the week, it was obvious that there was no point in businesses advertising when they were largely closed. So Jan decided to produce a May issue without advertising and then to put her efforts into bulletins, which would now be mainly emailed out and posted on the new notice board.

Meanwhile Karen and Jackie were managing volunteers to pick up shopping and prescriptions, but without a clear sense of what the eventual need would be. Volunteer drivers were already doing shopping runs for the self-isolated and collecting armfuls of prescriptions. And Ali Birchwhite found and delivered some home-made village honey on the way!

By Monday of the following week, Andrew Lake reported that he'd had to wait 50 minutes in a queue outside the surgery for a pick up. We asked Mid Devon for

advice about government help with prescription deliveries and found that they themselves were struggling to get advice about this. Karen and Jackie wondered whether we were reaching the most vulnerable in the village, and Sally contacted Jan Breally and Susie Bostock for help in identifying anyone we might have been missing.

Lots of local community groups have sprung up during this time. If you know of someone in another part of Devon who needs help, please go to the Devon County Covid-19 website and find their local community group on the map: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/communities/support-groups>

On Monday 6th April, two weeks on, we now have 12 drivers to pick up shopping and prescriptions, so do please phone one of our 6 contacts if you need help at this very difficult time. Stay safe, and a very big thank you to those who have volunteered to help!

Jackie Watson



Pictured above, suitably distanced, are those who set up the Community Support Group together with David Bowyer who made the new noticeboard; left to right: Sally Rowden, Jackie Watson, David, Jan Summers and Karen Hunt.

THE CHURCH BENCH IS BACK

I heard a tale of woe recently concerning a couple of walkers who, feeling tired as a result of their exertions, were looking forward to resting a while on the church bench. On arrival at the appointed spot they were shocked and saddened to find it was not there - it had gone.

The bench had been presented to the church in 1997 by the Parish Council and after 23 years it was looking somewhat the worse for wear. But David Bowyer came to the rescue and removed the bench to his workshop for renovation. David knows a thing or two about making things in wood and advertises in this newsletter as the Village Workshop, so he was just the man for the task.

As the photo below shows, he has done a magnificent job and has effected a real transformation. The bench is once more beside the porch and, in its south facing position, is ready to welcome anyone who needs to rest their weary bones for a while. Well done David.



QUIZ

1. Which organisation which preserves our notable houses and gardens celebrates 125 years this year?
2. There are 66 books in the Bible. Are there more in the Old Testament or the New?
3. Who is famous for saying, 'We're doomed!'?
4. Where would you find these words? 'Peace, prosperity and friendship with all nations'
5. Which of these does Wales have the most of per square mile? Sheep, Castles, Hedges, Rivers
6. 'The Mayflower' set off for the New World 400 years ago from which UK port?
7. Why were thousands of new daffodils planted at Rosemoor this year?
8. How many legs does a daddy long legs have?
9. Which country was formerly known as Tanganyika and in which decade did its name change?
10. How many lakes are in the Lake District?
11. What do Poundbury in Dorset and Nansledan in Cornwall have in common?
12. To which organ of the body is the gall bladder attached?
13. What is the name for a group of flying geese?
14. Which composer's sixth symphony is known as the Pastoral symphony?
15. Which TV presenter was attacked by Rod Hull's Emu?

Minute Quiz

If you saw these letters on cars, from which countries have they come?

a)A b)B c)C d)D e)E

Answers for the April Quiz

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Tree ring dating | 9. Aubergine |
| 2. Prince Edward | 10. The first heart transplant |
| 3. The two opposite sides add up to 7 | 11. The Atlas Mountains |
| 4. Snails and slugs | 12. The many, the people (greek) |
| 5. Slalom | 13. Poisson d'Avril (April Fish) |
| 6. Mercury | 14. No time to die |
| 7. The letter 'e' | 15. Finding Nemo |
| 8. Turkey | |

Minute Quiz Answers

a) FLannEL b) BReatHE/CReatOR c)EScapED d) VAcAnCY
e) CAleNdAR

GARDENING FOR MAY

Listening to people in these unusual times, it is apparent that many of us are using our gardens as a way to fill our time and thoughts this year. Indeed, it might be that some people are paying this page attention for the very first time! As I write at the beginning of April, we have been treated to some amazingly sunny days and the hedgerows have been full of beautiful primroses and wild daffodils while the cow parsley and campion are already in flower.

