

THE TOWN'S GOLD STANDARD AWARD



Town Council Chair Debbie Brown and Clerk Matt Sheehan with the Gold Standard certificate.

The achievements of the Town Council in raising standards of operation and introducing new ideas to move Cleobury forward has been acknowledged with the presentation of a Quality Gold certificate. One of only three councils in Shropshire to achieve this, they received the award at their March 2nd meeting. More details inside on Page 19.

THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

We live in strange, worrying times, with established social events and day to day habits being called to a halt. Schools closed and parents looking at how to occupy young minds and keep them thinking, vital fund raising events like the annual Pound the Bounds walk in support of the County Air Ambulance cancelled, leaving a big gap in their fund raising. A clear warning to vulnerable 70 year olds to stay indoors, which cramps the style of many fit and vigorous people. But with such an invisible threat in the air and taking thousands of lives, it would be folly to ignore warnings.

Let's be positive about this, as the Clarion normally tries to be. The effect this dreadful threat will have on this community is to bring out one of our great strengths - the willingness to help others. I spoke to Town Clerk Matt Sheehan on Monday March 16th and he was preparing for a conference with

Katja Ward and others to set up a collaborative group to help those who will need it in the months ahead. At that time, there was already a list of 20 people who had asked how they might help others. A remarkable demonstration of community spirit.

We will have help with shopping and delivering, and making regular phone calls to over 70s with a medical need to self-isolate and no other help in place. And that includes covering an established shopper if they fall ill.

The group will be based in the Cleobury Country Centre in Love Lane and the first point of contact is Matt Sheehan on his council mobile: 07483 112 290, matthew.sheehan@cleobury.org.uk, who will pass on details to the volunteer coordinators.

There are posters around the town and leaflets with full information at most outlets for such information. As I write these words there is no immediate threat, but we are ready to help anyone in need. Take care and stay safe. JR

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The Cleobury Clarion, April 2020

Volume Fifteen - Edition One



Winning Wedding Florist, Claire
Bradley - See Page 9



Where would you take your
Ferrari to breakfast?
Britain's oldest motor racing
venue, course.
See Page 27



Luxury comfort and warm care
in the Shropshire countryside.
Doddington Lodge is a very
special place.
See Page 61.

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THE CHILDE ENDOWMENT FUND

Students residing in the parishes of Cleobury Mortimer, Neen Sollars, Milson, Coreley, Hopton Wafers, Farlow, Wheathill, Aston Botterill, Stottesdon, Kinlet and Neen Savage are invited by the Trustees to make applications to the above fund for financial assistance to help further their studies.

Details and application forms are obtained from Lloyds Bank, Cleobury Mortimer, Lacon Childe School, or The Reverend Justin Parker, Clerk to the Trustees of the Fund at Adams House, Birmingham Road, Kidderminster DY10 2SA. Closing date June 24th.

Rosemary Hinwood

DOG FOULING

As a dog owner, I always clear up after my dog and make sure I have the 'poo bags' with me when I take him out. The majority of owners in Cleobury do clean up after their dogs; it is the minority who do not. The problem is these people who simply walk away and leave their dogs' mess. They must go out late at night or early in the morning, when there are not a lot of people about. They would

be the first to complain if they trod in the mess. Perhaps the answer would be 'Dog Patrols' of dog owners walking around in pairs for safety to see if we can stop the mess. I for one would gladly do this.

No mention is ever made about cats' 'little parcels' not being cleared up. Where I live there are several and I get fed up of finding mess left in the grass, or more annoyed when they have dug up plants and scattered earth all over path and plants. I regularly check, because if there is cat mess my dog goes straight to it. Cats don't mess in their own territory, so owners cannot clean up after them

Carole Evans

THE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Members' question time on March 9th was very successful. There were lots of interesting questions posed by all who attended and by one member unable to be there. We are lucky to have some very knowledgeable members who were able to give much appreciated advice. Everybody felt they had benefitted from the many suggestions and answers and we look forward to doing it

again in the future. Our Spring flower competition was won by Jenny Vanderhook with a lovely selection of Spring flowers and foliage.

Unfortunately the current Coronavirus may prohibit us from holding some meetings and our usual plant sale in May. Members please read the next Newsletter for further updates.

Liz Smurthwaite

GOOD, SENSIBLE ACTION

The Sports and Social Club on Love Lane is following the officially recommended action and closing its doors until the coronavirus problem is over, however long that takes.

It's a very popular venue and renowned for its fund raising charity evenings. We can add common sense and social responsibility to that list.

They've used their regular half page advert to explain their reasoning and you can read it on Page 52, their familiar spot.

SPOT-ON QUOTE

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JIM WRIGGLESWORTH

Last Christmas Eve, after a period of ill health, the Vice President of Far Forest and Rock Legion Branch Jim Wrigglesworth, sadly passed away. Jim was a long serving Legion Member and held the post of Senior Branch Standard Bearer for a number of years.

Born in Herefordshire his working life began as a steam locomotive fireman on Western Region of British Railways. With the demise of steam, Jim and his family moved to the Kidderminster area where he became a bus driver with Midland Red, where his kind and considerate nature were appreciated by the many people who came into contact with him.

To support Jim's family and friends, members of the Far Forest and Rock Branch were able to arrange for a number of Legion and Veteran Association Standards to be present at the Funeral. The County Chairman of the Legion and his wife were also in attendance.

Nigel Caldicott

CLOWS TOP GARDENING CLUB

April – Easter a great time to venture outdoors to have some fun. National Gardening Week this year is from Monday April 27th to Sunday May 3rd.

Jobs to Do This Month

Clip back lavender so it is in neat mounds.

Look out for red lily beetles and pick them off before they do any damage.

Dig up and move emerging self-seeders to preferred positions.

Plant out sweet peas when the soil is dry enough to work it.

Sow outdoor vegetable seeds when soil is workable.

Add water lilies and marginal plants in ponds and bog gardens.

Introduce biological controls in the greenhouse.

Pot on growing seedlings regularly to keep them vigorous.

Prepare climbing and runner bean beds and set up supports.

Use fleece to protect young growth from late frosts.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday April 22nd and the speaker for the evening will be 'Ingrid Millington' on 'The Dry Garden'.

Pauline Bowen

NIGHTINGALE NURSING FUND

Kidderminster Male Voice Choir recently met the trustees of the Nursing Fund at Ashleys Café in Cleobury Mortimer to kindly hand over a donation of £200.00 for the charity. This will go towards paying for care for the patients of our doctor's surgeries that find themselves in a medical crisis or emergency. We expressed our grateful thanks to the Choir at such a kind gesture.

They have offered to perform at a concert for us to raise further funds for this worthwhile charity. Watch this space.

Rosemary Abbiss

THE READING GROUP

A notice from Shirehall

In light of the coronavirus outbreak, we are aware that a number of reading groups have already made the decision to suspend their meetings due to

advice from the government concerning non-essential social contact. Shropshire Libraries have therefore made the decision to suspend the reading group service until further notice. This means no new sets of reading group books will be sent out to our libraries or will be available to collect from Library Headquarters at Shirehall.

BUT OUR LIBRARY STAYS OPEN

The fact that Cleobury's library is located within the Cleobury Country Centre does have some strong advantages. At this troubled time, when staffing public facilities to keep them open is a big headache as staff have children off school, our library will remain open because Clare Todd says the Centre is not closing. In fact, it will be the base for the Community Support Plan that has been set up to help those in need.

More than that, Clare has told us that she's willing to collect or deliver books for library users if they will contact her on CM 272300 and explain what they need.

That's a good example of the service you can get at the Centre, with someone seeing a need and volunteering to do a job that's not in her employment contract. It's long been said that if you want to judge how valuable someone is in any sort of responsible position, look at what they do beyond their job specification. It's the sort of drive that makes a business or club stand out and become successful. If only they all did that....

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CLAIRE - ANOTHER CLEOBURY SUCCESS STORY

Claire Bradley is a typical rural success story, who found a love of flowers and a course at Pershore College while she was working at the Pets and Petals shop that graced the High Street. The college took her to Grade Two as a florist, but that ladder to the top ran out when the lecturer moved on and the place couldn't find a replacement.

No chance of working for her Grade Three so she just got on with the job, graduating from delivery driver cum florist to manage the shop and get in lots of practice. After maternity leave she had a break from floristry, but took a big step ten years ago, when she decided to go self employed and make her way as a floral designer, based at her home. She found people coming to her because she has such a great way of using nature's blooms to show off any occasion to best effect.

Today she's Claire Bradley Floral Design, helping out in other florists' shops as a freelance, looking after two children and the family home and getting such support from

her customers that she was a finalist wedding florist section in 'Bride' Magazine's Matrimony Wedding Awards for 2020. Based on reports from her many happy customers, the evidence of her actual work and background on her operation, Claire was named Wedding Florist of 2020.



Claire with 'Bride' Magazine's Wedding Florist of the Year trophy and a smile to match.

She's very modest and down to earth about it all. She uses the freshest flowers, with deliveries from selected English and Dutch flower wholesalers, and she likes give the blooms a chance to hydrate and regain their natural beauty before using them. Then

she'll be up at 5.00 to check them and make sure everything is just right on the wedding day. A feature in 'Bride' on Still Light Photography showed off just how good her work is.

She's very versatile, creating flowers for all occasions, running Christmas workshops and teaching recreational floristry at Kidderminster College on Wednesday evenings.

Back down to earth to talk about her family. If either of her children said they wanted to be a florist, would she encourage them? "Oh yes, I'd want them to do whatever they really wanted to do." And after ten years of working for herself and building a reputation, is she happy with that choice of self employment? As you'd expect she said: "Yes!"

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

To Dame Vera Lynn, 103 years old on March 20th. She's still singing and is remembered best as 'The Forces' Sweetheart' for her staunch work during the 1939-45 World War.

When you think that she matured when war time rationing was the norm, it says a lot about the benefits of clean and simple living. But it also means that we should regard Spam as a health food.

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CLEOBURY MORTIMER PARISH HALL

Arts Alive and Flicks In The Sticks are suspending all shows until the start of the next season in August. All being well, the programme will resume with 'Green Book', which was originally due to be shown in March

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**BRAND NEW FEATURE:
'POTHOLE OF THE
MONTH'**

News and a view from the Clarion's Pothole Consultant, specially employed at a salary of plain old fashioned nil!

