



SNAILBEACH DISTRICT NEWS

March 2021
Spring is here

Free



In the first Mary Poppins book the 'East Wind' brings the famous nanny to number seventeen Cherry Tree Lane. In the film Mary rides the wind holding on to her talking parrot headed umbrella. Two of the Banks children, Jane and Michael, watch in awe as all the other aspiring nannies are blown away. Later, Michael Banks says to Mary Poppins, "You'll never leave us, will you?" Mary Poppins replies, "I'll stay till the wind changes."

We have had more than our share of the East wind both from the physical damage caused by the return of the 'Beast from the East' and from a virus spread by a human weather system now encircling the globe.

Maybe the wind has changed for us too. Spring looks to be around the corner and the vaccination programme is offering a tantalising prospect of a less regulated future.



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From the editor

The wind plays a leading role in this month's issue. At the Stiperstones Inn we have had our fair share.

Shortly into the New Year the beautiful red hawthorn on our northern corner crashed down blocking the road.

In the February gale two of our chimney pots and part of the stack fell, destroying a tiled roof below. three fence panels are no better than morning sticks and one of my garden stores careered across the lawn depositing doors as it went. Finally, the other morning as I opened the door 'Little Cat' was lifted off her feet and deposited under the table! Nose through our adverts to get a whiff of winds of change around the world.

As always these days the newsletter is available online at

www.snailbeachdistrictnews.co.uk

The deadline for April is March 21st. sammy@snailbeachdistrictnews.co.uk

Thank-yous and commendments.

A big thank you to everyone for making our villages such welcoming places during the long winter. The lights were incredible and now the snowdrops and the odd daffodil are through. The prizes for Christmas scarecrows went to the 'Grinch' and Skeleton at Cal's and the the Angel at the Jackson's.

Thank you to everyone who has helped support the newsletter with Christmas messages and to the Baptist Chapel for their very generous donation.

We were rather over run with visitors looking for the snow and so another thank you goes to those who have been picking up the litter that was left behind.

We have all needed cheering up and Elaine, Alex, and Luke have certainly done that with their sheep tales on Facebook and on their regular Friday evening slot on radio Shropshire.

We will be on a reduced print run again this month. We hope to deliver to Stiperstones and Pennerley while copies for further afield will be available in the shop.

Alf Lewis, long time and well loved resident of The Bog, Stiperstones and Pontesbury sadly died earlier this year. He will be sadly missed by his large family and his close friend Brenda Jones.

Pete and Trish sent me this record of Alf's early life.

I, Alfred Lewis (known as Alf) was born at Gorsty Bank July 1927 to Jack and Mercy Lewis. I had one brother, Jack and one sister, Winnie. Our mother sadly died when I was only 9 months old, so I was brought up by my Grandmother and Grandad, Thomas and Annie Lewis, who for many years that I remember collected blackberries from Pontesbury Hill with horse and cart and took them to Minsterley Station for the 7 o'clock train. These were used for dye, and so we could fill the barrel my Grandfather would lift me into the barrel to trample them down well so we could get more in. Grandad Tom's horse and cart was well known in the area as we travelled up to Frog's Gutter, The Rock. Mrs Swain's shop in The Bog where I would buy a penny's worth of sweets. Grandad would then call at The Miner's Arms to have a drink and I was allowed to play skittles when Mr Pickering was Licensee. This was to collect whinberries, our next call would be Tankerville, Crows Nest and Snailbeach. We would often have to clean them before weighing and putting them in chip baskets and seal. Then take them in the horse and cart to Minsterley Station to be transported to Birmingham. I remember particularly one day my Grandad saying we have made eight shillings and four pence today which now seems unbelievable.

My dad, Jack was a miner at Bergam and Black Tommy, Snailbeach. I remember how he used Tom the horse to pull a sledge full of barytes from the top of Bergam to the landing stage near the road where it was put on my dad's lorry and taken to Malehurst during the late 1930's. After that, my dad and Tom Evans were mining at the Black Tom, Snailbeach around 1940.

My Grandad had some land known as The Slang that was adjacent to the hopyard, there was a bridlepath to the waterwheel, I remember well Mr C Hotchkiss mowing the grass with a scythe. We also had land known as Slatons Grave near the football field at Snailbeach.

The men from Snailbeach would come and help with the harvest. I remember my dear old Grandmother would carry a side basket full of food from the Gorsty Bank for the helpers and they also had a barrel of cider. The long days and the summers seemed to have no end but the winters were very severe. I often think about those days, all the work was carried out by hand and things were very laid back, at least I thought so, but I am sure people had difficulty providing for their families.

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Setting up a PC out of the box can be challenging, it often ends up in confusion resulting in a machine that is a pain to use. The manufacturers don't make it any easier, bombarding the user with multiple choices and unnecessary software.

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The jet stream is a core of strong winds around 5 to 7 miles above the Earth's surface, blowing from west to east.

The seasons affect the position of the jet stream. In winter, there is more of a temperature difference between the equator and poles, so the jet stream is stronger and flows over the UK. This is why we tend to see wetter weather. The reverse is true in summer, where there tends to be a smaller temperature difference. The position of the jet stream typically ends up to the north of the UK and we see calmer, drier weather.

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Your home may be repossessed if you do not keep up repayments on your mortgage.

To add to the usual work on the hill at this time of year, such as tree clearance and gorse cutting, the prolonged snow cover has meant that we have had to regularly take hay out to our flock of sheep and ponies. The hay that we feed to our animals comes from the hay meadows that we manage at Pennerley. These fields are managed firstly as flower rich habitats and secondarily for their crop of hay, so we do not add any manure or fertiliser to them as this generally reduces the diversity of plants within them. Usually they provide us with plenty of hay last us through the winter, however this year for the first time we have had to buy in some hay to see us through.

One of our main winter jobs is clearing sapling trees from the heath, which if left would allow the internationally important heathland on the Stiperstones to succeed to woodland. However it has been a nice change this year to also be planting some trees in the form of hedges at Rigmoroak. If time allows we might even be laying a previously planted hedge. We received a grant from the Woodland Trust for the trees (search for MOREhedges) and with help from our volunteers have planted over 250m of new hedge.



