

The Cleobury Clarion

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FEBRUARY 2020

HIGH STREET EMERGENCY



No 18 High Street, with barriers to keep pedestrians clear.

Most of the town have known for a long time that the upper floor of No 18 High Street was in a bad state of repair. In December the matter came to a head when, as we understand the matter, a builder inserted an Acrowprop to support the roof and the main beam collapsed.

The roof sagged, the walls bulged and an inspector from the county declared the place dangerous. Barriers were put in place to keep pedestrians out of

the danger area and Cleobury Cafe's staff did a sterling job and moved the bread and cake sales across the road to the shop left vacant when the Fruit and Veg business closed. That took them just two hours and all credit to them for such an effort.

The Cafe had just had their big Christmas delivery in, which meant £2,000 worth lost. Ashley and Estelle Pugh have worked hard to make the place a success, opening seven days a week to serve good food at reasonable prices. It's been a real asset, encouraging people to stop and take a walk around the town.

Rescue came with the chance to move into the empty Bowketts premises, and by the time you read this the cafe and all the bread and cake sales will be in there. Estelle paid tribute to Gwilym Butler, who made the temporary site available, but the need for more space and the cooperation of landlady Birgit Jones took them up the road. The cost of business and stock lost is frightening, but the Pughs are fighters and back in business. Great news.

KAS WINS THE CLARION CUP



Kas Elliott of Masquerade and Councillor Paul French show off the Clarion Cup.

The Clarion Cup, awarded for the town's Best Dressed Christmas Window, was won by Kas Elliott's Masquerade, that lovely shop that has adorned the High Street for 15 years. Judging was on December 21st by the Clarion editor and two representatives of the Town Council, who gave Masquerade a unanimous victory vote. **More details on Page 17.**

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The Cleobury Clarion, February 2020

Volume Fourteen - Edition Ten



*Teddies and Toys people,
Carolyn and Keith.
See Page 9*



*Team Leader and Fund Raiser,
that's Kimi. See Page 13.*



*Ali Sheffield, in charge at
The Market Hall. Page 61.*

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RUNNING CLUB GENEROSITY



From the left: Lisa Bailey, Andie Ford, Jon Bodenham, Ian Steele and Jo Watson.

In January Cleobury Mortimer Running Club handed over a cheque for £250 to Jon Bodenham, the town councillor responsible for the Dementia Friends initiative.

The club raised the money through donations at their Halloween fancy dress run and red and white hats sold to members, kindly knitted by a mum of one of the coaches. All topped up with a donation from income generated by the 10k race held earlier this year.

Treasurer Andie Ford commented: "We are real advocates of running and the benefits it has to improving physical and mental health, and wellbeing. As the largest club in Cleobury Mortimer, we felt that

this was a way we could support the town in its aim to become dementia friendly. It's something a lot of us have already been exposed to and know someone who is already living with dementia."

Councillor Jon Bodenham, said: "Not only has CMRC helped raise awareness of dementia but the money that has been raised will help to go towards further dementia friendly projects. Thank you to everyone in the club for all their help."

SHROPSHIRE FEDERATION W.I.

Last September, as part of our centenary celebrations, I organised a camping event in Much Wenlock for WI members around the country. We raised £455 for Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service from donations given from campers.

As Climate Ambassador I am organising an event for the 'Show The Love' campaign at Attingham Park on 15th February. Part of this campaign will also include a woodland walkway at Attingham to show off green hearts. Lots of other organisations are involved in this event including the Wildlife Trust, Friends of the Earth, Natural England and lots more.



All smiles as the Shropshire Federation hand over a cheque for £455 to the county Domestic Abuse Service. From left: June Turner of the Federation, outreach workers Sharna Morris and Hayley Hirst and Paula Pierce of the Federation.

RAINBOW CANCER CARE FOUNDATION

John Gaskell of Rainbow handed over cheques totalling a whopping £22,450 to a range of local charities at the Golf Club at the end of last year. That makes the total raised in just ten years an amazing £106,450 all for local charities.

John lost his lovely wife Ange last year, but the Rainbow Cancer Care Foundation they founded is carrying on its fine work in her memory. Their big event is already booked into this year's Golf Club calendar on Friday, July 3rd. It's great to have such support that benefits local needs to this extent. Thank you, John.

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WALKING FOR HEALTH

The first outing this month, on the 12th, will be an 'Away Day' with a visit to Wyre Forest Visitor Centre. Members meet at the Sports and Social Club car park on Love Lane, where transport will be available for those who prefer not to drive.

On the 26th they will be back to their regular habit of meeting at the Market Hall for a start at 10.00 and a return to the CoCo Coffee Morning for a warm drink and possibly a little cake.