Welcome to the latest 'Clarion' innovation, the 'Pothole of the Month' column which has been introduced in response to a massive reader demand (well one, anyway). As you can imagine, there is no shortage of contenders but this month's winner should be pictured somewhere here in glorious black and cream.



At the junction of the Ludlow and Vaughan Roads is April's PotM. Ideally placed for lorries to splash waiting pedestrians.

A number of possible uses (other than a pothole) have been suggested including a National Heritage Mining Centre, an outdoor swimming pool and a film set suitable for depicting the Korean War. However, Shropshire Council have given the matter a great deal of thought and have come up with a truly innovative solution. They are offering a 25 year lease on the complete pothole for a sum to be negotiated plus ground rent which will double every year, a system pioneered by various national building companies. They are marketing this opportunity by comparing it to sponsoring a flower display or hanging basket with the leaseholder having the hole named after them and, let's face it, who wouldn't jump at an opportunity like that?.

Having digested this information, you might well say 'But shouldn't potholes be an ephemeral thing, here today and gone tomorrow?' and that's where the sheer genius of the scheme becomes clear. Although such a system would never work in most other counties, Shropshire Council's unique policy of not filling in potholes, ever, will ensure a constant revenue stream stretching endlessly into the future. And

given the vast numbers of 'Leasehold Opportunities' scattered throughout South Shropshire, we could run out of sponsors before potholes. But, canny as ever, Shropshire have thought of that and will shortly be marketing a parallel scheme covering crumbling road edges. So, as you can see, your Council Tax has been well spent and must be considered a bargain (even though it is going up by the maximum allowable figure of just under 4% again next year). And, having been advised of this initiative, you will no doubt be crying 'Floreat Salopia' (or words to that effect) every time you encounter one of these 'slight undulations' on your journeys around our fair county. Happy travelling!

Steve Todd

.....
To support this drive and make sure it's not overlooked, a special certificate listing the selection for Pothole of the Month and its location will be sent to the Shropshire Council Highways Department with a copy of the page.

If we get any response, we will let you know all about it.

*Jim Reynolds
Editor*

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FROM THE BANDROOM

We travelled to Bedworth on March 8th to compete in the Midlands Area Competition. We all came off stage feeling that we had played really well, even our MD had a tear in his eye, for all the right reasons!

We were very disappointed when the results were announced. Expecting to be in the top half, we were unfortunately in the bottom half. It was as though the remarks had been thrown up in the air to get the results order, frustrating when we had listened to other bands playing the same piece and really felt that our performance was better. Never mind, there is always next year. Cleobury still has a second section band to its name.

As with everything, Corona virus will have an impact on our band. All UK bands have been advised to cease rehearsals and cancel concerts. To this effect, our first engagement of the year, our annual Spring Concert has been postponed and might turn into an Autumn concert at this rate.

If you have to self isolate which many of us will, don't forget the

power of music, whether it be radio, CD or YouTube, it can raise your spirits enormously and put a smile on your face.

Our website lists all contact details www.CMCB.org.uk, please also find us on Facebook *Katie Griffiths*

READING GROUP REPORT

Norwegian By Night by Derek B Millar is a good read. Sheldon an 82 years old American Jew and recently widowed, moves to Oslo to join his granddaughter and her husband in their apartment.

A clever crime novel drawing the reader in. It covers relationships, religion, nationalities, guilt, several wars and their after effects. There is depth to the characters and the generation interaction is quite believable. Comments were made about slow sections, though it accelerates as the book progresses. Although about a murder, it has amusing and lighter moments, so all found interest in the story. Due to current restrictions we will not be meeting for a while but will continue our reading.

Deana Kimber
01299 271754

PAVEMENT PARKING

Sadly, it doesn't stop, as anyone walking around the town can tell you. Sadder still, one area where it happens all too often is Love Lane, around Lacon Childe School and up the road a bit at the Primary School. The example pictured was very recent.



This Volvo estate car was so far onto the pavement that children had to walk out into the road to get past, as you can see. There was another car behind and across the road a car parked on the road. The effect was a chicane that would test the skill and temper of any bus driver.

The worst bit about the whole sorry incident was that the Volvo driver was waiting to collect a pupil, then drove off.

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JOB VACANCIES

Sadly, no job vacancy adverts this month, when no doubt local traders have more pressing matters on their minds.

So can we just remind you that all advertisements of job vacancies appear on this page are free of charge for a single insertion - the Fire and Rescue Service do pay for their permanent presence.

We print 1,000 copies and circulate throughout South Shropshire and the Northern fringe of Worcestershire, so our reach is quite considerable. From Ditton Priors in the North to Mable in the South and from Kinlet in the East to Knowbury and Ludlow in the West, in fact.

We're always happy to help if you are looking for good staff. A call to the editor on 01299 270642 is all it takes.



Shropshire
Fire and Rescue Service

**On-Call Firefighters Cleobury Mortimer
(Retained Duty System)**

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service is currently looking to recruit on-call firefighters at Cleobury Mortimer Fire Station. On-call firefighters agree to be available for a certain number of hours per week; they carry a pager and must be able to get to the fire station within five minutes. For this they are paid between £1,587 - £2,116 per annum (dependent on contract) as a Retaining Fee plus payments for attending incidents and drill evenings at Cleobury Mortimer fire station.

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IN PRAISE OF....

The Clarion does like to publish reports and letters that bring good news. Something we could all do with in the face of the coronavirus crisis. This fine piece of writing by 15 year old Luke Curtis was sent in by his grandmother, Jacqui Jackson, with the comment: "I would like to share with Cleobury what an amazing job Lacon Childe School achieves with their pupils."

Abandoned.

"Help I don't know where I am"

Thump, thump, thump my heart was beating, it was the only heart beating. Walls surrounded me, four walls that were once so simple but now felt like an unfamiliar maze. Light faded fast, I stood helpless in the dark with no way out, no doors and no hope. The darkness stretched further with every step that i took. Trapped I stood, not in a cage or surrounded by the walls of a prison but in my mind I was trapped by the endless thoughts of those who once lived on this street.

Running, I try to break through the wall of graphene my mind has forged, but no hope. I am locked away from those who blew away like smoke outside the walls that tower over me like mountains. I become weak as I fall to the lumpy black sidewalk.

Once this sidewalk was smooth grey stones clumped together but the cracks between were almost invisible, they sat there as rivers of humanity flooded down the street, not stopping until the sun faded into the silver silky moon. The street became almost silent as the crickets chirped with life under the illuminated light of the rusty street light as it shone on the sidewalk where a shadow laid. My shadow.

After many days of lying here I thought the cold sting of pain in my back would have disappeared,

but instead it became like white noise as it became tolerable over time. I was left here, just my mind and loving heart everything was carried away, everything but the tool of my demise which glowed with the neon red of my blood which turned rusty over time

It was Tuesday 14th of March 2002 I was walking through the silent street as man with no face approached me and forced me against the wall with a firm grip. I became delirious and froze as he shouted at me, demanding I gave him money but I froze once again, trapped in my mind, hopeless. After what felt like hours I was shoved to the ground and felt an uncomfortable warmth that took over my senses in the bottom of my back. I laid there cold as my spirt sunk below the ground I was trapped by four walls, four corners of the cold pavement stones, I was abandoned.

Luke Curtis

THE CREATIVE WRITING GROUP

We were happy to welcome a new face to our March meeting, when Marion arrived from Cle Hill, curious to see what it was all about. This time it was to see what members had built around the word 'Rejoice'.

Peter had worked it into an extract from a new book he's working on, while Vicky managed to read her offering despite young Willow's efforts to stop her. Gill Guest has been busy on the latest version of the chronicles of Neen Savage and read some intriguing notes. She was pleased when members pointed her at other local information and history. Jim seemed to rejoice at everything, but the choice of Spring as our word for April's meeting was foiled by the virus. No more meetings until further notice, when we hope corona will have been conquered. JR



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QUALITY GOLD COUNCIL AWARD

The presentation was made by Rosemary Abbiss, vice chair of the Shropshire Association of Local Councils, who explained "The Local Council Award Scheme exists to celebrate successes of the very best local councils and to provide a framework to support all local councils to meet their full potential. Cleobury Mortimer Town Council first achieved Foundation Status and then went on to prove they were worthy of Quality Status through good governance. Quality Gold was the ultimate aim."

Cleobury Mortimer is only the third local council in Shropshire to gain this prestigious award. They were praised for first becoming a Town Council, which lifted their status. There were many other achievements mentioned, like revamping the play area, and being awarded National Lottery funding to provide an outdoor gymnasium for adults. With the Police Commissioner's funding they have distributed Smart Water and have installed CCTV, which has been invaluable in the detection and deterrence of crime. They have changed the way they organise and run the Annual Town Meeting, which has been very successful and there are other local councils that are likely to follow their lead.

They have shown that they are correctly managing finances and the management and development of both staff and councillors. There is a Neighbourhood Plan coming to fruition and numerous voluntary community groups that are contributing to the life and wellbeing of the town.

That's another success story we can chalk up for Cleobury. And a big 'Thank you' goes to the volunteers who work hard on our behalf as councillors.

CATHERTON COMMON UPDATE

On March 4th an unprecedented six curlew were seen circling over Catherton Common by a Shropshire Wildlife Trust Volunteer Warden. Another warden had spotted our first curlew of the year on the previous day. The sight of six curlew is a rare and exciting event given the severe drop in numbers that this species has seen over recent years. We must make every effort we can to protect them and give them space to breed.

Other ground nesting birds, Stonechats and Snipe have been seen recently over the common, they have been accompanied by the song of the skylark on the odd sunny day, a ground nesting bird certain to have been heard, if not seen, on the common over the last few weeks.

All of these birds are easily disturbed if dogs are quartering the ground. SWT volunteer wardens have recently had to approach a number of people whose dogs have been off the lead. Please keep dogs on a short lead on the common between 1st March and 31st July. This is a legal requirement under the 2000 Crow Act.

The terrible weather we have been suffering has had some benefits for wildlife on the common as it is a lot wetter than it has been over recent years. This will benefit amphibians and reptiles along with some of the burrowing insects they feed on. The matrix of wet and dry heathland leads to an amazing variety of plants that makes Catherton Common such a special place.

Shropshire Wildlife Trust volunteers carried out a lot of cutting of gorse over the winter months. Recent research has shown that cutting is more effective than burning at reducing the vigour of gorse and therefore has a better long term impact on reducing its spread. Gorse is an important plant along with heather and other shrub species but mustn't be allowed to become dominant.