Yellowhammer

Hedgerows are excellent habitats in their own right, but particularly with hedgerow trees they provide a network of wildlife highways across the countryside. Woodland wildlife in particular can use them as a link between woods and copses, but with their grass and flower edges they are also used by a whole

range of different wildlife. Unfortunately we are still seeing a loss of hedgerows across the countryside and a survey of hedgerow change, carried out by the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, revealed that between 1984 and 1990 hedgerow length in England had declined by 20 per cent and in Wales by 25 per cent. Much of this loss is a result of lack of management rather than removal, since if the hedge is simply allowed to get old whilst being subject to grazing animals it will deteriorate to the few remnant old hawthorn trees commonly seen around the hills today.

Hedgerows offer many benefits in addition to the wildlife corridors that they provide. They act as windbreaks, and farm animals use them for shelter against wind and rain, and when the snow is drifting the drifts are reduced in areas where there are multiple hedges. In the summer hedges and hedgerow trees offer shade for grazing animals, which is increasingly important with climate change and can prevent some of the grass burning off in drought periods. The shelter from the wind prevents erosion of soil and if planted along contours can help surface water soak into the ground and thus prevent soil erosion through water runoff.

Many farmland birds use hedgerows both for feeding on invertebrates and nesting. One of these is the yellowhammer which is now a red listed bird due to having suffered a 55% decline in breeding numbers during 1970-2010.

One bird that seems to benefit from poor gappy hedges is the sparrowhawk which can more easily ambush its prey when there is less cover for small birds to escape into. You will often see them flying along hedges and quickly flicking over to the other side to surprise an unwary blue tit.

Due to last year's lockdown we didn't get much heather burning in last March. Hopefully this year will be different if things dry up, as it is an important management technique not only for the heathland plants but also to prevent wildfires in our ever hotter summers.



Sparrowhawk

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Known to sailors around the world, **the trade winds** and associated ocean currents helped early sailing ships from European and African ports make their journeys to the Americas. Likewise, the trade winds also drive sailing vessels from the Americas toward Asia. Even now, commercial ships use "the trades" and the currents the winds produce to hasten their oceanic voyages.

As the wind blows to about five degrees north and south of the equator, both air and ocean currents come to a halt in a band of hot, dry air. This 10-degree belt around Earth's midsection is called the doldrums.



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Thanks to National Lottery players some of our best loved places in the uplands of England will be better looked after.

Funding has been secured to work with 12 upland commons in four of England's national landscapes; the Shropshire Hills, Yorkshire Dales, the Lake District and Dartmoor.

Here in the Shropshire Hills, this national project will focus on three of our upland commons; the Long Mynd, Stiperstones and Clee Liberty.

Through a partnership of 24 organisations the Our Common Cause project will empower those who graze common land, the commoners, to better manage them to restore peat, create habitats for birds and butterflies and improve the quality of access for public health, well-being and enjoyment.

Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager, commented "It's great that the Shropshire Hills has the opportunity to be involved in this national project, which is based on the principle that upland commons and the ancient practice of commoning are important."

"These areas of land are of great value for livelihoods, for public enjoyment, heritage, nature and more. They owe much of this value to the system of commoning, especially common grazing, but they are under some pressures and through collaborative working commons can deliver all these benefits even more into the future."

"In the Shropshire Hills the project will work on the Long Mynd, Stiperstones and Clee Liberty commons, all with their distinctive characteristics and issues. The project will work with those who hold common rights as well as the owners and a wide variety of other partners, and will help to raise public awareness and understanding."

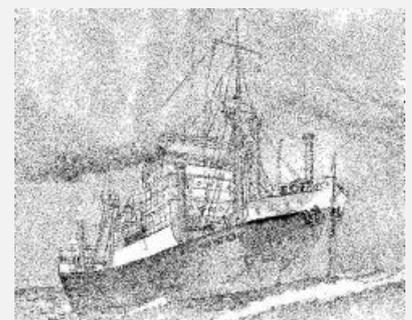
Find out more about this project and latest press release at <https://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/our-work/projects/our-common-cause>

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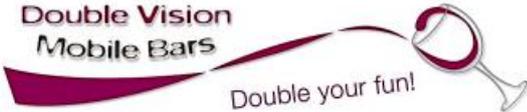
The name **mistral** comes from the Languedoc dialect of the Occitan and means "masterly". The mistral has the reputation of bringing good health; it blows away pollution from the skies over the large cities and industrial areas. The sunshine and dryness brought by the mistral have an important effect on the local vegetation. The vegetation in Provence, which is already dry because of the small amount of rainfall, is made even drier by the wind, which makes it particularly susceptible to fires, which the wind spreads very rapidly, sometimes devastating vast expanses of mountainside before being extinguished. During the summer, thousands of hectares can burn when the mistral is blowing.



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A COMPASS IS A DEVICE that indicates direction. It is one of the most important instruments for navigation.

Magnetic compasses are the most well known type of compass. They have become so popular that the term “compass” almost always refers to a magnetic compass. While the design and construction of this type of compass has changed significantly over the centuries, the concept of how it works has remained the same. Magnetic compasses consist of a magnetized needle that is allowed to rotate so it lines up with the Earth's magnetic field. The ends point to what are known as magnetic north and magnetic south.



Scientists and historians don't know when the principles behind magnetic compasses were discovered. Ancient Greeks understood magnetism. As early as 2,000 years ago, Chinese scientists may have known that rubbing an iron bar (such as a needle) with a naturally occurring magnet, called a lodestone, would temporarily magnetize the needle so that it would point north and south.

Very early compasses were made of a magnetized needle attached to a piece of wood or cork that floated freely in a dish of water. As the needle would settle, the marked end would point toward magnetic north.

As engineers and scientists learned more about magnetism, the compass needle was mounted and placed in the middle of a card that showed the cardinal directions—north, south, east, and west. A spearhead and the letter T, which stood for the Latin name of the North Wind, Tramontana, signified north. This combination evolved into a fleur-de-lis design, which can still be seen today. All 32 points of direction were eventually added to the compass card.

Historians think China may have been the first civilization to develop a magnetic compass that could be used for navigation. Chinese scientists may have developed navigational compasses as early as the 11th or 12th century. Western Europeans soon followed at the end of the 12th century.