Spring is a very busy time in the garden and there is much to be done in May. The days are ever longer and outside sowings of french and runner beans can be made now with succession planting of broccoli, carrot, cabbage, lettuce and peas to prolong the season and avoid a glut. This year I will be trying broad beans in the shade of a large apple tree – an area I have struggled with – because I didn't know that broad beans can cope with limited sun, as can rhubarb and kale. It is difficult to buy garden products at the moment but some mulch around the base of plants will always be useful and pinching out broad bean plant tips is said to protect against blackfly.

I shall also be trying to grow courgettes vertically for the first time to save space. I'll start the seeds in the greenhouse or on a window sill and plant them out after the danger of frost at the end of the month. They will then need a strong stake and be encouraged gently to grow upwards and tied in every few centimetres and the lower leaves removed as the courgettes begin to grow higher up. Also, to save space in the vegetable patch, I am going to plant quick growing crops such as spring onions and radishes in amongst the roses.

Another first attempt is with the Asparagus Pea I'd not even seen before, let alone grown. I have made an early sowing indoors and will put the young seedlings out soon and plant more for later. They will need protecting from pigeon damage like kale, chard and cabbages and I have a homemade chicken wire tunnel for this and it works a treat.

To protect soft fruit later in the season, it is a good idea to drape them with old net curtains or lacy tablecloths which allow both the rain and sunlight to go through them but keeps the birds off.

'There is nothing like the first hot days of Spring when the gardener stops wondering if it's too soon to plant the dahlias and starts wondering if it's too late'.

Henry Mitchell 1981



Even if you are not a gardener, it is proven that being outside boosts our immune system and helps keep us healthier in both mind and body. Enjoy all the sights, sounds and smells of the great outdoors this month, the favourite of months for many people.

If you have any garden brainwaves or are trying a new plant for the first time, why not pass it on for inclusion in next month's magazine? Send to: zmon.news@gmail.com



Seed Sharing

There is a chance that, after planting for this year and saving seeds for successive sowings, you might have some seed left over which you would be willing to share. If you have any vegetable or flower seeds, please let Sally know on 82531 and she will post a message on both the new bulletin board on the green and on the village facebook page. Thank you.

GAMES

We are very grateful to the Drake family - Richard, Jo, Abby and Thomas - for providing these two pages of games for younger readers, to help pass the time.

We'd like to include some each month so if other readers would like to design games for future issues please send them to: zmon.news@gail.com.

WORD SEARCH: In the following grid can you find the words listed below?

S	H	O	R	T	S	A	S	O	P	O	P
F	C	S	P	R	O	U	T	X	B	H	R
A	Q	B	N	F	P	R	B	T	L	M	I
I	C	E	C	R	E	A	M	H	O	Z	M
D	U	L	H	A	P	P	R	C	S	D	R
S	E	S	S	A	L	G	N	U	S	Y	O
R	J	D	S	P	W	Q	U	S	O	N	S
N	M	E	Y	P	P	A	H	H	M	U	E
S	E	J	S	I	O	L	B	G	E	S	E
D	A	F	F	O	D	I	L	X	H	W	F
T	G	D	B	A	R	B	E	C	U	E	H
U	S	V	H	A	P	N	E	D	R	A	G