Clive Dean

Shropshire Wildlife Trust reserves officer south

The Clarion is available on the World Wide Web on the fourth of the month, complete with all advertisements.

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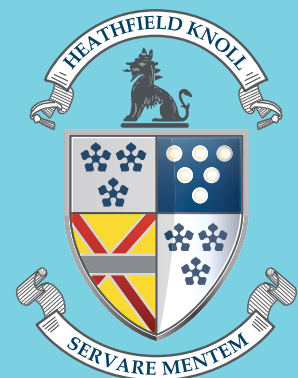
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CANCELLATIONS AND POSTPONEMENTS ADVISED

Clows Top Gardening Club have cancelled their March and April meetings

Sparc Theatre in Bishops Castle have cancelled all events until further notice. Refunds on tickets are available: 01588 630321.

The Age UK Lunch Club meetings are cancelled until the emergency is over.

The CoCo Memory Walk scheduled for April 8th is suspended. Hope to arrange for later in the year.

CoCo Coffee Mornings are also suspended. Does that mean no coffee cake? How will we survive?

The April 3rd Gin Walk is postponed until October 2nd. Ticket refunds available via the Severn Hospice Shop or you can keep them until October.

The Severn Hospice Ten Year celebration on April 1st is cancelled. It will be rearranged for later in the year.

Doddington Friendship Club will not meet again until May 5th at the earliest. Watch this space for news.

Nineveh Ridge Care Farm closed on March 20th and will re-open when the crisis is over and their clients and staff can return in safety.

The Reading Group will not be meeting until the emergency has passed and it is safe to gather again.

The Borders Classic Bike Club have suspended their monthly meetings at Blount Arms.

Hobson's Kitchen Taproom has been closed and events cancelled in view of the emergency.

Walking for Health has stopped until further notice.

The April 12th gig by 'Mumbo Jumbo' at Clows Top Victory Hall has been cancelled.

Cleobury Country Farmers' Market will not be running until the emergency is over.

The Soup Lunches at the Melville Chapel in Oretton will not be organised while there is still a threat from the coronavirus.

The Sports and Social Club will be closed until the virus problem is overcome. See their advert on Page 52.

Rock Pathfinders have cancelled all their walks until further notice. Check their website for news: www.rockpathfinders.uk

The annual Bound the Pounds around Rock parish has been cancelled, which means a gap in fund raising for the County Air Ambulance. They hope to reinstate the event later this year, subject to the coronavirus situation easing.

The Cleobury Mortimer Footpath Association have cancelled all walks and work parties until further notice.

The Creative Writing Group meetings have been cancelled until further notice. Next date will be advised in The Clarion.

This year's Cleobury Town Festival has been cancelled, the Council agreeing that their time and effort should be put direct support work in the community. Expect the Festival to be back for the summer of 2021.

The Nearly Dead Poets Society are still alive despite the threat, but are being careful and not meeting until further notice. But they will exchange jokes and have a laugh.

The Craft Fair scheduled for May 10th at Kinlet Hall has been cancelled.

Ever After Nursery has closed until further notice.



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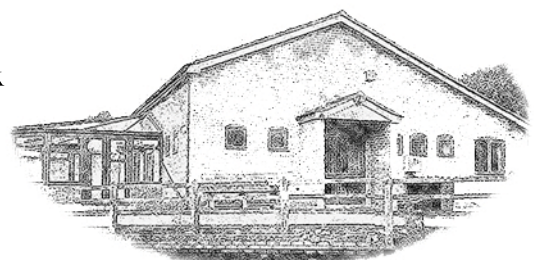
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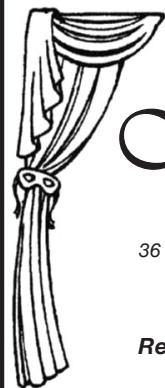
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My dear brothers and sisters,

It has become clear that as we face a national and international crisis so we need to help each other within our communities to support and encourage each other to manage the challenging situation as best we can.

All of us will face fear and anxiety from time to time but fortunately there are lots of ways in which we can make the time ahead as safe as possible.

We need to work together to create community solidarity which will make this period as good as it can be however we end up experiencing it.

Our Churches will remain open. Although public services are suspended our Churches will remain open as places for prayer and reflection.

As clergy we aim to remain as visible as possible and we will be accessible by telephone, email and other means. The Church of England by its nature is an institution for the whole community whatever beliefs people may hold. We are your Church. The Faith that we hold is founded on hope and of the triumph of light over darkness just as spring comes out of winter. God is love and those who live in love live in God.

Ashley with my clergy colleagues.

The Church Office open Tuesday & Thursday from 9.00am-2.00pm
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NINEVEH RIDGE CARE FARM CLOSURE DURING PANDEMIC

It is with a very heavy heart we have to announce that Nineveh Ridge will be closing its gates on Friday 20th March 2020.

We have clients from all over the West Midlands: Dudley, Wolverhampton, Redditch, Bromsgrove, Worcester, Kidderminster, Ludlow etc. We feel that with such a diverse client base, not to mention some really serious health conditions amongst them and the staff that we have no other option.

Nineveh Ridge has a wonderful staff of loyal care workers, and we are hoping to keep paying them while we are closed. We are hoping therefore that our clients will still be there to help us back onto our feet when we re-open.

We cannot predict yet when we will be reopening, but we will be doing improvement works to the farm in preparation for it.

We will be announcing on our website and our Facebook page when we are re-opening, as well as getting hold of each one of our clients by email.

With very best wishes,

Mark and Pippa, Richard, Sean, Rachael, Paula, Marcus, Lisa, Beth, Sharon, Anne-Marie, Kate, Tony and Claire.

HOPTON CHURCH

We were honoured to have Kidderminster Male Choir giving a concert on March 7th.

Although we were down in numbers, due to the Coronavirus fears, there was a good sized audience to appreciate the wonderful singing and entertainment.

We were also treated to a surprise guest: The Wyre Forest Young Singer of the Year 2019, 14 year old Megan Lane, who sang for us...what a fantastic voice she has.

Many thanks to the gentlemen of the Choir for your excellent repertoire which suited all ages. We had some wonderful feedback on the night and look forward to you returning when we have the new facilities installed.

Having thought about the impact of the Coronavirus scare, the PCC committee have decided to postpone the "Spring Supper" for the time being. We hope to continue with the Quiz Nights at Cleobury Mortimer Golf Club and another Barbecue

at Sproseley throughout the summer months, God willing.

Thank you to all who supported the Concert in these very difficult times.

*Marilyn Wood
(Churchwarden)*

THE FOOTPATH ASSOCIATION

For our March work party, we split into two groups and made repairs to two footbridges in Neen Savage. One at the Glen Caravan park and one to the north of Keepers Cottage on the Simon Evans Way.

Sadly, like everything else, our work party program is cancelled indefinitely. However, we do hope to use the extra free time to keep our footpath network in good shape. This by walking paths individually, carrying out a bit of clearance on the way with secateurs, shears or a slasher.

Anyone can join in, so contact us on feedback@cmfa.co.uk if you would like to take part.

Susan Sharp

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BREAKFAST AT SHELSLEY WALSH

When most people in this area talk about hill climbing, it's about the long hauls up local slopes or maybe a Welsh mountain. But there's a local tradition with a history of almost 120 years, that's very different from that.

Shelsley Walsh, across the border in Worcestershire, is the oldest motor racing venue in the country; they've been racing cars up there since 1905 and there's no sign of them stopping. There was a threat of closure a few years back, but the reaction was so big and the fund raising so effective that it's still active and growing. Thanks to the Midland Auto Club, who organise the events there.

They also open up the Stratstone Restaurant once a month through the winter and the place fills with fast cars and a few motorbikes. Steve Foster has raced there and is a regular at events, and kindly invited me to take a breakfast shortly before the coronavirus scare closed the place.

Parking was in the paddock where the racers normally gather, with BMWs and Porsches dominating and a sprinkling of

four wheeled exotica to ogle and drool over.



It's a McLaren. Super stylish, not at all quiet and certainly not affordable by most of us.

Breakfast offered a range of traditional British food, with a mug of tea to wash it down. Is there any smell to match bacon on a cold morning? It went down well as I greeted a party of old bike enthusiasts, just one couple arriving on two wheels.

We took a stroll up the first section of the winding hill, Steve pointing out the Members' Enclosure, where Midland Auto Club people have a good view of the scenic hill and the action as the cars take another run against the unforgiving clock. They race up the hill one at a time, their time deciding who's won their class. As you stand on what is quite a narrow country lane, but

minus potholes on this hallowed ground, you do wonder how the really quick drivers get up at speeds well over 100mph. I have stood and watched the sad sight of a very bent Ferrari coming back down on a low loader after a high speed visit to the bank.

This historic place has seen some stunning machinery roar up its winding course, including a 1936 six litre V16 supercharged Auto-Union Grand Prix car (600 bhp of it!) driven by Hans Stuck. It was fitted with twin rear wheels to improve grip for all that power.

80 years later his son Hans-Joachim drove a detailed replica of the car up the hill. An ace in his own right, Hans-Joachim flew in from Austria on the morning of the event and had one trip up the hill as a passenger before climbing into the Auto-Union and repeating dad's drive. A magic moment.

How much of the 2020 programme of events will be run remains to be seen, but if you like seeing historic cars in action this is one of the best places to do so. The Clarion will give you notice of all events that we are told about; the connection is a good one. I do hope this magic place will be back in action again this year. JR

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THE BRITISH LEGION

The Cleobury Branch of the Legion is now well-established with its monthly meetings in the Sports and Social Club on the second Wednesday in the month at 7.30pm.

Our first event of the year was a quiz run by Lesley Ravenscroft in the Club on February 18th, in aid of the Poppy Appeal. It raised over £200 and the final total will be higher as some donations were made and the boxes not yet opened.

On March 15th 48 people sat down to our annual luncheon. The excellent carvery was supplied by the Clocktower and we enjoyed an interesting talk by the Chairman of the Trustees of The Mercian Regiment Museum (Worcestershire), Lt Col Mark Jackson, who gave us a comparison of his two tours in Northern Ireland: in 1972 just after Bloody Sunday and in 1994 running up to the IRA ceasefire. The difference in training and procedures separated by two decades was remarkable as was the reduction in the number of incidents.

In common with other organisations, we have been affected by COVID-19 (Coronavirus) and have had to cancel our coach trip to the RAF Museum Cosford on 23 April. The VE75 concert on May 8th is also cancelled and we shall not be holding a Branch meeting in April.