In their earliest use, compasses were likely used as backups for when the sun, stars, or other landmarks could not be seen. Eventually, as compasses became more reliable and more explorers understood how to read them, the devices became a critical navigational tool.

Adjustments and Adaptations By the 15th century, explorers realized that the “north” indicated by a compass was not the same as Earth's true geographic north. This discrepancy between magnetic north and true north is called variation (by mariners or pilots) or magnetic declination (by land navigators) and varies depending on location. Variation is not significant when using magnetic compasses near the Equator, but closer to the North and South Poles, the difference is much greater and can lead someone many kilometers off-course. Navigators must adjust their compass readings to account for variation.

Other adaptations have been made to magnetic compasses over time, especially for their use in marine navigation. When ships evolved from being made of wood to being made of iron and steel, the magnetism of the ship affected compass readings. This difference is called deviation. Adjustments such as placing soft iron balls (called Kelvin spheres) and bar magnets (called Flinders bars) near the compass helped increase the accuracy of the readings. Deviation must also be taken into account on aircraft using compasses, due to the metal in the construction of an airplane.

Magnetic compasses come in many forms. The most basic are portable compasses for use on casual hikes. Magnetic compasses can have additional features, such as magnifiers for use with maps, a prism or a mirror that allows you to see the landscape as you follow the compass reading, or markings in Braille for the visually impaired. The most complicated compasses are complex devices on ships or planes that can calculate and adjust for motion, variation, and deviation.



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Known as **the scirocco**, this warm, humid wind originates over North Africa and picks up moisture as it crosses the Mediterranean towards southern Europe. It brings with it uncomfortably humid air and strong winds.



Historically, scirocco's not the farmers' favourite. In ancient times, the wind was associated with the the Greek god, Notus. He was feared as a destroyer of crops.



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Letter from Westminster – March 2021

Philip Dunne MP

The effort to vaccinate the public against covid19 continues at truly remarkable pace. I write in mid-February, so cannot reflect on the PM's statement about the route out of restrictions.



So instead, I want to offer my heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in the rollout of the vaccine in South Shropshire. I received my jab at Ludlow Hospital last month, and having been forced to shield for much of the pandemic, I joined in the enormous sense of relief felt by all who have been vaccinated against this wretched virus.

As I write, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin have administered over 40,000 doses in the past week alone. So I am deeply grateful to our local GPs, but also NHS staff, Shropshire Council staff, RAF medics at Ludlow Racecourse, volunteers from Shropshire Fire & Rescue, and many members of the community including retired clinicians, and public spirited folk, braving the chill and wet weather to help get the most vulnerable in our community vaccinated.

I also want to thank the generosity of those supporting the vaccine programme. I know local businesses and individuals have been coming forward to offer snacks and hot drinks to health staff, which really does reflect the best of our community, not least during February's cold snap.

The immense progress the country has made towards vaccination allows us to plan further ahead, and last month, the government confirmed that Local, Mayoral and Police & Crime Commissioner elections would go ahead as planned in May. In Shropshire, that means voting will take place to elect all local Shropshire Councillors, and the Police & Crime Commissioner for West Mercia, as well as local town and parish councils.

When the pandemic hit last year, some elections were postponed. But we know much more about COVID19 now, and other countries have shown successful elections can take place within covid-secure guidelines – including in Ireland, France, Portugal, Israel, South Korea, and the United States. We will have reached all 9 cohorts of the vaccination programme by the Spring, which means everyone over 50 will have been offered a vaccine. So we can commit to go ahead with these polls with confidence.

The government is working with the Electoral Commission to ensure a safe election. The changes for voters and election staff will be similar to those made for workplaces up and down the country during the pandemic. Voters (and companions of disabled voters) should bring their mask, as they would wear in any indoor public place, and are encouraged to bring a pen or pencil with which to mark their ballot paper.

But if you are concerned, please consider applying for a postal or proxy vote ahead of the polls. You can find more information on how to apply at <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/elections-and-electoral-registration/voting-and-elections/postal-and-proxy-voting/>.

The pandemic does of course mean quite a significant change for those campaigning. You may not receive a knock on the door from rosette-wearing candidates, and as I write, political campaigning is not considered essential activity, so you should not get leaflets through your door unless they are posted via Royal Mail – though one party has irresponsibly chosen to ignore these rules in parts of the county.

But these elections are important – they will determine your voice in town or parish councils, in Shirehall, and the oversight of your local Police service. So it is right we do not delay democracy any longer than we must, and voters can head to the polls with confidence on 6th May.

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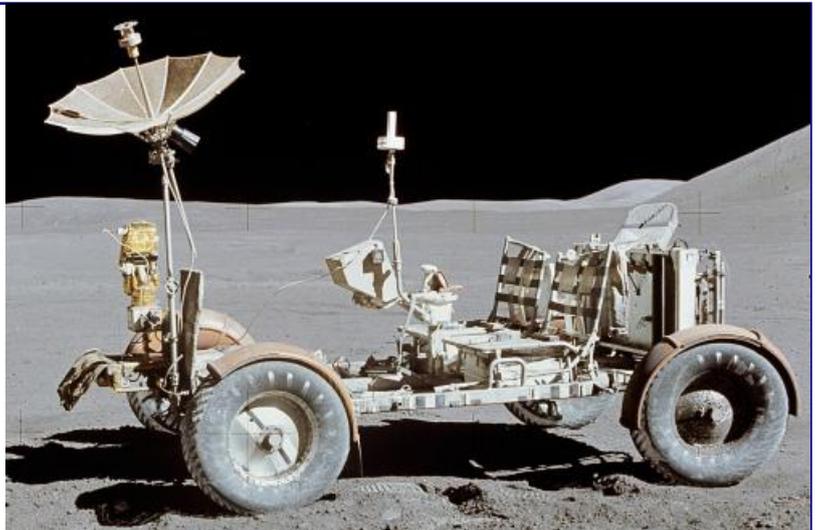
Grounds and Garden Maintenance



Locals have mixed feelings about **the chinook**, a warm and dry west wind that blows on the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains. Known as the 'snow eater', it helps thaw frozen landscapes and warm frost-bitten hands.

But it also triggers migraines, known locally as 'chinook headaches'. The wind is named after a Native American tribe who believed that the warm air blew on the ridges to warn or send a message to people.