DAFFODIL

BLOSSOM

BARBECUE

SUN

SHORTS

HAPPY

ICE CREAM

GARDEN

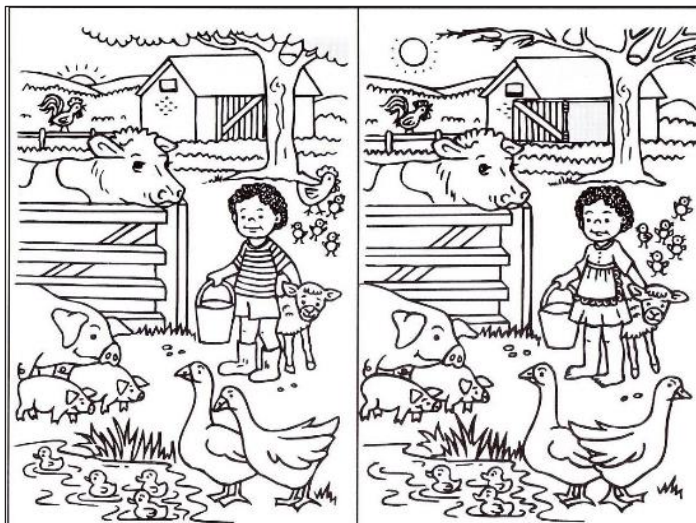
SUNGLASSES

SEED

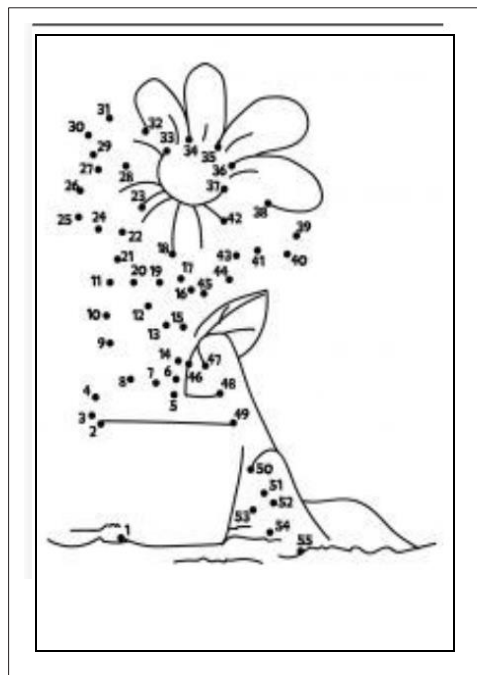
PRIMROSE

SPROUT

Can you spot nine differences between the two pictures below?



And a couple of pictures for you to complete . . .



NORMAN VICARY-

MEMORIES OF LIFE IN ZEAL part 3

What is now the church car park was the Church Room, where we went for a shilling hop on a Saturday night. The only music was from Mr Honeychurch of Bow with his concertina. The Church Room had a tin roof and if there was a hailstorm the noise drowned out the music.

The North Star Inn, now North Star House, was seriously damaged by fire in 1928. The landlord and his wife, Mr and Mrs Jenkins, were made homeless and came to live at Higher Week where their daughter Barbara was born. After the fire a builder from Lapford, Mr Harry Partridge, was called to assess the damage and, on his way home to Lapford in his pony and trap, he was involved in a fatal accident at Stopgate Cross, where a motor cyclist collided with the trap and died.

May Day was a special occasion for Zeal: the main meal would be duck, green peas and new 'teddies' (potatoes). In the afternoon there was a parade through the village led by the band: Charlie Greenslade (cornet), Margaret Quick (flute) [*the aunt of Margaret Dennis*], Mr Honeychurch (concertina), Sid Snell (violin) and Jim Elson (big drum). They were followed by the May Queen sitting on Charlie Greenslade's hand-cart which was pulled by some of the bigger boys of the village. Everyone then went to the field behind the school [*where Churchill Gardens is now*] for 'sports' races and skittling for a pig, etc. Sometimes we were lucky enough to have a gentleman from Chumleigh with his swing boats.

One day in about 1930 the Exeter Male Voice Choir came to sing at the church. After the concert the open charabanc in which they were travelling lurched too near the hedge at the bottom of Butt Park Hill, and a protruding branch almost severed the ear of a chorister's wife. The charabanc pulled into Higher Week and a Dr Bastard of Bow was called to stitch the poor woman's ear back on. After a considerable time the party resumed their journey back to Exeter.

Next month: the final part of Norman's reminiscences is a list of people who lived in the parish, many of whose names will be familiar to current residents.

RAINFALL FOR MARCH - 99mm

CREDITON FOODBANK COLLECTION.

Two reports on the foodbank this month . . .

Crediton Foodbank would like to thank all the people who donate regularly either with groceries or by financial giving. Although grocery donations have reduced as expected in these challenging times, financial donations have increased, so that we are able to meet the needs of the people who are struggling to cope.

From the foodbank data analyst: You'll not be surprised to hear that we're 48% up on the month already, with over 200 people fed, and 38% up on this time last year, at 575. Alarming figures and last week we fed 86 adults and 64 children - an average week is 20 adults and 10 children. We are now a delivery only service and we have had so many offers of help it is heart-warming. In these uncertain times when many people are anxious it is good to know we can allay their fears a little and ensure they have food on the table. Thank you again for your on-going support.