Despite those cancellations we are an active branch and will be resurrecting the Cosford trip and have plans for The Royal Mint and Croome Court. We are always looking for members. You don't have to have served in the Forces to join. You can find out more about the Royal British Legion at www.britishlegion.org.uk. You can contact me on 01299 271384 or our membership Secretary Matt Sheehan on 272610.

Mike Hermolle - Branch Chairman

SCAMS - THE LOW LIFE ARE BUSY

Warnings have come in from Which? Campaigns and software arm Bitdefender about scammers using the coronavirus to try to help themselves to your money. The Bitdefender warning came via Linda Fowler, long term printer

of the Clarion and a trusted source for us.

Amongst the dirty tricks are illegitimate websites selling the supplies you can't find in pharmacies, like hand sanitisers, masks and thermometers, which you'll pay for and they won't send.

Emails from pretend doctors claiming to work for the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organisation, asking you to download attachments or to donate bitcoin. Don't!

"Donate to Fight Coronavirus" emails asking for donations to virus victims, medical staff or even Covid-19 studies. They'll nudge your conscience and your heart, then hit you in the pocket! If it looks too good to be true it probably is, but these crooks use well known names as a cover; just don't be taken in unless you are absolutely sure.

I have almost lost count of the times I've asked my computer savvy son about an email that looks alright, but puzzles me. He almost always says "It's scam, delete it" and if he doesn't he takes a close look to be sure. We are all vulnerable - just what thieves like to know.

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The flooding caused by Storm Dennis and its aftermath was some of the worst we have seen in South Shropshire since 2007. Areas around the Severn were particularly badly affected, where flood water from upstream Shrewsbury and Ironbridge was mostly held back by flood defences, but then pushed downstream past Bridgnorth and Bewdley. The Teme and the Corve also burst their banks, causing severe localised flooding around Ludlow and Tenbury. Many other smaller rivers were affected as well.

I visited many of the homes and businesses who had suffered flooding. While the damage was heartbreaking, it was encouraging to see such community spirit, with friends and neighbours going the extra mile to do what they could to mitigate the impact of the floods, and help clear up afterwards. I also commend the incredible hard work from emergency responders – including Shropshire Fire & Rescue, the Environment Agency and Shropshire Council.

I have been working hard to ensure the government is very much aware of the impact of local flooding here, and the clear need to invest in flood defences for the future, including raising the issue directly with the Prime Minister at Prime Minister’s Questions. So I am pleased the Chancellor heard my pleas, which he referenced by namechecking me in his Budget Speech last month, and announced £120m to repair damage flood defences, £200m for improving resilience in areas affected by repeated flooding, and doubling investment in flood defences over the next 6 years to £5.2bn. This includes at least £23 million of funding for Severn Valley defences, which is an extremely welcome start.

Last month’s Budget contained some further welcome measures, including an emergency package of £30billion of measures to support individuals and small businesses during the Coronavirus outbreak. I write ahead of publication in a fast-moving situation, but it is clear the intensity of the outbreak is growing rapidly. For most people COVID19 is a mild illness from which they will fully recover. But vulnerable groups are particularly at risk, including older people, of which South Shropshire has a significantly higher than average population. So I urge everyone to consult latest advice and follow the appropriate precautionary measures.

Support for businesses in the Budget, including increasing the Business Rates retail discount to 100% for one year and expanding it to the leisure and hospitality sectors, introducing a £5,000 rates discount for pubs, and offering £3,000 grants to those eligible for Small Business Rate Relief will be a significant boost for South Shropshire businesses who may be affected by the impact of coronavirus. The Chancellor made clear he will take further measures as necessary.

From my inbox, and driving across the constituency myself, I know how poor the condition of local roads has become. I have raised the issue with both Shropshire Council, who have doubled their teams filling in the potholes, and have invested more than £6 million on road resurfacing and drainage work since January this year. I have also raised this issue with the Roads Minister, so was pleased to see an additional £54m funding for road maintenance from April 2020 for the West Midlands through the Pothole Fund. I am pushing for a fair share to come to Shropshire to tackle our serious road conditions.



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KEITH MARTIN



This is typical of Keith, in the centre background and never trying to dominate. (Picture courtesy of The Shropshire Star)

Keith Martin lost his fight with cancer on March 10th. This community is much the poorer for the loss of this quiet spoken, modest man who made a major contribution in his capacity as secretary to the committee of the Cleobury Mortimer Mens' Shed.

He had a convincing way of letting other, more vocal, people dominate a discussion and then quietly summarising and asking if that was what the chairman wanted recording. If he could see a fault in an idea, he would gently point out the weakness

and suggest how the job might be done better. Never a cross word, just logic simply expressed.

He was well qualified to serve in a demanding role, having worked as an I.T. Information and Forecasting manager with GEC Computers. Much of his spare time was spent in the Scout movement, mentoring the youngsters with his quiet ways and being awarded the Medal of Merit for his services.

The Shed committee were told of his cancer last year and were astonished at the way he carried on his work even when having chemotherapy. A model of determined modesty, whose abilities impressed all who knew him. He will be sorely missed.

SHIRLEY PUGH

Shirley died last month, in the Clun nursing home where she had been placed by the health authorities, apparently because they could cope with her deteriorating health.

She was a familiar figure on our High Street, where she had worked for no less than 65 years as a hairdresser. Hers was the shop window that was always attractively dressed for the occasion, where you would

sometimes see her working at 7.30 in the morning to accommodate a customer who didn't want the stress of finding a parking space when the place was busy. Such a thoughtful touch that brought her a lot of regular work as a result.

Shirley was very quiet and gentle in her manner, but with a tough centre. So when she slipped and broke her ankle on the icy pavement outside her Childe Road home, she was soon back in action on crutches. No fuss or complaining, she just got on with life.

Our sympathies go to Ashley and Tiffany and their children on the loss of a rather special lady.

I'M PUZZLED

I opened a new business account with Lloyds recently. Not here in Cleobury Mortimer, but at Ludlow branch, because Cleobury can no longer handle such matters.

I've a business debit card and cheque and paying-in books, but on opening the first statement to arrive I was rather surprised to find my account is with the Great Yarmouth branch. There's nobody you can ask about this at 5.00, so I've written a letter. More later.



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The Very Brief April Social Calendar

| | | | | |
|------------------------|--|---|-------------|--------------|
| Thurs 2 nd | | BLACK WHEELIE BINS & RECYCLE BOXES EMPTIED TODAY | | |
| Wed 8 th | | Please note there will not be a British Legion meeting this month | | |
| Thurs 9 th | | GREEN GARDEN WASTE WHEELIE BINS EMPTIED TODAY | | |
| Sat 11 th | | Possible coach trip to Bury Market, but do check | Mrs Gregory | 01584 891464 |
| Thurs 16 th | | BLACK WHEELIE BINS & RECYCLE BOXES EMPTIED TODAY | | |
| Thurs 23 rd | | GREEN GARDEN WASTE WHEELIE BINS EMPTIED TODAY | | |
| Thurs 30 th | | BLACK WHEELIE BINS & RECYCLE BOXES EMPTIED TODAY | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | AND FORWARD TO MAY..... | | |
| Thurs 7 th | | GREEN GARDEN WASTE WHEELIE BIN EMPTIED TODAY | | |
| | | | | |

MARION'S CONFESSION

Has anyone else also gone to a group meeting for the first time and left their mark by accidentally pressing the fire alarm button when departing? I decided to see what the Creative Writing Group was all about at the library and enjoyed the meeting very much.

The topic we were invited to write about in 500(ish) words for April was 'Spring' - the season close to my heart with the birdsong and spring flowers.

I have been for a walk through the woods above Catherton Common this morning. The first thrill I had was to hear a curlew calling, then a raven croaked above me. As I clambered up the slope to the trees I noticed the bright yellow of the gorse coming into flower. There was a pretty birdsong coming from amongst the gorse, but sadly I didn't recognise it.

Amongst the trees are many old tree stumps and parts of branches lying on the ground - covered in a bright green moss looking very pretty. Next I was thrilled to hear from the heights of a fir tree the trilling of a goldcrest. I am grateful

that I can still hear this call, as I am told as you get older the range of your hearing diminishes and some people less in years than my 73 are unable to hear this. There was also a woodpecker calling, but I failed to spot it.

There was a small group of sheep in the wood - to me (an ex shepherdess) they looked different ages. That reminded me of the Scottish hills, when you would find little groups of sheep staying together and always on the same patch of the mountain. Alistair MacRae, an experienced wise old shepherd, said the family groups would stick together. Even if the ewe lambs (flock replacements) had been sent away to better land for their wintering, in the late Spring, when they came home they would team up with their mothers again and perhaps older and younger siblings and stay together on their little part of the hill.

The birdlife and wildlife in Scotland was fantastic. I saw my first ring ouzel in a remote place - that is a blackbird with a white band on its neck - also spotted on Clee Hill. I also saw a flock of snow buntings and plenty of wild goats, some of them with enormous horns.

When I worked on Mull in late Spring the cuckoo called from dawn until dusk and the mountain hares scampered about amongst masses of wild primroses. So much more to mention in Shropshire - larks singing, thrushes and blackbirds, but I think I have written enough now.

Marion Rees

AND MARION'S ALARM...

This was not going to be reported, it would be ungallant to add to the lady's embarrassment. But she has confessed in print, so here's the story in detail.

Marion was going out of the library unaware that she had to ease open the door. So she pressed what she thought was the button and triggered the fire alarm. It is not quiet...

Sandra Dodd came but did not know how to turn it off. She had asked Clare Todd, who said it was never a problem so not to worry; when we tried to contact her about this very audible worry she was in Lisbon!

So Sandra called Sam Dolphin, no longer a Cleobury Country staff member, but a caring lady. Caring enough to drive down and press the buttons to turn it off, bless her.

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THE BREAKFAST CLUB

The Club met at Cleobury Golf Club on March 10th to hear Phil Howl's tale of his remarkable efforts to restore the old station building at Neen Sollars.

The Tenbury and Bewdley Railway, running from the Severn Valley Railway at Bewdley, through Tenbury to join the Shrewsbury & Hereford Railway at Woofferton, was opened in August 1864. Cleobury Mortimer was one of the six stations along the line, as was Neen Sollars, and although the stations were not identical, they shared many details of their design.