Apollo 15 landed this moon rover in 1971. Not so much a robot, the astronauts sat on board and drove it like a golf buggy



Is there life on Mars?

The first manned moon landing was in the summer of 1969 just after my family took over the Stiperstones Inn. Moon rovers from both the Soviet Union and the USA arrived over the next few years. The computing power of the early space modules and rovers compared unfavourably with that in your microwave oven.

I watched the 'Perseverance' moon landing the other night. The technology did not look that different from 50 years earlier. The computing power has now risen to that of a cheap smartphone although the whole computer system has been specially designed to withstand the high levels of radiation found on the Martian surface. What was interesting though was the fact that now that the computer had guided the rover safely to its destination it would be completely reprogrammed from earth to perform all the exploration and surveillance tasks that are now scheduled.

The rover will collect about 30 samples of rock about the size of a piece of chalk. These will be sealed into special airtight containers to avoid any contamination. The containers will be left in a neat little pile on the Martian surface. In six years time a little buggy with its own take off rocket will land on Mars, pick up the samples and blast off into orbit around the red planet. A third space vehicle will then be sent from earth to collect the samples and bring them back home. They maybe here by 2032, not sure if I will still be around, but I am sure there will be an article in the newsletter about it.



Perseverance landed safely February 18th 2021, beaming pictures back to earth the same day.



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WHEN THE WIND BLOWS (Traditional)

Once there lived a farmer who owned a land along the coast of the Atlantic ocean. Even after letting out several advertisements for recruitment to take care of his farm, no one seemed to sign up for it.

People were reluctant to work along the Atlantic, it had frequent raging storms. These storms were cruel, violent and destroyed every building and crop-field they touched.

After months of advertising and request refusals, a man approached the farmer for the job to take care of the farm.

“Do you have any skills or experience to work on a farm like this?” the farmer asked him.

“Well, I may not have enough experience, but I can sleep when the wind blows”, replied the man.

Although the farmer wasn't much convinced by the man's answer, the farmer was desperate to have someone to help him on the field that he hired him anyway. The man worked well around the farm. The farmer was pretty satisfied with the man.

Then one stormy night, the wind howled waking the farmer. The farmer immediately got off his bed, grabbed a lantern, and headed towards the quarter where his helper was sleeping.

“Wake up” the farmer yelled, throwing the soundly sleeping man off the bed- “A storm is coming. Tie things down before they get blown away”.

The man sat up and said- “No sir. I told you, I can sleep when the wind blows.”

The farmer turned red with fury after listening to this. He controlled all his will to fire the man because at the moment it was more important to secure his fields and barn that to argue with his helper. The farmer ran out to tie the things up and was surprised by what he saw.

All of the haystacks were covered with tarpaulins. The chickens were in the coops, the cows were in the barn, the doors were closed and barred, and the shutters were firmly secured. Everything was tied down so that nothing could be blown away.

The farmer smiled as he comprehended what his employee had said. Now, he understood what the man meant when he said he could sleep when the wind blows. He went off to bed and slept soundly through the storm.

Maybe we will all be more prepared next time. - Editor

Explosive Remains in South Shropshire



On a recent walk with some friends we came across the ruins of a round building with concentric walls near the Grit Farm. My historical friend Mike Nurse identified it as a dynamite store. I have known about the well preserved square example at the Upper Works and I believe there is another one below Buxton Wood. In 'Never on a Sunday' Emily Griffiths recalls how as a child on a bicycle she would fetch 10 pounds of gelignite shoved under her jumper from the store at Tankerville. 'Old' George Evans remembered how many of the miners kept a supply together with fuses on top of the grandfather clock!

Mike's curiosity was piqued and he has sent this piece for our newsletter.

The Round Powder House at White Grit Mike Nurse 12/02/21

A little way up the much mined hill east of the Minsterley to Bishop's Castle road, near its junction with the Priest Weston road, is a round powder house, or explosives magazine building (Grid Ref. SO321980). It is by the footpath I was taking with friends walking from Mitchell's Fold to The Bog last year, and is within a mile of the fine remains of four mine engine houses - White Grit just to the west over the road, Old Grit and East Grit (Gritt Farm), across the hill to the east, and Ladywell Mine to the north east on Shelve Hill. Michael Shaw dates mining here as commencing possibly in the Roman period and continuing until the 1940's. (Michael Shaw, 'The Lead, Copper and Barytes Mines of Shropshire', Logaston Press 2009, pp.149-152)

It is a striking and interesting historical building, even though, unfortunately, in a state of serious decay, with a large ivy tree growing from it. About 20 feet in diameter, it consists of two substantial concentric circular rough stone walls with a passage way between. The outer wall had a single doorway, and the inner wall a single doorway into the passage way at the rear, so that it was necessary for miners collecting explosives to walk around the curving passage to reach the explosives store entrance. It has been suggested that there was a 'serving hatch' in this inner doorway (Adrian Pearce, 'Field Guide to Stiperstones Mines' Shropshire Mines Trust, 2010, p.47). The man giving out the explosives from this central store should have worn special clothes and footwear, whilst miners in pit clothes and heavy boots were excluded. Parts of the walls now stand to 6 foot, elsewhere less, but the plan is clear. The ruin is roofless but a plan and elevation drawing in the Shropshire Archives shows a shallow conical roof of slates or stone slabs covering the whole building.

Michael Shaw has suggested that the roof would have been of lightweight construction, so that in the event of an explosion 'the roof would blow off and the walls protect anything at ground level.' (Michael Shaw, *ibid.* p. 157). Whilst this is sound in principle, many such roofs were not lightweight. A substantial roof helped to ensure the explosives stayed dry, and security to prevent theft was a priority. The 1860's to 1880's was the period of the 'Fenian outrages' - attacks and bombing by Irish independence fighters. In World War Two, in France, Maquis thefts of dynamite demonstrated the vulnerability of lightweight roofs of mine magazines.



This elegant and practical structure is not unique as a round powder house: online search shows there are a few in the north east of the USA, and one in Ireland, but it is uncommon and seems to be the only one in Shropshire. Mines powder houses were built following regulatory legislation - the Gunpowder Act 1860 and the Explosives Act 1875, and Michael Shaw dates this building as 'after' the 1875 Act (Michael Shaw, *ibid.*, p. 157) which laid down detailed new requirements for magazines covering their construction, location, licensing, inspection, rules for operation, and a regime for enforcement.