Chris Parsons Food Bank Co-ordinator

Last month we donated a full box of food, a mountain of soap which at this time was so needed to make sure that those families with so very little can keep themselves safe, making sure their hands are clean. We also donated £40 in cash. Thank you everyone. I was concerned that we may not have anything to contribute for the foreseeable future but I have had some financial donations. I thank you.

If you are able to donate food even if it is only one item it would be so appreciated. Any donation can be left when out for your daily walk on the gate post or just inside the gate at 'Kentmere', 2nd on the right going towards the Waie Inn, or you can ring me, Lois, on 82982. If you would prefer to donate money, that can be left in the box by the front door. The Foodbank has a number of volunteers available to collect any donations left with me. Current needs are for: sugar, jam and tinned vegetables of any sort; stocks of these are very low.

KEEP SAFE and GOD BLESS

PS I have been concerned how I could reach the village not being able to walk around. I have been praying that I would get donations. The villagers of this amazing village have reached me: a large box of food and £40 has been delivered to my doorstep, and I now have £110 to donate to the foodbank.

God is good.

Unfortunately there is no mobile library until further notice but here's a joke instead:

What do you call a library book that is self-isolating?

A loan

THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY - SAVING THE PLANET

Since the lockdown, I have felt somewhat discombobulated - the very sound of the word sums it up for me.

AIR POLLUTION DROPS

However, there is some good news: carbon emissions, nitrogen dioxide and air pollution levels have fallen dramatically throughout the world. Nitrogen dioxide is produced from car engines, power plants and other industrial processes and is thought to exacerbate respiratory illnesses such as asthma. This drop could reduce the spread of disease. A high level of air pollution exacerbates viral uptake because it inflames and lowers immunity. Road traffic accounts for about 80% of nitrogen oxide emissions in the UK, according to Paul Monks, professor of air pollution at the University of Leicester. For the average diesel car, each kilometre not driven avoids 52 milligrams of the pollutant entering the air. Since the lockdown, road travel in the UK has plummeted by as much as 73%; even the mileage of large lorries has fallen by 40% *.

**From Cabinet Office data 29 March 2020*

FEWER FROG DEATHS

This will mean a significant reduction in deaths from pollution; agriculture should also get a boost because pollution stunts plant growth; the natural environment and wildlife have benefitted as humans have left them to it - baby turtles hatching on beaches without tourists; toads and frogs surviving their migration to ponds - evident right here in Zeal as the number of frogs squashed flat by traffic is significantly fewer than usual.

It's hard being restricted to home, going out only for exercise in the vicinity and making only essential journeys. It's even worse for those with serious health conditions who aren't even allowed in the garden. However, it has been a time to reflect on the good things - the spring weather and flowers do lift my mood; as do the conversations with fellow walkers, horse and bike riders [all at a proper distance, of course] - thank you, you know who you are. Then there have been more chats by phone and video than usual. With fewer cars and planes around, I have been able to really appreciate the insects buzzing and the birdsong; and it seems to me as if they are actually doing better too. What I wonder is whether we might be able to keep the pollution levels down, even after this crisis, by continuing with many of the actions you have already had to take and maybe even got used to?

TIPS ON REDUCING VEHICLE USE

So here are some tips on reducing vehicle use for you to consider for the future:

Don't drive so far - shop local. After all, so many of our local, independent shops and businesses have risen to the challenge of helping us, despite many not knowing if they can survive economically;

Buy local produce - this helps to reduce the miles your food travels to get to you;

Shop less often - plan for what you need. Avoid popping out for just one item, see if you can manage without or substitute something else already in the cupboard;

We haven't been able to share our cars outside those we live with, but many of you have been helping by buying for others while shopping for yourselves. We could still do that in future *and* share cars too;

For some of you, it may be possible to work from home some of the time and gain time and the money back that you spent commuting.

DON'T SPEND, SPEND, SPEND

Ignore the adverts and marketing persuading us to go shopping and spend, spend, spend. We will be told it's necessary for the "economy" but our planet cannot take the production, transportation, disposal of things that really are surplus to our needs.

The climate emergency when compared with Covid 19 can seem less urgent but already lives throughout the world are being seriously affected. Reduce your consumption. Spend your money where it will benefit, or do least harm, to the planet and environment. Demand our government does the same with our money that it spends on our behalf.

Erica Eden

QUOTES

First a couple for these unusual times . . .

'You are not stuck at home, you are safe.'

Terry Waite

'Life can only be understood backwards but it must be lived forwards'.