With its rural setting, it is not surprising the line never carried a large volume of traffic; passenger traffic ceased in 1962, and goods in 1964. Several stations were sold off to become private residences, Neen Sollars amongst them. After several changes of ownership, Neen Sollars was bought by Phil in 2013. Although William Clarke, engineer of the T&BR and designer of Neen Sollars station, would have been saddened to learn that the line closed over 50 years ago, he

would surely have been delighted by Phil's devotion to restoring the station to its original condition.

By 2013, many of the more interesting features of the station had disappeared, decayed or fallen off. Phil was determined that they should be re-created and, bringing together his architectural experience, archival research, and very real practical skills, he showed us what determination can achieve. In the course of restoration, he had to scour architectural salvage yards to acquire just the right type of hand-made blue clay roofing tiles, and hunt for just the exact colour and texture of bricks. He was not daunted by the fact that the secondhand bricks he bought were not quite the same size as the originals; he just set to, and cut hundreds of bricks to size to achieve a perfect match. Newly laid brickwork often displays a 'lime bloom' for years, (particularly if laid in wet weather) but Phil didn't want this to impair the match between new and old, so he experimented with patent treatments until discovering a perfect solution using an industrial grade hydrochloric acid gel. He also produced detailed drawings for recreating the highly decorative

timber bargeboards and roof finials that had been a key feature of the original building but had all been removed by the end of British Rail's ownership.

He tracked down the old quarry where Clarke had sourced the sandstone for the masonry window surrounds, and then provided masons with detailed working drawings to enable them to cut perfect replicas where needed. In the old goods shed, he found two original cast iron lamp brackets – but he needed four, so had to get new brackets cast, using the old as the pattern.

All in all, an impressive story of dedication, skill and perseverance, and one that enriches the community by preserving something of our local history.

The next meeting of the Club is scheduled for 14 April at The Talbot Hotel, where our speaker will be Peter Blackburn, with the challenging title 'Desperation'.

Those wishing to attend should contact Angela Drennan (CM 270636) to book places.

Mark Baldwin



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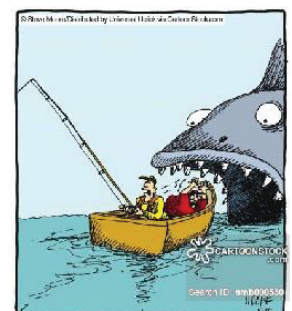
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PLASTIC - NOT SO FANTASTIC

Plastic Pledge Awards.

Here are four businesses who are all doing their bit to reduce single use plastic. Congratulations to them for taking the pledge!

The Cleobury Mortimer Plastics Reduction Group would like to take this opportunity to encourage everyone to support these and all local businesses as much as possible during these extraordinary times.

Heath Farm Meats, Bagginswood. To promote more customers bringing their own containers; to experiment with greaseproof paper meat wrap; change to no plastic wrapped prepacks.

Cleobury Seafood and Freezer Centre. To use cardboard and paper where possible; sell drinks in glass or cans; buy non plastic wrapped product where practical.

Tracey's Kreations Sweetshop. To sell sweets only in cardboard or paper; recycle all bulk containers; avoid plastic display furniture.

Flowers by Fiona. Will use raffia string and ribbon; will use biodegradable oasis; use cellophane, not plastic.

CLEOBURY W.I.

Our March speaker Tina Hobin, went out to change and came back dressed for an episode of the Arabian nights. Her long dress was covered in sequins and she glittered and shimmered as she introduced her first dance. The title for the evening's talk was: "Belly dancing for everyone" and she talked about the history and development. She has written four books and is writing her fifth. It was interesting to learn how this ancient dance was used by women as a birthing tool, how it promotes health and fitness and moved through the Middle East until picked up by Hollywood in the early 20th Century and brought to us in the cinemas.

Tina allowed us to try on the many outfits, all handworked with beautiful patterns stitched with sequins on glorious colours. We had never seen so many dramatic dresses before. Tina started teaching belly dancing in Oxford which led to a career performing all over the world as well as on Film and Television. When she invited us to join and made us practice some of the exercises, it was clear how you improve posture

and balance, support your back and strengthen your muscles. An enjoyable evening, a lecture and performance not to be missed. Look out when her classes start again in the Parish Hall, when life goes back to normal. In line with Government instructions our meetings are cancelled until further notice. Please make sure you stay safe.

Gabby Franklin

WHO CAN REMEMBER FRED JORDAN?

Can any Clarion reader help solve an identity mystery? Madge Shingleton is trying to trace any copy of a recording Fred Jordan made for the BBC of local folk songs. He was quite renowned as "a real Shropshire lad" but finding anyone who knew him or has any recording has stumped her so far.

There's quite a history of folk singing in the area, so there's a good chance we can come up with more information, if not a recording of him in full voice.

Contact Madge on 01299 271181 or email her at madge.shingleton@shropshire.gov.uk. Any information gratefully received, as they say.

JR

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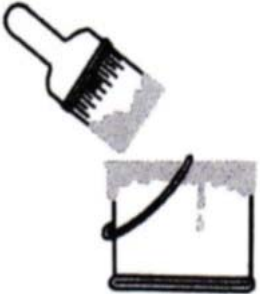
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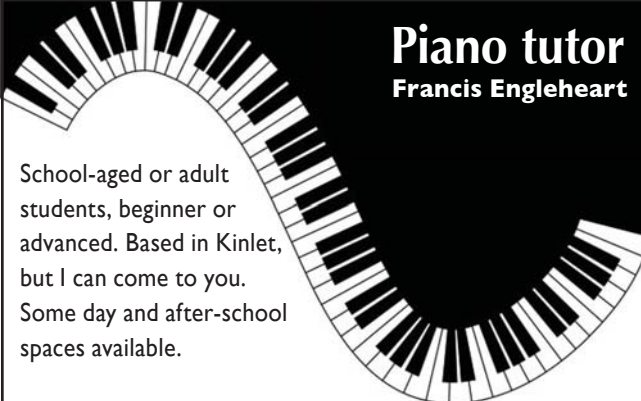
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April in the Wyre Forest

Linda Iles

The Wyre Forest and surrounding areas are still relatively rich in butterflies. The earliest in the year to appear as adults are those which hibernate: Peacocks, Brimstones and Commas for instance. (Incidentally, Red Admirals are sometimes able to continue their life cycle and emerge as adults here during milder winters although most migrate to the Continent.)

In spring and summer it's a rare day in the garden or walk in the forest when I don't see an Orange-tip butterfly. The males are easy to identify and obviously named. The females lack the orange tips to their white wings and so pose more of a problem. Both sexes have a small crescent-shaped black mark in the centre of the fore-wing, which helps to distinguish even the female from the other whites, but it is the rather lovely cryptic green pattern under the hind-wing that really clinches it. You'll need to persuade the butterfly to rest in a suitable position to examine it!

The male butterfly ranges far and wide looking for a mate, who is much less flamboyant and keeps out of sight, camouflaged among vegetation. She will lay her orange eggs on wild plants of the crucifer family: those with four petals forming a cross, hence the name. This is the family of cabbages, rockets and cresses, all with a peppery taste and including both Garlic Mustard/Jack-by-the-hedge and Lady's Smock/ Cuckooflower, which occur (as you might expect) under hedges and in meadows respectively. The female Orange-tip leaves a chemical signal with her eggs to discourage others from laying in the same spot – a neat strategy to prevent the food running out. The seedpods of the host plant give a bitter taste to the caterpillars that feed on them: a deterrent to predators that is carried over into the adult butterfly and advertised by the bright colour

of the males' wings. I love these details and I'm very much indebted to the beautifully-illustrated book, 'Butterflies of the West Midlands' (produced by local members of Butterfly Conservation) for this information and also to Mick Farmer for the photo.

By the way, the name 'Cuckooflower' is shared by various plants that flower later this month, announcing the imminent arrival of the Cuckoo. I'm intrigued by an entry in Richard Mabey's 'Flora Britannica' sent in by a lady in East Sussex in 1994: 'My birthday falls on 14 April, and when I was a child my father told me that on that date the old woman of the woods let the cuckoo out of her basket (locally there used to be Cuckoo Fairs). For the last 20 years or so my children have given me cuckoo flowers on my birthday and it is a very rare year when there are none around by 14 April'. We have Cuckooflowers in the cherry orchard here at Uncllys and have been pleased to see large numbers popping up in our lawn for the last 2 years now that we take a more relaxed attitude to mowing!

Linda Iles



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Diamond now seem to have settled into a steady pattern. Some on time, some not although they do all seem to have run eventually unless you know something I don't. Apparently, the Diamond location app (available on a smartphone near you) works well. The good news being that it tells you exactly where the bus is in real time. The bad news is that it tells you how late it is.... Things have been complicated somewhat for part of the month due to Bewdley bridge being shut and having to re route round the bypass. Still no sign of any meeting being arranged to discuss the timetable. Madge Shingleton has been badgering the various parties involved but answer has come there none. One thing that needs to be clarified is the last departure from Ludlow. Under R&B, this terminated at Clee Hill Village because that was the location of their depot. Now Diamond are operating the service, the bus goes all the way back to Kiddy anyway but is not shown as stopping this side of Clee Hill, so why not as the bus is running anyway? As things stand, this means that the last bus from Ludlow to Cleobury leaves at 16.30.

Shropshire Council get yet another mention in the 'Rotten Boroughs' column of 'Private Eye' This is the fourth edition running in which they have starred (which must be a record). This was about the appointment of the Pothole consultant which was duly mocked. Apparently one of the consultant's first actions was to tell the contractors that when they arrived on site to fill potholes, they should do them all and not just a selected few. This radical piece of advice must be well worth £1000 a day as clearly it would never have occurred to anyone else... Having said that, it hasn't worked, as contractors turned up to fill a hole outside the Primary School and left the other five next to it.

The results of a survey carried out by Cycling UK which marks councils on their performance in filling potholes have just been published and in first place is..... Worcestershire who filled in 139,500 holes last year. Shropshire doesn't get a mention but

hasn't come last. However, as the results are based on information supplied by 85 local authorities and there are 435 of these, perhaps they didn't respond. If not, it couldn't be because they were busy filling in potholes... Apparently, major holes should be filled within 24 hours of being notified and inspected, with smaller examples within three months. I suspect Shropshire read this as months and years...