Alan Kimber can tell you more on CM 271754 or ajkimber@hotmail.com

THE GIN WALK

Not to be confused with Walking for Health, you understand. It's an intriguing title for a new fund raising event, organised by Shaunah Murrell for Severn Hospice. "Like the Wine Walk, but with gin," as she put it.

It's on Friday, April 3rd, from 7.00 to 10.00 in the pm and there will be three homes open to welcome you and serve a glass of beverage. Buy your tickets from Cleobury Chiropractic, The Larch Barn, Swift's Bakery or Cleobury Pharmacy. More details from Shaunah on 07929 274 767

THE CURRY EVENING
Apologies to Gabby Franklin that this report appears so late, but we simply did not have room in the busy December/January issue. Ed

The need to help raise funds for the heating project at St Mary's led to a most enjoyable evening. Many talented and generous people were pleased to donate all the food, cook a Curry, make a dessert and bring

cheeses to our magnificent cheese board.

Cooking that much rice was a bit more difficult but the kindness of the Lamp Restaurant saved the day. They generously cooked, donated and even delivered the rice to the Hall. It was a pleasure to see so many people enjoying the different home cooked Curries. There was also a Chicken casserole, especially provided for the Non-Curry eaters and so many fabulous puddings. And then there was the entertainment by our very own artists, from the ancient art of Egyptian Belly dancing to singing and reciting amusing poems. Thank you everyone for making the evening such a success. Altogether £1000+ was raised. Isn't it amazing what we have achieved together whilst having so much fun.

Gabby Franklin

THE BREAKFAST CLUB

The Club met at the Golf Club in December to hear the Reverend Sue Barrett explain how she and husband James settled in Cleobury a few years ago.

Following the death of James' mother in 2012, both Sue and James felt that God was calling them to set up a retreat.

At that time they were living in Feckenham, near Redditch, running a smallholding, and James was a hands-on blacksmith with his own business. Although they were able to establish their own house as a retreat, it was not ideal for the purpose, and they did not have sufficient land for their farming plans. A move was essential. After searching, they found Little Detton, which met

their needs. Buying it was a challenge: the property was subject to a local 'Agricultural Tie', requiring the new owner to be employed in agriculture, horticulture, or forestry. Sue applied to buy the property, as a genuine smallholder, with years of experience, and every intention of farming the land. She met the requirements, but was told that if she bought Little Detton, no-one else could live with her unless they were a dependent. So James would not be allowed to live with his wife, as he had his own business elsewhere! He decided to give up his business, and work most of the time on the smallholding, as this was the only way the terms of the 'Tie' could be met. Success! – they moved to Little Detton in 2017.

They have expanded their farming to include cows, Jacob sheep, pigs, turkeys, ducks, and chickens, and they farm in a sustainable, low-input way. The perfect backdrop for their retreat. If that wasn't enough to do, Sue (already ordained as a Priest in 2007) also became a Licensed Assistant Minister to our Benefice in 2017. She feels that God has guided her throughout the last few, momentous, years.

The Club does not meet in January, so the next meeting will be on February 11th at Lacon Childe School and our speaker will be Olwen Sales with "In the Saddle". Those wishing to attend should contact Angela Drennan (270636) to book places, and are asked to arrive a little earlier than usual – by 7.20 am, please.

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TEDDIES AND TOYS



Carolyn and Keith Balmer, long term supporters of charities that help deprived children.

Teddies and Toys is the charity support operation that rents an office in the Market Hall. Just so that anyone with suitable toys their children have outgrown can leave them there and they will be passed on to children who simply don't get gifts in their normal life.

Small teddy bears go to Jenny Vanderhook's Christmas Shoebox operation and they also have a cooperative arrangement with the Severn Hospice Shop and pass on fabrics that can be sold as fund raisers. Teddy bears seem to have a universal appeal

and Keith's old company picked up the bill for a container sent to Syria, where war has left too many children orphaned and struggling. They have to be careful that the little bears don't contain anything like batteries - very common today. They take the batteries out and sew the bears back up.

The Teddy Trust is Leominster based, where Ellie Somme started it six years ago. The Balmers are typical of the selfless people who give time and finance to make life better for deprived children. Like buying bags of children's clothing from the Severn Hospice Shop and sending it where it's needed most. Like children in India suffering from inherited AIDS.

They realised that much of the charity clothing was being sold on to Africa, where traders then made a profit by selling it. They arrange to send direct to charities over there. And if they are offered household or office goods, they pass them on to shops like our own Severn Hospice branch, who have a ready market for hole punches.

They've given support to orphanages in Dar es Salaam, Bali and India and have visited Cape Town to give aid there.

Carolyn and Keith are simply big hearted people who recognise that they can help orphaned and deprived children, the innocents who suffer most when war breaks out or drought hits crops. Just getting them to sit down and talk about it took a long time, an indication of how modest they are about the time and effort they give to others.