S. Kierkegaard

And then some seasonal ones . . .

'A swarm in May is worth a load of hay; a swarm in June is worth a silver spoon; but a swarm in July is not worth a fly' *17th Century saying*

'The world's favourite season is Spring. All things seem possible in May'.

Edwin W Teale

'Come we to the summer, to the summer we will come,
For the woods are full of bluebells and the hedges full of bloom'

John Clare

CALLING ALL GROWERS A MESSAGE FROM BLUEBERRY HILL

Even before coronavirus was being discussed, I had planned to ask gardeners in the local area to consider supplying the market garden with produce to supplement what is grown on site. The principle reason for this is to ensure a good, very local and larger supply which in turn will enable me to serve more people and also have some items to sell on site as well as in the weekly baskets.

How Will It Work ? Please only contact me if you grow your produce using only organic methods, so no herbicides, no pesticides, no synthetic chemical fertilizer, no slug pellets. I will pay a set price per kilo for different categories of produce, for example new potatoes and all other root crops, main crop potatoes, soft fruits, single items etc. (full list will be given). I will then add the same amount when selling to the customer, so we make the same amount each.

Now, more than ever, we have all been reminded of the importance of food security. By working together, we can ensure that we in all our local communities, have a good, nutritious, continuous supply of fresh food. We can also feel proud and confident that it has been grown in harmony with both the local wildlife, and that of the wider world by not using chemical fertilizers. Food miles too will be kept to the bare minimum.

If you are interested in growing food for local distribution, please contact me at blueberryjacqui@hotmail.co.uk

Kind wishes and keep well everyone

Jacqui Bourne

If you like reading . . .

A few books have been collected together, and, for now are in the village Telephone Box for us all to share and borrow. Feel free to take a book and to either return it or pass it on, and, if you can, please leave one you have finished for someone else to enjoy. Please only give a book you are happy to part with!

So far, there is an assortment of novels, murder mysteries and children's books but we hope the scope will broaden as more people bring books along.

The telephone box is still in use so, at all times, we must ensure that the phone is easily accessible. And, of course, please wash your hands when returning home from a book swap and please wipe it down carefully and set it aside for a few days before beginning to read.

And this from Erica Eden . . .

FOR LOAN - BOOKS & BOARD GAMES

We have a large collection of board games for adults & children; novels for adults and children's picture books. Happy to loan them. Email or phone for further details and safe collection/delivery. Erica & Roy - 82606 reden@rocketmail.com

FARMING FROM THE HEDGE

For those of you who take an interest in and feed the birds, you will be pleased to hear that numbers in the February Farm Bird Count were slightly up on last year, 17 species were seen at Thorne Farm here in Zeal, in total 140 birds.

Top of the list were starlings, about 60 followed by Jackdaw 24, House sparrow 11, Blue tit 8, Great tit 1, Long tailed tit 5, Coal tit 2, Pigeon 5, Magpie 3, Robin 2, Blackbird 5, Collared dove 2, Great spotted woodpecker 1, Chaffinch 2, Crow 7, Buzzard 4, Pied wagtail 1; Since doing the count I have heard Skylarks. The count was mostly done from a bedroom window looking out on to the farmyard and joining field when Storm Dennis was with us. The aim of this annual count is to show what farmland birds are benefiting from conservation efforts, while identifying the ones that need help.

My son Nick who is the farm manager on the Yattendon Estate in Berkshire (mainly arable), recorded the same number of species, however, he recorded 3 that we haven't, Lapwing, Red Kite and Partridge.

Farming seems to have been in the headlines quite often this year with storms Ciara, Dennis and Jorge leaving the fields waterlogged or under water, which left over 50% of autumn cereal crops not planted, those that were have suffered badly by the persistent wet weather. Television documentaries, celebrities, and government advisors have given their opinions on the effect of climate change which hasn't always been an accurate account of farming in Britain.

As I am writing this article at the end of March, 16 days into self isolation, the current global situation is not such a big deal for someone retired, our only need is to feed ourselves but we give thanks to the kind people who are shopping for us.

You have probably noticed how few aircraft are in the sky, no aviation trails leaving us clear blue skies when there is no cloud. The birds are singing without a care in the world, living in Zeal we have fantastic views. While you are taking your daily exercise, enjoy the beautiful area we are fortunate enough to live in. It is a long road with no turning. As a Devonian friend of mine would say "t'will be alright drekly". Keep well and look out for one another.