The provisions in the 1875 Act, and Orders, make it possible to flesh out the stone ruins on the hillside, and see them, in the mind's eye, as they were. The building had to be well and substantially built of brick, stone or concrete, having a strong and lockable door to prevent unauthorised entry 'by evil-disposed persons'. The inside of the store should be lined or covered (wood recommended for the walls) 'to prevent exposure of iron and steel and prevent detaching of grit, iron or steel'. All surfaces were to be kept clean and grit free. The floor should be made of wood or of an asphalt free from grit. Iron and steel nails were to be avoided and copper and brass used. All tools used in the store should be made of 'wood, copper, or brass' or other suitable material. At the store entrance should be 'a visible boundary ... a step, or a vertical 'footboard', beyond which dirty iron-nailed boots should never pass'. Inside the store 'suitable shoes', or overshoes should be provided. These should never be placed where they could pick up grit. A 'pocketless magazine suit' was recommended for use in the store, otherwise routine checking and searching of pockets to prevent introduction of anything which might cause fire or explosion, such as 'lucifer matches'. All this was an integral part of the life of the powder house.

Finally, conjectures as to why it is round - because a round structure has a larger floor area than a square for a given wall length; or because walls, without corners, can be built more readily where the stones available are poor (in East Anglia local stone is poor and there are many round church towers)? Certainly the curving walls provide an easy sheltered access to the store. This fascinating building deserves conservation.

From "Never on a Sunday" about the gelignite in the Tankerville Store

"It was only dangerous if it was damp. The detonators were kept in a separate place. There was a steel sheeted door then three lots of doors. No matches or cigarettes were allowed and everything had to be brass so there were no sparks"

Emily Griffiths

A TALE OF TWO KITTIES

Rosa McCombe

CHAPTER 4: LEAVING OMAN

I had bought an old farmhouse in Spain which needed renovation and I was hoping to retire there. As I had committed to do a couple of consultancies in China and Taiwan on leaving Oman, I had to temporarily leave the kitties in a cattery. I had my vet see to all the paperwork and pet passports and arrange for them to be put on a flight to Spain in a few weeks' time.

On the day the kitties were arriving I left Southern Spain at 6a.m to drive 5 hours to Madrid Airport. It was a dark, foggy morning and as I had only been in Spain a couple of days I had hired a car for the journey. I needed to collect the kitties before 2p.m because the offices would be closed between 2-5 for lunch.

I arrived in Madrid and spent a further 45 minutes trying to find the service road to the goods section of the airport. I drove up and down the city ring road getting more and more frustrated. When I eventually found it, I was directed to an office block. Here I was sent back and forth trying to find the vet who would check the kitties and hopefully release them. She wanted paying but there was a mistake on my bank card, I was only allowed 30 euros a day. I had spent that on petrol. She took me to a bank on site. As I had only just arrived in the country there were a number of things not yet in place but after much discussion I got some money.

Everything had taken so long and I was worried I wouldn't get to collect the kitties in time. I had to get more papers signed and again was sent back and forth being told I was in the wrong office, time and time again. I was near to tears when eventually I was able to go to the final office to get the note signed to take to the receiving depot. It was 1.45 when I reached this office and found the door locked, on the notice outside it gave the hours 10-2 and 5-9. They had closed early! I lost it. I ranted and raved as I stormed along the corridor. I knew very little Spanish at that time but kept hissing 'hombre, no bien', 'hombre, no bien', ('man, no good') fiercely. Two men who were talking in the passageway saw my distress and asked if they could help. I told them my tale and complained that the final office had closed early. They came to check and then one of them kindly offered to sign the note, probably illegally and probably to get rid of this hysterical English woman. I had 5 minutes to drive to the other end of the service road, find the department and collect the kitties. I made it with seconds to spare. I was so relieved to see the two cat carriers coming out along the conveyer belt.

I now had to negotiate the Madrid spaghetti junction and find the right way home. I

got to the motorway and found the number of the right carriageway but there was no indication to say if it was going North or South. A few minutes later I recognised some of the names and knew it was going North, I wanted South. Ten minutes later I was heading South. Four hours later I was relieved to see TO ANDALUCIA on the signs and five and a half hours later I entered my village of Santa Maria de Nieva.

The kitties had been silent all the way to their new home. I talked to them constantly but I think they were quite stunned after their mammoth trip. However they were very resilient and by the next day it was as if we had always lived there. They had lots of land to investigate and Tom Bombadil would wander happily but Goldberry preferred to stay close to home.

The road into the village ran on one side of the house and there were hills and ramblas on the other side of this road. My land on the other side of the house ran down to fields of almond orchards and olive groves. There were high mountains beyond which had snowy tops in the winter.

I had the house renovated and although it wasn't to a great standard it had taken most of my savings. I realised that my dream of retiring early was not to be. I started looking for another job and was accepted for one in Libya. I had to go back to Madrid to get a visa, but that is another story.

The kitties and I had to fly to Stuttgart and then get a Swiss Air flight to Bengazi, Libya. We had a two hour wait in Stuttgart so on arrival I checked at the reception that the kitties were ok and looked after. I was told they were fine and had water etc. However as I was waiting on the shuttle bus to board the plane an attendant called me over. She apologised and told me that the kitties had not left Spain, they had been found on the conveyer belt which should have taken them to be loaded on to the plane. The next flight they could be put on was to Paris and they would arrive in Libya in two days. My poor kitties.

We were happily reunited but only stayed in Libya for one eventful year.