APOLOGIES

Oh dear, the December/January issue of the Clarion had a good ration of errors. It started with the editor putting Neen Savage's Saint Mary's Church in the low hills around Kinlet. That was quite a removal job!

Then Councillor Jon Bodenham was renamed as Bateman in the headline of his story on Page 39, though the credit at the end of that piece gave Jon his correct name.

And finally the website for the Men's Shed was given as www.cms.co.uk. It's not, it has a full name:

www.cleoburymortimermensshed.co.uk.

Humble apologies to all those offended by such sloppy work. Is it time for the old feller to retire and just mind his own business?

People of Cleobury, can you help us again by gifting us more teddies and soft toys. We are mounting a big push, so we need your help. With your help we have sent soft toys to deprived children all over the world, and even sent them to less fortunate children in the UK. Please help by dropping your treasured soft toys off at the Market Hall in Cleobury.
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TOO MANY CAMERAS?

The town has obtained grants for Closed Circuit Television (or CCTV if you prefer) cameras in recent years. At one time it seemed that there was a contest to see which was the most common facility in Cleobury, cameras or hair dressers. Cameras are ahead at the moment.

So what do they all do? There are about 24 cameras, watching over the town 24 hours a day. We don't have someone sitting in an office watching them all day long, but if there is an incident they can all be checked to see what happened. A good example is cars on the main street damaged by passing vehicles; Town Clerk Matt Sheehan tells us that the image is so clear that we can read the number plates of a vehicle, and that in a number of accident damage incidents the guilty party could be identified. Pass that record on to your insurance company and the chance of a settlement is much greater.

That number plate recognition helps in tracing people involved in all sorts of incidents outside the town. Like the Land Rover stolen and run down Ron Hill in a vain attempt to get it started. When that didn't work, the

villains all piled into the car they arrived in and headed for home. The cameras had their number and it was passed on to the police.

Up the hill at Doddington, Gary Shorthouse had a truck and trailer stolen one night; together worth about £15,000. The first he knew was in the morning, when there was no trace of two of the essential tools of the farm's business. His wife Deana put a message out on Facebook and a responder reported a truck and trailer stopped on Ludlow Road to sort out a problem late that night. That established the time and a search of camera records gathered at the office in the fire station showed truck, trailer and the villains' car, complete with that vital number.

Deana Shorthouse is full of praise for the police and the action at the fire station that got their truck returned. Insurance covered the trailer loss, as that had been quickly sold on, but the truck came back. "We got married soon after and I told people we didn't need more Pyrex, so we asked them for a donation for the fire station, as they'd been absolutely brilliant."

There are other examples of thieves being traced as they pass through the town in the course of their nasty business. But the

system the town has now records every vehicle passing through, about 7,500 on an average day. If you're driving on honest business, that's not a problem. But if a known criminal comes this way, there's a very good chance our camera system will record the fact.

It's a compliment to our system that Blakedown, Broseley and Ludlow councils have been to examine what Cleobury Mortimer does and are planning similar installations of their own.

With the excellent example of free SmartWater issued to every household and the We Don't Buy Crime drive making the sale of stolen goods very risky, it's no accident that this is a low crime area. It's no excuse for being complacent and thinking we don't have to be vigilant and look out for thieves, but this is not the sort of soft target that criminals like to find. And don't forget that if you do see something suspicious, call 101 and report it.

WISE BIT

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**Veronica Hargreaves
CM Reading Group
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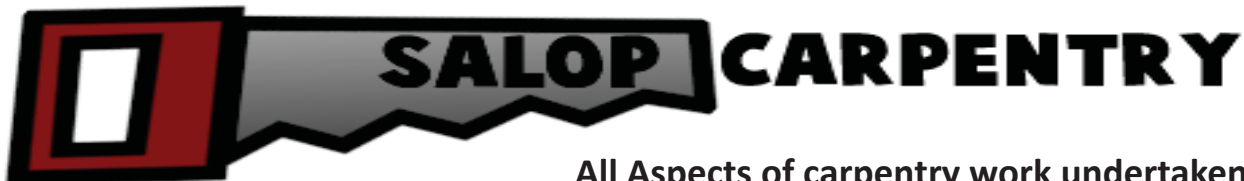
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TEAM KIMI



The amazing Team Kimi, Bev and Kathie and one very appealing little owl, reported their total funds raised in 2019: £10,176.60p split between Bayton's Nineveh Care Farm and New Bridge Cat Rescue.

There's no rest for the team, who have set themselves a 2020 target of double that very impressive 2019 figure. Not a penny for themselves, all of it for the two needy causes they favour. It's that great Cleobury Mortimer kind heartedness coming out again. Don't miss them at the Cleobury Country Farmers' Market through the year, plus lots of other regional events.