The contractors in question are Kier, who are already noted for failing to adequately maintain Armed Forces married quarters so it's probably unreasonable to expect anything better in our case. They have recently revealed their six monthly trading figures which showed that they have transformed their performance compared with the previous six months by slashing their losses from £45.3 million to er... £41.2 million. This has been done by, amongst other things, reducing staff numbers and selling units which may explain why they are sending teams daily from Liverpool to South Shropshire to fill potholes (or rather not fill them as there isn't much time left after all the travelling). I don't know what the terms of the contract with Shropshire Council are and whether there are penalties for failure to perform but I reckon Kier must have seen them coming....

Still, there is good news for some. The authorities in Luxembourg have announced that to combat global warming, all public transport within the Grand Duchy will now be free. This is not as good as it sounds as it is only a small place and, having been there, not very exciting. Less good news was set out in a recent 'Panorama' programme on the state of the UK's bus services and it makes sober reading. Apparently, Londoners are subsidised to the tune of £90 per head whereas the rest of England averages £30. In addition, London buses are subsidised from profits made on the Underground, so a double benefit. Whilst it's true that Boris has promised an extra £1 Billion a year, this does little more than offset the £900 million cut since 2010.

Steve Todd



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Cleobury Community Hub

Thanks to the incredible efforts of many volunteers and young people, Cleobury Community Hub opened in September 2019. St Mary's Youth Project has converted the Methodist Church into a café style environment open to everyone in the community. Our hope is to work alongside the Neighbourhood Plan to create a space for people of all ages from our fantastic community to meet and spend time together.

St Mary's Youth Project is founded in a Christian ethos, but all are welcome regardless of faith or belief.

News and Events

Alongside all those in our community, and the whole country, March has been a month of two halves. The Hub has continued to see a rise in visitors, with an average of 90 different individuals coming each day to share time together. Soft play has remained a firm favourite, with parents and carers taking the time to enjoy a hot drink while smaller members of the town burn off some energy. However the Hub maintained its appeal to all ages with stand alone events such as the Alpha course providing a safe space to explore questions of faith and spirituality.

There is no escaping the fact we are living in an uncertain and worrying time. **The decision has been made to suspend the opening hours of Cleobury Community Hub** due to recent changes in Public Health England's advice regarding the Covid-19 virus outbreak, and attempts to limit direct social contact. This decision was made with a heavy heart and with the situation evolving rapidly it's currently impossible to decide a date for re-opening. Please keep an eye on our website (www.smyp.org.uk) and our social media accounts (@CleoburyCommunityHub) for further updates. (Please contact GKY dance directly for further information regarding dance lessons).

This time of social distancing presents a great challenge to all, but also an opportunity for the community to step up and create and discuss new ways to remain supportive and engaged with all those around us, even if not in direct contact. Already stories of great community spirit are emerging, be it neighbours shopping for each other, or the cooking of meals for those who are in a higher risk category. SMYP will be involved where possible, and meetings are being held to find a practical role we can play. Updates will be posted through social media and on the website.

Thank you for your continued support to the Community Hub and the work of SMYP.



CLEOBURY COMMUNITY HUB - WEEKLY CALENDAR
Café open Tuesdays and Fridays 10am-6pm

Hub Closed until further notice

- Mondays - Kids Club 3:20pm-5pm
- Tuesdays - Nippers (parent/toddler) 10-11:30am
- Wednesdays - GKY Dance 5:30pm onwards
- Fridays - Soft Play 11:30am-6pm

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I've done a fair few motorway miles recently and did some rough analysis of the annoying middle lane hoppers who wander along for mile after mile getting in everyone else's way. Is this just because they can't be bothered to follow the rule of the Highway Code which says that all lanes other than the inside are for overtaking or just that they are asleep?. It's bad enough on three lane stretches, but on the M40 on the four lane section before the M25, they sit two lanes out creating even more of a bottleneck. There have been suggestions that 'undertaking' be allowed as it is in the USA, but the police have always resisted any change. Anyway, my rough and ready survey shows that the vast majority of the miscreants are either women or members of the BAME community. I make no comment on this other than to ask 'Why?'

I read that John McDonnell speaking to his remaining MPs has told them to cheer up as 'Normally when a socialist revolution fails, they all get taken to a football stadium and shot'. Oddly, he didn't mention that when a socialist revolution succeeds, their opposition gets taken to a football stadium and.... Another leading member has warned the party against moving too far back to the centre and going back to 'the old days'. Presumably this refers to the old days when Labour won elections...

A group who have been poorly treated by successive Governments must be the armed forces. Sent to fight dubious foreign wars whilst under resourced, poorly equipped and inadequately supported. And if they do return having avoided death or injury, they risk being made redundant, often just before being eligible for a pension. Perhaps the next time a military intervention is considered, the first unit in should consist solely of MPs and senior MoD personnel. I bet they would adopt a less gung

ho approach then. And it doesn't end there as their married quarters are often damp, miserable and badly maintained by a private contractor, Kier, who has admitted that they are not doing an adequate job. Even many years later, they can be hounded by allegations that they mistreated prisoners and civilians and can suffer for years until the accusations are disproved (as most of them are). They have had little support from the MoD who threw some £6 million at a firm of bent solicitors to bring these trumped up charges. It's just a shame that the authorities haven't shown the same level of enthusiasm in pursuing former terrorists.

Add to this the sheer insanity of outsourcing the recruiting contract to a company such as C(r)apita resulting in only some 7% of initial applications producing a recruit. As a result the three services are thousands short of even their savagely reduced complement. It has now been decided to curtail the current contract and revert to the old and well tried system of being able to speak to a serving member of their chosen service from the outset. Strangely, when this fiasco was investigated by MP's, no one in the MoD could remember who took the original decision to privatise the work... Surely, as ever, they are lions led by donkeys.

Mind you, I'm not sure where the missing recruits will come from. Probably not from Universities where the practice of 'Non Platforming' anyone whose views you disagree with has become commonplace. This is just the type of approach that Hitler, Stalin or Putin would applaud. Surely the way to combat extremist views is to demolish them by the force of argument and expose such people from either the far left or right as the mouth breathing knuckledraggers that they are. By refusing to engage, you merely make martyrs of them.

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THE SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB

Let's start on a positive note, with the success of the Big Quiz, held on Sunday, March 1st. A total of 10 teams entered this devilishly difficult quiz, with Team Mary, Mungo and Midge being the eventual winners. Thanks to Karen Gallagher for once again being our Quizmaster.

During the next few months our community faces difficult and challenging times in dealing with Coronavirus. At the time of writing, the Government advice is to avoid pubs, however given what has happened in other European countries, this will most likely change to a general closure of bars and pubs with a view to social distancing. In anticipation of this, the Social Club Directors have decided to close the Club for the foreseeable future.

If you have a private event booked at the Club during the next month, please contact the Social Club on 01299 271448 or via our Facebook Page. Despite the Club being closed, the telephone will be checked for messages, likewise Facebook.

We look forward to welcoming you back, whenever that may be, but in the meantime, let's help each other by supporting the elderly and vulnerable in our community. If you are shopping for someone, please ensure you follow all guidance as set out by Public Health England on the www.gov.uk website.

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Stepping Out! Who's Walking, When and Where.

WALKING - A REASON, A ROUTE AND A ROUTINE

**Doctor Paul Thompson from the Medical
Centre writes:**

Surprisingly it turns out exercise is good for you!
Unfortunately for a lot of us it's not always as simple as that. Lots of things at any age can act as various constraints even when we have good intentions.

The main reason that walking is a healthy option is that it avoids us being sedentary. Modern life pushes a lot of us into roles where we are sitting most of the time or activities that we do are made easier for us. Sadly having a sedentary lifestyle is statistically as detrimental in terms of health as smoking cigarettes.

Recent updated UK Physical activity guidelines actually give some readable advice without being too overbearing. They cover the age ranges from 'cradle to grave'. They suggest as one way of achieving better health 150 mins of moderate intensity exercise per week. This actually means whilst exercising you can talk but you can't sing!

Walking has the potential to be the way back into, or part of a fuller healthy lifestyle.

For a lot of people the bit where we actually do the 'exercise thing' is deferred for lots of reasons but sometimes to avoid those hurdles it can be useful to think of a favourite Route(s) in advance and give a particular time in the week when you intend to do it. This might work best if built into a regular Routine over a number of weeks. If we give advance notice to family and friends others can sign up as a one off or regular get togethers, unsurprisingly this has been shown to have its own advantages and locally there are long established groups already stepping out in an organised fashion.

Fortunately for everyone locally its near impossible to find a flat walk. Inevitably setting off at a reasonable pace leads to a good contribution to the weeks tally. If you're starting to find it too comfortable and can break into song its time to replan your routes. For some the walking may lead onto other forms of exercise and short burst exercise can be equally good for you but a brisk walk up a hillside around here probably counts as vigorous exercise for most of us.

One small plea: if considering getting out there, please make sure your clothing means you can be seen by traffic .

FOOTPATH WORK IN BAYTON Susan Sharp, Footpath Warden

After moving from Cleobury to Bayton in 2018, I took on the role of footpath warden. I have one other person, Steve, who helps me by looking after the Bayton Common end of the parish. The role is to improve footpaths by waymarking and clearance, to report larger problems to the council and liaise with local landowners.

For the last year, Steve and I have walked all the paths, adding waymarks where needed and clearing bramble and hedges around stiles. Two paths in particular needed so much bramble clearance that I have developed tennis elbow from overuse of the shears. This may make life difficult for the coming year in both Bayton and CMFA's patch. Any help from local walkers taking a few minutes to use secateurs would be welcome.

I am not authorised or financed to carry out other repairs but must request the council or a volunteer team to do any work which then goes on a long waiting list. Having been used to being able to get things done with CMFA I find this a little frustrating. However I have managed to persuade the council to let me put in waymark posts. 12 were delivered and 9 have gone in (some in Mamble – see below).

The Shakenhurst Estate covers a large part of Bayton. It also covers part of Mamble and Neen Sollars. Working with Judith Evans, the warden for Mamble, we have talked to the owners to identify and implement improvements right across the estate. We are very fortunate that the owners have been very kind and helpful. In general the paths on the estate had no serious problems and paths through crops are kept clear. So the work required was mainly to improve waymarking. Several of those waymark posts have gone in, with one more to go. Other improvements agreed were the clearance of growth on paths and the removal of unnecessary stiles. This is work in progress, but if you walk the Estate you should notice some improvements with more to come.

Within the rest of Bayton, there are four paths where waymarking still needs to be improved and on-going clearance done. There are four paths with problems where I have requested the council to take action.

