

Easton Village Newsletter

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NATURE NOTES 63



During the recent churchyard tidy up, I noticed two plants which I had never seen there before and had not seen elsewhere in the village. One was Salad Burnet with its head of tiny white flowers like a small Cow Parsley or Keck, and the other was Tor Grass which had survived the mower by growing next to a tombstone. Several other plants in the churchyard do not occur anywhere nearby, including the delicate Quaking Grass (left), Field Woodrush and Pignut, whose strange name comes from its little underground tuber, presumably much enjoyed by pigs. I saw meadows white with this plant in the Pyrenees in 2009. Churchyards often harbour an island of diversity amid an ocean of arable land as they have never been cultivated or fertilised like most meadows, but simply mown. Years ago, Cecil Clark told me that when he was a lad, he and another boy used to scythe the churchyard for half a crown, and it took them all weekend. Easton churchyard is also rich in fungi in the autumn. Apart from the dreaded Honey Fungus, I have recorded nine species with such tasty names as Jelly Ear, Dead Man's Fingers, Witch's Butter, Oyster mushroom (right), Coral spot and Velvet shank.

Brian Davis



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

The Poppy Collection in the village last November raised £102 for the Royal British Legion. Many thanks to Charles Nixon and to all who contributed to this excellent total.

49 CLUB

Tony Ellis was the lucky winner of the November draw, receiving a cheque for £22.50 just in time for Christmas

ADVENT FAIR

Very many thanks to everyone who contributed in any way to the Five Parish Advent Fair held on 29 November. Particular thanks go to Peter Gould who once again ran the honey, chutney, pickles, marmalade and jam stall. The total raised was £680.00 which will be distributed between the five parishes. This is £100 down on last year's total, but it was such a cold day and people are more careful with their money now. I think this was the 8th Advent Fair and perhaps it is time to think again about what we could do in 2011. Any ideas, please let me know.

Sue Young

CHURCH NEWS

We would like to thank everyone who participated in the Christmas celebrations at St. Peter's, particularly those who decorated the Church so beautifully, those who provided refreshments and all those who braved the cold to enrich our worship by turning out in such numbers to attend the services.

Services during January will be:

2nd January - 9.30 a.m. Sunday Worship

9th January - 6.00 p.m. Evensong

16th January - 9.30 a.m. Eucharist

23rd January - 6.00 p.m. Evening Eucharist

30th January - 4.30 p.m. Christingle Service



Morning Prayer is said by Fr. Jonathan at 9.00 a.m. on Saturdays at Fiddlers. Everyone is welcome to attend.

LOOKING AFTER CHICKENS IN THE WINTER



Many people know that there are around 7 billion people on this planet but you may not be aware that actually chickens outnumber people in the world. Compared with the number of humans, the number of chickens is at least double that figure and is estimated to be between 15 and 35 billion - something I was particularly surprised to find out. Unfortunately most of these end up on the dining room table but nevertheless chickens are becoming more and more popular due to their easy maintenance and there are several families in the village who keep them. However, with temperatures reaching a low of -9°C in the village recently, it is important that chickens are kept warm, watered and fed in their coop. An article on www.keeping-chickens.co.uk, a website which I would recommend to chicken-keepers as a reliable source of information, helped us to decide to insulate the coop ready for the freezing weather with both extra shavings for bedding and straw underneath the coop itself. This year, for the first time we found that our hens adopted the appearance seen by most chickens in the winter whereby they lose their feathers and also stop laying as many eggs. But recently we seemed to have found a solution: particularly at the weekends we allow them to have a free run of the garden where we can keep an eye on them (apologies to our neighbours for those occasional times when they've strayed further afield!). With this being the only change in their routine we think that the resulting improvement in their activity and diet has allowed them to flourish once again: their feathers have grown back and we are even receiving three out of four eggs a day. Certainly, if this is feasible, allowing them to scrape away in the leaves and mud will leave your chickens happy and healthy.

Rachel Thomason (aged 17)