Ken Down



HOMES FIT FOR HEROES?

WESTERN ROAD COUNCIL HOUSES ZEAL MONACHORUM

For this month's archive piece I wondered what had been happening 100 years ago and came across Lloyd George's speech the day after the WW1 Armistice, when he was reported by the press as promising "homes fit for heroes". It will come as no surprise that this was not an easy promise for the Government to fulfil: lack of funds; extreme shortages of skilled manpower and materials in the building industry; and Bolshevism - there had been a number of damaging strikes and fears of revolution as in Russia.

SIX COUNCIL HOUSES FOR ZEAL Initially rural counties could not afford to build but in 1919 an Act was passed which changed the way social housing could be funded. So in April 1919 Crediton Rural Council [CRC] consulted parishes about their needs for council houses under the scheme and Zeal requested six.

In May 1920 tenders were invited from local builders, they said they would do what they could but the amount of available labour was uncertain. The CRC agreed large mansions, and other non-essential buildings, could wait until dwellings for men who returned from the war were erected. Nonetheless, by January 1921 no progress had been made and the CRC's chairman described the delay as extraordinary; especially in view of the fact that the Government was clamouring for more work for the unemployed.

Finally in February 1922 the six Zeal houses were completed on Western Road. At a meeting of the CRC it was reported that the houses were available to let at 7 shillings 6 pence [worth about £10.90 today]. An agricultural labourer's weekly wage at that time was between 14 and 22 shillings. There had been numerous applicants for the houses but only two were occupied. Mr Carter Pedler [a CRC Councillor resident at Reeve Castle in Zeal] said the house could have been let over and over again as a result of the advertisements, but when prospective tenants learned of the sanitary arrangements they said "Oh, dear, no." The sanitary system comprised earth closets designed for buckets instead of a flushing arrangement and are two feet from the larder doors. "At the best of times, as you know, there would be a faint smell in the house, and at the worst of times it would be absolutely poisonous." One applicant pointed out that, among other things, he was an ex-Serviceman, was crippled and could afford no more than 5s per week. Others objected to having to walk so far for their water.

The Reverend McCarthy of Zeal read the report of the above meeting and wrote an angry letter to the Exeter & Plymouth Gazette saying the houses were not wanted, there were plenty of empty cottages. And why was a site chosen where a well had to be sunk at about 50 yards from the furthest cottages and difficult to access, when a part of the Glebe near the reservoir could have been obtained at half the price. He was informed the houses cost £1240 each - there were two bedrooms, a box-room, a kitchen parlour with room for four chairs and a small table, and an earth closet under the same roof. He wrote: 'When in Morocco I saw an harem in the same condition obtained. But there, eunuchs were kept to keep the place sanitary'*[sic]*.

By April 1922 three houses were occupied and the tenants were complaining about the water supply being quite unfit. If a pail of water, pumped from the well, was left to stand for a few minutes a thin skin formed as if it contains a lot of oil and also tastes very bad. It was most inconvenient to go several hundred yards to fetch water from the public supply in the village. Mr Carter Pedler said difficulty had been experienced in draining the well and a solution needed to found. The CRC pointed out the houses were built for the working classes who were prepared to have them but not at the price fixed. It recognised that it would have to reduce the rent to 6 shillings to let the remaining ones and that it had no choice but apply the reduction to all six houses.

In October 1927 further complaints were made respecting the leaky condition of a roof; that the key of one lock fitted those of all the other houses and the rain water butts leaked. At a CRC meeting Mr Carter Pedler said it would not be difficult to stop the dripping through the roof. It was due to the system of tiling whereby one tile only slightly overlapped another. Another Councillor said nearly the whole of the roofs put up under the Addison* scheme were the same; they were rotten things.

I found no further information about repairs or how the water problem was solved. I assume that eventually the council houses were linked to the public water supply from the reservoir.

** The government had created a Ministry of Reconstruction in 1917, headed by Christopher Addison.*

Sources: Western Times, Exeter & Plymouth Gazette

Erica Eden



Western Road council houses, early 1930s. Photo provided by Marjorie Brealy

Western Road Council Houses, Fancy Dress, circa 1960s [people unknown - please get in touch if you can name them]





Zeal in early morning mist by Sally Rowden



Fishing Lake at Zeal by Becky Ringrose