Susan

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EXTRA BUS NEWS

Our thanks to Councillor Madge Shingleton for passing this news item on:

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, Shropshire Council has extended its concessionary bus travel for the elderly and vulnerable, to enable them to take advantage of the exclusive early morning shopping times being offered by some supermarkets and shops.

Until today concessionary bus passes couldn't be used before 9.30am. Under the new arrangement the passes can be used before 9.30am, with immediate effect and until further notice.

The change applies to all bus services operating in the Shropshire Council area.

Steve Davenport, Cabinet member for highways and transport, said:

"Previously concessionary travel did not kick in until after the morning rush-hour, but in response to coronavirus those who have the passes can now travel earlier so they can get to the shops to buy food and other essential items. "These are challenging times and we hope this will provide a vital lifeline

for our elderly and vulnerable customers"

PHARMACY NEWS

Cleobury Medical Centre advise that they are experiencing a very high level of demand at present, which means that the process of repeat prescriptions will take three days. They are asking us not to order a repeat earlier than three days before it's due, as it won't get into the system. We will be able to order when we have ten days of medication left, which I would guess is what most organised people would be doing. So this is just a little tweak to make the process smoother, part of the cooperation we are all being asked to observe in these strange times.

EVER AFTER NEWS

Sarita confirms that Ever After Day Nursery has had to close, to protect the staff in the current situation. She had hoped to stay open to look after younger children whose parents are in vital jobs.

KATE TRIUMPHS

Kate Jones has cancelled her Sing, Laugh, Breathe choir sessions in the Market Hall

until further notice. But being the quietly persistent character she is, she has looked about and found a way to bring all her amateur choristers together to carry on singing and keeping in practice. Which is also a great help for any singer living alone and isolating.

Sessions are held via Zoom, an online service like Skype that lets people see and hear one another live online. You don't need to have a Zoom account and you can make contact through a computer with a camera and microphone, so laptop, tablet or smart phone will do.

We don't have room on this page to give full details, but contact kate@sing-laugh-breathe.co.uk and she'll get you sorted. It's the same time, and day, 11.00am on Wednesday. Get in touch and enjoy.

THE SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB

No report on the news pages this month, but see their regular advert spot on Page 52. They don't need an advert with the doors closed, but are telling you what's happening through this novel approach.



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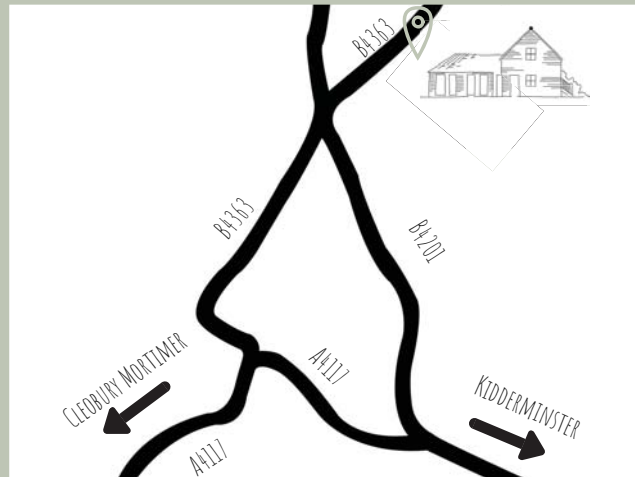
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About Luxure Aesthetics

Sally Burns is a NMC registered midwife and is a professionally qualified aesthetic practitioner and is very experienced, working in the NHS for 35 years.



Sally is fully insured with Cosmetic Insure and a member of the British Association of Cosmetic Nurses.

Sally graduated from Keele University in 2018 with a Master of Arts.

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OUCH!



The collapsed wall at No 53 High Street. You can see that it was hit pretty hard.

A hit-and-run attack on the John Brazier offices at 53 High Street was quite a shock for the staff who were quietly getting on with their work at 11.30 in the morning when there was a loud bang and the building shook. John tells us it felt like an earthquake.

By the time they'd recovered and run outside, whatever had hit the heavy brick wall enclosing the car park had left in a hurry. Two workmen over the road had seen it all and reported a blue Suzuki as the guilty party, and could offer part of its registration number. That and the details of time and place have been passed to the police and the CCTV footage is being checked. That's where the town's cameras come in very handy - if they recorded the collision there should be proof of the Suzuki's number. For sure, there will be evidence of its wall-banging day.

We have asked to be kept in touch with developments and if there is a prosecution notified

we'll tell you. It does the town's reputation as a low crime area a lot of good if the runaway driver gets his or her collar felt.

CLEE HILL WILDLIFE

We cancelled our meeting to plan the Curlew and Lapwing survey, but the survey is going ahead. It is carried out by individuals or couples, with no contact with anyone else, so it complies with the Government's social distancing guidelines. It involves three visits, of about three hours, around April 1st, May 1st and mid-June. It's easy, instructions are provided, and it's only necessary to recognise Lapwing and Curlew. Training is available. Please help if you can.

Many people in the area will see or hear Curlews from their home, or while out and about. We are continuing our project to find Curlew nests, put electric fences round them to protect the eggs, and radio-tag the chicks and follow their movements, hopefully to fledging (as three did last year). Understanding the reasons for poor fledging rates is the key to an effective conservation plan to reverse the decline. The project costs money. If you feel able to, please make a donation.

For further information, see the Clee Hill pages of the Community Wildlife Group on www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk. If you want to help, or report a Curlew, please contact Chris Bargman: 01299 270514, email: chcwgs@shropscwgs.org.uk

Leo Smith

SAINT JOHN'S DODDINGTON

In common with all churches, services at St John's have been cancelled for now, and our events have been postponed.

The church, however, will continue to be open 9am - 5pm every day and you are welcome to drop in to spend quiet time and pray. There are candles to light and a prayer board where you can add names of people you would particularly like prayer for. Don't forget to use good hygiene and physical distancing while you are in the church. If you would like any practical help during this difficult time, or have any questions, call Celia on 01584 318036 or email stjohnsdoddington@gmail.com. Let's keep in touch with each other: send messages, phone each other, call and ask for prayer or anything else you need - we may need to be physically distant but let's not be socially distant.

Celia Gibb

RATHER LONG SILLY BITS

A woman walked into the kitchen to find her husband standing there with a fly swatter.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"Hunting flies."

"Are you killing any?" she asked.

"Oh yes. three males and two females," he replied.

Quite intrigued, she asked "How can you tell them apart?"

"Three were on a beer can, two were on the phone."





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April 2020 Clarion Report

We are all in the middle of something new that some will struggle with so we ask that you find someone maybe a neighbour alone or struggling and talk to them safely and look after them if you can. Shopping and getting medicine will be very difficult for some as well as dealing with isolation, so please think of others as it will help those on the front line in the NHS.

Local support is being coordinated by the Town Council, COCO (Compassionate Communities) and the church pastoral care team. There is a dedicated team coordinating the efforts of volunteers to look after those that are vulnerable and unable to do things for themselves.

If you would like to volunteer, we need the following information. Are you DBS checked? Will you be able to phone the lonely? Can you collect and deliver shopping? Can you walk their dog? These are the basic questions we need to match you with someone needing help.

If you contact us needing help, we need the following information. Name address contact and number, what you need help with, do you hold cash to pay and how desperate are you for items, prescriptions. Please if you have enough for a few days let me know as you can understand we need to prioritise with the volunteers we have, so please help us.

The Play area and outdoor Gym equipment is now closed as per Government guidelines. we would hope that everybody follows the governments guidelines and if you go to our open spaces for some exercise would you take your dogs for a walk that you observe the two-metre rule. we all need to stay safe and look after each other we have a fantastic community of volunteers all coming together to help and look after those that are vulnerable.

The town council is guided by government as to our future role to keep things going and one thing we have already agreed is to cancel the April meeting and Parish Annual meeting in May. We will review all other meetings in the future making sure that we keep the community fully informed as to what we are doing. Information can be found on our website and we constantly put out information on social media. If anyone has any questions, needs help, would like to volunteer, please contact the town council using the contact details below.

Thank you to all who are volunteering, the councillors, COCO and the church pastoral care team, schools, shops, food distributors, takeaways, pubs, we are overwhelmed with kindness and offers of help, so to all Thank you from those needing help.

Please stay safe look after each other and we should get through this without losing our loved ones.

Call 07483112290 or e-mail matthew.sheehan@cleobury.org.uk.

M Sheehan Town Clerk
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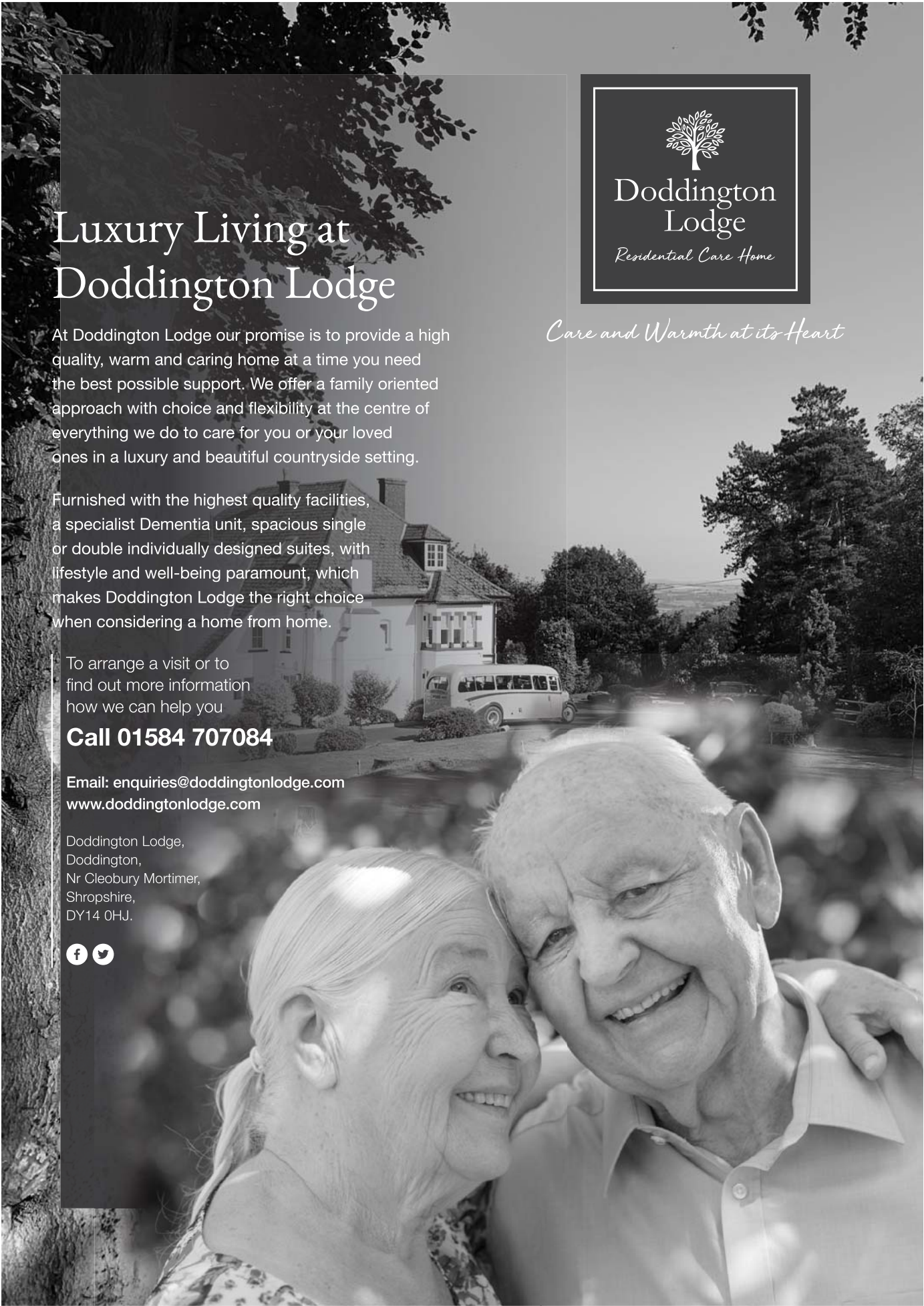
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Care and Warmth at its Heart