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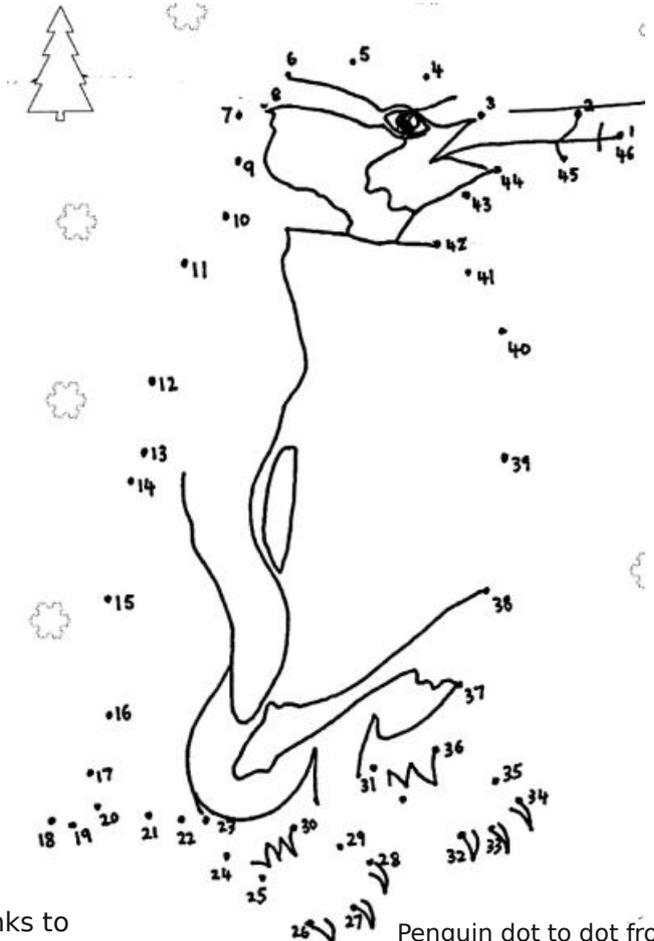
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 A T A T Y A C V Q S P O O N F U L O F S U G A R

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Uncle Arthur's Jokes

Speaking of sight, it reminds me of me brother. He's got a nice cushy job in a watch factory. What does he do? *He stands about all day and makes faces!*

Speaking of names, I know a man with a wooden leg named Smith. *What's the name of his other leg?*

Speaking of weather, the other day when it was so cold, a friend of mine went to buy some long underwear,. The shopkeeper said to him, "How long do you want it?" and my friend said, "*Well, from about September to March.*"

Yesterday when the lady next door answered the bell, there was a man there. And the man said to the lady, "I'm terribly sorry. I just ran over your cat." And then the man said, "I'd like to replace your cat." and the lady said, "*That's all right with me, but how are you at catching mice?*"

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During this lockdown period, our coffee and chat meets fortnightly online as well as groups, such as play reading, are continuing their sessions too. Nothing stops our u3a from meeting, greeting and learning.

Contact Susan Lockwood at susanlockwood345@btinternet.com or phone 01743 791092/07854 110271.

Heather's Report for February 2021

Dear All,

GRITTING: The bad weather has returned and also problems related to gritting. The main problem it seems is that the Council's contractors use the same people to grit and try to repair the roads. So if it freezes they have to switch repair gangs over to do the gritting which doesn't always happen smoothly.

When we have diversion routes put in place for a road closure which is normally gritted then the diversion route should be gritted too. Let me know if this does not happen.

Do get in touch if you are having problems or if your grit bin is empty.

NEWS UPDATES: I regularly send our news bulletins via email on current conditions including information on services, the law, grants etc. If you would like to be added to the list of recipients please contact me on the email/phone number below.

POSTAL VOTES: The Government has decided to press ahead with elections for Shropshire Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner on 6th May irrespective of what the health the situation looks like. If you would like to vote by post, contact elections@shropshire.gov.uk or 0345 678 9015

MOVING BACK TO MY HOME: Eleven months after the fire in my house I will be moving back in towards the end of this month/beginning of March. Please bear with me if my responses aren't as quick as normal during the move.

Best wishes Heather Kidd,
Shropshire Councillor for Chirbury and Worthen Division,
heather.kidd@shropshire.gov.uk 07980635518
www.heatherkidd.org Facebook too!

Down dropt the breeze,
the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to
break
The silence of the sea!

Day after day, day after
day,
We stuck, nor breath nor
motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.
S T Coleridge
The Ancient Mariner

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A gentle wind followed the rain clouds, driving them on northward, a wind that softly clashed the drying corn. A day went by and the wind increased, steady, unbroken by gusts. The dust from the roads fluffed up and spread out and fell on the weeds beside the fields, and fell into the fields a little way. Now the wind grew strong and hard and it worked at the rain crust in the corn fields. Little by little the sky was darkened by the mixing dust, and the wind felt over the earth, loosened the dust, and carried it away.
from the Grapes of Wrath - Steinbeck

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Do you remember any of these classics. Who put the wind in your sails?

- 1 The Wind Cries Mary 1967
- 2 Wind Beneath My Wings 1988
- 3 Summer Wind 1972
- 4 Blowin in the Wind 1963
- 5 The Wayward Wind 1956
- 6 Candle in the Wind 1973
- 7 Mandolin Wind 1971
- 8 Dust in the wind 1978
- 9 Windy 1967
- 10 She's Like the Wind 1986

An easy and a tricky one
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	2		5				9	
		6	9		7			
8			7					
7				8				4
					3			1
			8		9	5		
	6				5		3	
5				1			2	

Wind chimes

When ten thin tinkling tin things twinkle
and tingle in the wind
twinkling and tinkling the ten thin tin
things make a tingling
tintinnabulation of joy

- ANSWERS**
- 1 Jimi Hendrix
 - 2 Bette Midler
 - 3 Seals and Croft
 - 4 Peter Paul & Mary (Bob Dylan)
 - 5 Gogi Grant / Tex Ritter
 - 6 Elton John
 - 7 Rod Stewart
 - 8 Kansas
 - 9 The Association
 - 10 Patrick Swayze

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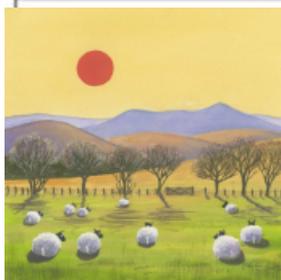
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Email: michaelwanless5@gmail.com



Your Safer Neighbourhood Team are:

SGT 2382 Damien Kelly
PC 21056 Matt Howell
PCSO 6160 Shaun Culliss
SC 39516 Amber Jones

Police contact numbers

Please note - Bishops Castle Team voicemail:
01743 264777 has now been disconnected by HQ

Emergency: 999
Non Emergency: 101
Crime stoppers: 0800 555 111

Website: www.westmercia.police.uk

Twitter: @SouthShropCops

Facebook:

Bishops Castle Policing Team Rural Watch

Latest Crime News

Burglary in Worthen Persons unknown have entered the garden and used an unknown implement to smash a small panel window on the garage that has enabled them to reach inside and unfasten the main large side opening window. Unknown if entry gained Nothing stolen

Malicious communications in Hemford
Assault in Chirbury

Criminal damage in Snailbeach Tile thrown at house window causing it to smash. Tile believed to have been removed off shed next to the property
Overnight 22nd January – 23rd January
Stone thrown at same house window causing a hole during the evening of 17th January 15:00 – 20:00

Theft from motor vehicle in Worthen 2x Stihl SH181 Chainsaws and a Stihl SH45 hedge cutter removed from boot of insecure vehicle

Burglary in Marton Outbuildings entered at a derelict property, believed petrol strimmer was stolen

Key Phone Numbers

NHS Help

111

Worthen Medical

01743 891 401

Pontesbury Medical

01743 790 325

Shropshire Council

0345 678 900

Care in the Community

0121 318 5138

Citizen’s Advice

0344 499 1100

Rural Support

0300 123 2825

Samaritans (Free)

116 123

Western Power

(Power Cut)

105

Severn Trent

(emergency)

0800 783 4444

British Gas

0800 111 999

Universal Credit

0800 328 5644

Child Benefit

0300 200 3100

Pensions

0800 731 0469

HMRC Covid 19 support

0800 024 1222

Minsterley Motors

Telephone 01743 791208

552/553 Shrewsbury to Bishops Castle

Monday to Friday

Notes (SCH - School Days Only)													SCH			SCH			
BUS STATION, Stand N	07:35	08:10	08:50	10:05	10:25	11:00	12:00	12:30	13:30	14:00	14:35		15:45	16:25	16:25	17:00	17:40	18:10	
Cophome Rd, opp Barracks	07:42	08:17	08:57	10:12	10:32	11:07	12:07	12:37	13:37	14:07	14:42		15:52	16:32	16:32	17:07	17:47	18:17	
Shrewsbury Hospital			09:02	10:17	10:37		12:12	12:42	13:42	14:12			15:57	16:37		17:12	17:52		
Radbrook Oakfield Rd Jct	07:47	08:22				11:12					14:47				16:37			18:22	
Hanwood, Caradoc View Jct	07:52	08:27	09:07	10:22	10:42	11:17	12:17	12:47	13:47	14:17	14:52		16:02	16:42	16:42	17:17	17:57	18:27	
Hanwood, Cock Inn	07:54	08:29	09:09	10:24	10:44	11:19	12:19	12:49	13:49	14:19	14:54		16:04	16:44	16:44	17:19	17:59	18:29	
Lea Cross, adj Jct	07:57	08:32	09:12	10:27	10:47	11:22	12:22	12:52	13:52	14:22	14:57		16:07	16:47	16:47	17:22	18:02	18:32	
Mary Webb		08:38 SCH										15:20							
Pontesbury, opp Shop	08:03	08:38	09:18	10:33	10:53	11:28	12:28	12:58	13:58	14:28	15:03	15:21	16:13	16:53	16:53	17:28	18:08	18:38	
Minsterley, adj crown & sceptre	08:07	08:42	09:22	10:37	10:57	11:32	12:32	13:02	14:02	14:32	15:07	15:27	16:17	16:57	16:57	17:32	18:12	18:42	
Plox Green, Crossroads	08:09			10:39	10:59	11:34	12:34	13:04	14:04	14:34		15:29	16:19	16:59	16:59		18:14	18:44	
Snailbeach, Village Hall					11:01				14:06			15:32	16:21		17:01			18:46	
Stiperstones, adj Pub					11:05				14:10			15:35	16:25		17:05			18:50	
Hope	08:15			10:45			12:40			14:40					17:05			18:20	
Gravels	08:19			10:49			12:44			14:44					17:09			18:24	
White Grit, Jct	08:23			10:53			12:48			14:48					17:13			18:28	
Llan Turn Jct	08:27			10:57			12:52			14:52					17:17			18:32	
Lydham Glebe Meadow Jct	08:31			11:01			12:56			14:56					17:21			18:36	
Bishops Castle Salop Street jct	08:33			11:03			12:58			14:58					17:23			18:38	
Bishops Castle, adj Boars Head	08:35			11:05			13:00			15:00					17:25			18:40	

From 6th January 2020

552/553 Bishops Castle to Shrewsbury

Monday to Friday

Notes (SCH - School Days Only)																			
Bishops Castle, opp Boars Head									09:40			12:20		13:30				15:40	
Bishops Castle Salop Street Jct									09:42			12:22		13:32				15:42	
Lydham Glebe Meadow Jct									09:46			12:26		13:36				15:46	
Llan Turn Jct									09:50			12:30		13:40				15:50	
White Grit, Jct									09:54			12:34		13:44				15:54	
Gravels									09:57			12:37		13:47				15:57	
Hope									10:00			12:40		13:50				16:00	
Stiperstones, opp Pub	06:50	07:20	07:50			08:23					11:15				14:35			16:50	
Snailbeach, Village Hall	06:54	07:24	07:54			08:27					11:19				14:39			16:54	
Plox Green, Crossroads	06:56	07:26	07:56	07:56	08:30					10:06	11:21	11:55	12:46	13:05	13:56	14:41		16:06	16:53
Minsterley, opp crown & sceptre	06:58	07:28	07:58	07:58	08:33	08:50	09:25	10:08	11:23	11:57	12:48	13:07	13:58	14:43	15:10	16:08	16:58	17:35	
Pontesbury, Hall Bank	07:03	07:33	08:03	08:03	08:37	08:55	09:30	10:13	11:28	12:02	12:53	13:12	14:03	14:48	15:15	16:13	17:03	17:40	
Mary Webb						08:40									15:28 SCH				
Lea Cross, Opp Jct	07:08	07:38	08:08	08:08		09:00	09:35	10:18	11:33	12:07	12:58	13:17	14:08	14:53	15:30	16:18	17:08	17:45	
Hanwood, Cock Inn	07:11	07:41	08:11	08:11		09:03	09:38	10:21	11:36	12:10	13:01	13:20	14:11	14:56	15:33	16:21	17:11	17:48	
Hanwood, Caradoc View Jct	07:13	07:43	08:13	08:13		09:05	09:40	10:23	11:38	12:12	13:03	13:22	14:13	14:58	15:35	16:23	17:13	17:50	
Radbrook Oakfield Rd Jct	07:18		08:18								12:17							15:40	
Shrewsbury Hospital		07:48		08:18		09:10	09:45	10:28	11:43		13:08	13:27	14:18	15:03		16:28	17:18	17:55	
Cophome Rd, adj Barracks	07:23	07:53	08:23	08:23		09:15	09:50	10:33	11:48	12:22	13:13	13:32	14:23	15:08	15:45	16:33	17:23	18:00	
Bus Station Stand N	07:30	08:00	08:30	08:30		09:22	09:57	10:40	11:55	12:29	13:20	13:39	14:30	15:15	15:52	16:40	17:30	18:07	