IN BUSINESS - Doddington Lodge Residential Care Home

The whole outlook as you drive through Doddington seems brighter since there was a change of ownership at the Lodge and the place is looking at its handsome best. Such an historic building now adds to the community spirit of the village. Built in the 1840s as a 'fine country residence' and the Rectory to Saint John's church. It served in that role until 1897, when it was sold into private ownership and was home to two prosperous owners of the local quarry, who employed a large number of staff and entertained on a grand scale until 1939 and the matter of World War II.

The RAF took over for the duration of hostilities and the Lodge accommodated staff working at the radar station up on Clee Hill. In 1946 it was sold back into civilian hands at an auction, with a certificate to cover the destruction suffered while in military hands.

It has served as a home for the elderly for many years and had been previously closed prior to the current owners purchasing Doddington Lodge in 2018, transforming the Lodge back into its former glory. Family run, with the very experienced Scott Stevens joining the team as manager, a place where the staff and residents smile and careful attention to detail makes you feel extremely welcome.

The accommodation ranges from single to double suites, since some couples want to stay together and enjoy the beautiful facilities and surroundings. Each suite has its own distinct design and furnishing, there's no boring repetition. The luxurious carpet in each is chosen to match the decor and furniture and all but two rooms are en suite. There is an elegant light and spacious dining room, with a bar if residents wish for a glass of wine with dinner, and there are small separate kitchens in various parts of the home if a resident and guests prefer privacy, with the facility to make tea and simple meals if required. A real home from home and more.

Doddington Lodge is Dementia Friendly, a specialist Dementia wing and facilities where residents have safe areas but maintaining choice and still being a big part of the home environment. A country style walled garden, with sheltered seating and room to safely walk, whilst in the corner is a summer house for those who want to continue their love for gardening. On every corridor is an array of eye-catching pieces of art, some of local historic scenes, many of vibrant animals, stimulating memories and curiosity. Memory boxes by each of the residents' suites containing personal keepsakes

and photos so helping to promote a sense of independence.



The day to day running of the Lodge rests in these caring hands. From left: Manager Scott Stevens and Directors, mother and son, Anita Mares and Luke Wellings.

Every detail has been carefully designed for the wellbeing of the residents. Handrails in corridors, lighting throughout the whole building has an emergency backup system. Smoke alarms and floor level emergency lighting in all parts of the home. Safety is paramount and care has been taken to install the highest specifications available.

Everything about Doddington Lodge revolves around the personal and family approach. The new owners go the extra mile to ensure each resident can choose from a furnished, part furnished or unfurnished suite. There are twenty three beautiful suites, only nine currently still available. Residents can stay a day or longer term, flexibility is certainly evident. Each aspect of the rooms is thought through, extremely spacious, luxury decor and overlooking the idyllic Shropshire countryside.

Ways to provide even more unique facilities are planned for the future of the residents, such as a kitchen garden to provide fresh vegetables, and a tearoom within the landscaped English garden. This is certainly a very impressive and friendly home to visit and anyone looking for a special place for an elderly relative, or even for themselves, will be made very welcome and shown around a home to be proud of. The team is testament to the future of this landmark in the local community: "Here at Doddington Lodge we continue to make history."



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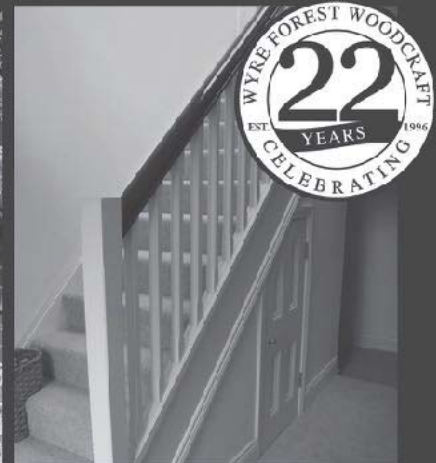
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Community Contacts for Clarion Readers

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| CEMETERY ADMINISTRATOR | Theresa Parfitt | 07703 965 064 | theresa.25016@hotmail.co.uk |
| CLEOBURY COUNTRY CENTRE | | 01299 272300 | In Love Lane, 9 to 5 Mon to Fri. |
| CITIZENS ADVICE | | 08444 991100 | Advisors on line 10.00 to 4.00 |
| CLEOBURY CARERS | Janet Manley | 01299 272841 | |
| CLEOBURY COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES | Katja Ward | 01299 270018 | 10.00 to 12.00 Weds |
| CLEOBURY MORTIMER LIBRARY | | 01299 272301 | Open 9 to 7 Mon, 9 to 5 Tues/Fri and 10 to 1 Sat. |
| LOCAL POLICE | Constable Anne O'Leary | | ann.oleary@westmercia.pnn.police.uk |
| CLEOBURY MORTIMER GUIDES | Dorothy McBride | 07761 976610 | |
| CLEOBURY MORTIMER SCOUTS | Lowri Hughes | | cleoburybeavers@gmail.com |
| CRIMESTOPPERS | | 0800 555 111 | Free Police contact. Talk in confidence, to report any crime. |
| DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINE | | 0800 783 1359 | Women's Aid, 24 Hour support: |
| HOME FROM HOSPITAL | | 01584 878046 | Help over the first weeks back home from Age UK |
| MARKET HALL | Ali Sheffield | 07752 542 853 | markethall@cleobury.org.uk |
| MEDICAL CENTRE | | 01299 270209 | Out of surgery hours, use the Shrop Doc Service. |
| SHROP DOC | | 111 | Service available evenings and weekends |
| THE PHARMACY | | 01299 270219 | Closes for half day on Saturday. Delivers prescriptions |
| NEWLIFE CHURCH | Pastor E Stirrup | 01562 630595 | Sunday services at 10.30 |
| NIGHTINGALE NURSING FUND | Rosemary Abbiss | 01746 718451 | |
| TOWN COUNCIL | Clerk Matthew Sheehan | 01299 271154 | Cleobury Country Centre 9 to 2 pm, Mon to Fri. www.cleobury.org.uk. Council meets in the Centre on the first Monday of the month |
| POST OFFICE | | 01299 270211 | In the Select and Save Grocery Store, Church Street |
| SAINT MARY'S YOUTH PROJECT | Mark Greaves | 07828 116810 | mark.stmarys@live.co.uk |
| SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL | | 0345 678 9000 | |
| SOUTH SHROPSHIRE YOUTH FORUM | | | richard@ssyf.net. |
| VOLUNTARY CAR SCHEME | | 01299 666119 | Mandy Smith |
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Out in Cleobury Country at: Heath Farm Meats, **Bagginswood**; **Clee Hill Stores**; The Village Store, **Cleobury North**; **Clows Top Stores**; The Sun and Slipper, **Mamble**; **Hopton Bank Service Station**; Bennetts End Inn, **Knowbury**; **Ludlow Library**; **Mawley Oak Garage**; The Colliers Cafe & Shop, **Rock**; The Fighting Cocks, **Stottesdon**; The Duck Inn, **Chorley**; The Live and Let Live, **Neen Sollars**; The Eagle and Serpent, **Kinlet**; Parker Motors, **Ditton Priors**.

Copies are also available from the Parish Churches in: Cleobury Mortimer, Bayton, Doddington, Hopton Wafers, Milson, Neen Savage and Neen Sollars.

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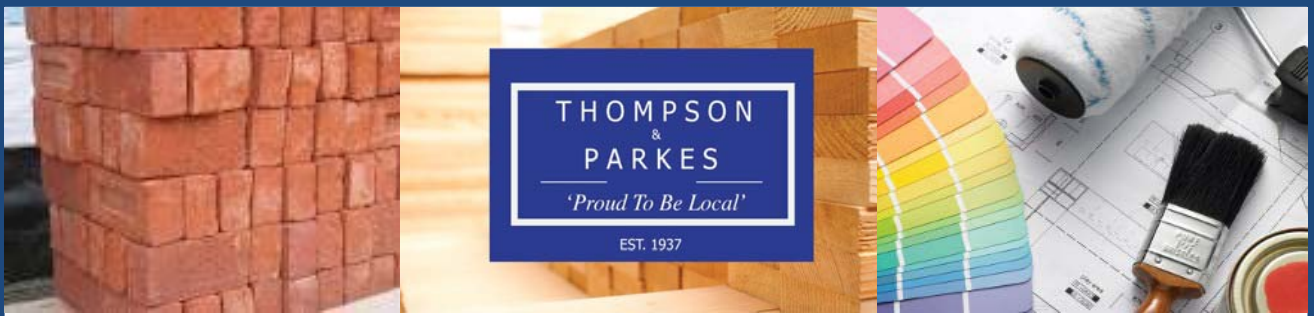
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