From 6th January 2020





Saturday

08:00	08:35	10:05	10:45	12:30	13:45	14:45	15:40	17:00	17:40
08:07	08:42	10:12	10:52	12:37	13:52	14:52	15:47	17:07	17:47
08:12	08:47	10:17	10:57	12:42	13:57	14:57	15:52	17:12	17:52
08:17	08:52	10:22	11:02	12:47	14:02	15:02	15:57	17:17	17:57
08:19	08:54	10:24	11:04	12:49	14:04	15:04	15:59	17:19	17:59
08:22	08:57	10:27	11:07	12:52	14:07	15:07	16:02	17:22	18:02
08:28	09:03	10:33	11:13	12:58	14:13	15:13	16:08	17:28	18:08
08:32	09:07	10:37	11:17	13:02	14:17	15:17	16:12	17:32	18:12
08:34	09:09	10:39	11:21	13:04	14:19	15:19	16:16	17:38	18:14
	09:12				14:21			17:40	
	09:15				14:25			17:45	
08:40		10:45				15:25			18:20
08:44		10:49				15:29			18:24
08:48		10:53				15:33			18:28
08:52		10:57				15:37			18:32
08:56		11:01				15:41			18:36
08:58		11:03				15:43			18:38
09:00		11:05				15:45			18:40

Saturday

	07:30		09:30		12:15			15:50	
	07:32		09:32		12:17			15:52	
	07:36		09:36		12:21			15:56	
	07:40		09:40		12:25			16:00	
	07:44		09:44		12:29			16:04	
	07:47		09:47		12:32			16:07	
	07:50		09:50		12:35			16:10	
07:05		09:20						14:45	
07:09		09:24						14:49	
07:11	07:56	09:26	09:56	11:40	12:41	14:00	14:51	16:16	16:55
07:13	07:58	09:28	09:58	11:42	12:43	14:02	14:53	16:18	16:57
07:18	08:03	09:33	10:03	11:47	12:48	14:07	14:58	16:23	17:02
07:23	08:08	09:38	10:08	11:52	12:53	14:12	15:03	16:28	17:07
07:26	08:11	09:41	10:11	11:55	12:56	14:15	15:06	16:31	17:10
07:28	08:13	09:43	10:13	11:57	12:58	14:17	15:08	16:33	17:12
07:33	08:18	09:48	10:18	12:02	13:03	14:22	15:13	16:38	17:17
07:38	08:23	09:53	10:23	12:07	13:08	14:27	15:18	16:43	17:22
07:45	08:30	10:00	10:30	12:14	13:15	14:34	15:25	16:50	17:29

745 Mondays and Fridays only

Pontesbury to Clun 745 A		Ludlow to Clun 745 B	
Pontesbury Shop	08:50	Ludlow Assembly Rooms	13:15
Minsterley	08:55	Craven Arms	13:30
Hope	09:00	Long Meadowend	13:35
Gravels	09:03	Aston on Clun	13:37
White Grit	09:05	Lydbury North	13:50
Lydham	09:10	Little Brampton	14:00
Bishops Castle	09:15	Clunton	14:02
Colebatch	09:20	Clun	14:05
Clun	09:30		
Clun to Ludlow 745 B		Clun to Pontesbury 745 A	
Clun	09:35	Clun	14:10
Clunton	09:38	Colebatch	14:20
Little Brampton	09:40	Bishops Castle	14:25
Lydbury North	09:50	Lydham	14:30
Aston on Clun	10:03	White Grit	14:35
Long Meadowend	10:05	Gravels	14:37
Craven Arms	10:10	Hope	14:40
Ludlow Assembly Rooms	10:25	Minsterley	14:45
		Pontesbury	14:50

Does not run on Bank Holiday except Good Friday

775 Tuesdays only

Pontesbury to Bishops Castle 775 A		Newtown to Bishops Castle 775 B	
Pontesbury Shop	09:30	Newtown	13:50
Minsterley	09:35	Kerry	14:00
Plox Green	09:38	Sarn	14:10
Hope	09:40	Blue Bell	14:15
Gravels	09:45	Church Stoke	14:20
White Grit	09:48	Bishops Castle	14:35
Llan Turn	09:51		
Bromleys Mill	09:55		
Lydham	09:57		
Bishops Castle	10:00		
Bishops Castle to Newtown 775 B		Bishops Castle to Pontesbury 775 A	
Bishops Castle	10:05	Bishops Castle	14:40
Church Stoke	10:20	Lydham	14:43
Blue Bell	10:25	Bromleys Mill	14:45
Sarn	10:30	Llan Turn	14:49
Kerry	10:40	White Grit	14:52
Newtown	10:50	Gravels	14:55
		Hope	15:00
		Plox Green	15:02
		Minsterley	15:05
		Pontesbury	15:10

Temporary Post Office
Stiperstones Inn
12.15 to 2.15
Tuesdays only



The Wind, Too, Can Change Direction

Original poem by Noshi Gillani

Translated by Nukhbah Langah

Do you know?

The wind, too, can change direction

The birds might leave their nests at dawn

And forget to find their way back

Sometimes in spring the tree branches out

Before autumn the leaves separate

Like the paths my life takes

Blown this way and that like dust

The strange smile taking shape on your lips

Says 'So, what's new?'

Of everything in the story, you are new

Do you know?

But how could you know this?

Your encampment of love and faith

Could blow away like dust

The wind, too, can change direction