THE HALF DEAD POETS' SOCIETY

A small but interesting group met in the library late in December and shared a wide range of readings. From Wordsworth to Tony Smith and David Walford, via Roger McGough and Bob Dylan amongst others. Bob Charteris hit the right note by reading one of Tony Smith's works and we laughed a lot, the best answer to the uncertain world we live in.

Our meeting this month is on Monday the 24th, 7.30 in the town library. Come, read or just listen and enjoy the company.

RHYME TIME

It seems only right to follow a report of adults enjoying poetry to tell you about the other extreme of the age scale. The tots from Ever After Nursery will be in the library from 10.30 to 11.00 on Wednesday the 5th to begin the process of listening and learning about the really imaginative use of our language.

CHARITY MORNING AT NEEN SAVAGE

We had a brilliant morning down at Neen Savage Parish Hall on November 23rd. There was a Christmassy atmosphere

with stalls selling cards and gifts plus plenty of cake and tea or coffee on offer.

We raised a wonderful £525 for the Edwards & Hinckesman Foundation, a charity that supports local young people through their educational studies. Charles Whitworth, one of the trustees, said "We are enormously grateful."

I was really pleased with how it went. As a family we feel it is important to give something back to the a Foundation which has supported both of our children through their further education.

Alison Andrews

Thank you for that report, Alison. Published late because we had to get the December issue off to the printer on time. JR.

ROCK PATHFINDERS

Two February walks again this month. On Thursday the 6th it starts at 10.30 from Droitwich Canals Gateway Park on the B490 Hanbury Road. WR9 7DU or SO Reference 916630.

On Thursday the 20th it's much nearer home with a start from The Sun and Slipper at Mable, DY14 9JL or SO reference 689716. Same starting time, everyone welcome to both events. Details: Alan on 01299 400304.

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Larch Barn Nursery operative	Requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packing plants 	Contact Details: Hello@thelarchbarn.co.uk

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Branson Poyner, Branson Automotive Ltd, New House Farm, Tenbury Road, Cleobury Mortimer DY14 8RD. Email branson_automotive@aol.com or phone 01299 832900 for an informal chat.



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For an information pack please contact us on 01743 260220, or email HRAssistants@shropshirefire.gov.uk, stating your name, address and quoting Cleobury Mortimer

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WALKING THE NEW YEAR IN

The Footpath Association had a record attendance at their New Year Parish Walk, with 49 keen people gathering at the Parish Church and setting off for a tour of the town's outer environs.



Easy access through the CMFA installed kissing gates meant less delay in moving from field to field.

A westward loop to join Tenbury Road and branch off down Eagle Lane before the long haul up Clarvers to join the Bayton road towards town before branching off at The White House to slither down the steep drop to the farther stretches of Pinkham. Back to Lower Street, where the more energetic went right for Papermill Cottages and a climb back to gather at the Kings

Arms. The editor, claiming shortage of breath, took the shorter route along Lower Street to the welcoming warmth of the KA to get the first beer in and wait for the main party to arrive.

In a piece of logical thinking, secretary and treasurer Mazella was collecting the annual subs. With a free lunch courtesy of the KA's Wendy, there was no dissent. The ease with which we moved along paths, thanks to metal kissing gates instead of the old stiles that caused long, slow queues, is a credit to the CMFA and the work they do to keep access to the paths clear.

I talked to recent recruit Bruce Atkinson, who combines a love of the countryside with work as a specialist builder and summer weekends racing his classic Alfa Romeo. If that's not a well rounded man, I don't know what is.

The lunch was a simple but very tasty affair. Dishes of bread on the tables and a small dish of chicken curry or three bean chilli served to go with it. I would happily go and pay money for that chilli - really nice.

I was later home than I had expected, but the walk and the pleasant company and good food made the hours fly by with little evidence of their passing. The New Year started well. JR

THE CLARION CUP

The Cup and replica that each year's winner of the Best Dressed Window at Christmas will win, has been sponsored by the Cleobury Clarion. The idea is to encourage traders to build on the appeal of the Christmas lights and encourage people to visit our town.

The judges were the Clarion editor, Councillor Paul French and Town Clerk Matt Sheehan, who walked up and down the High Street before sitting down and comparing lists over a cup of tea. It was not an easy task, with a lot of traders taking trouble to put on a good display, but Kas Elliott's lovely little Masquerade shop was the agreed winner.

The Cup was handed over on January 6th, when the Shropshire Star's photographer took a big range of shots to put on the pages of the county's top selling paper. Another boost for Cleobury as a place where things are happening.

The competition will be a feature of future Christmases and the cup and the winner's replica will be in the Masquerade window for all our readers to see as they pass up the High Street. The editor can tell you that Kas does a great job on curtains and furnishings.



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Mawley Estate Update

With the New Year in sight, recovery and restoration work at Mawley Hall continues in earnest, with much activity visible from the footpaths and bridleways which cross the Estate.

The extensive addition of native trees continues, with approximately seven hectares of woodland planting taking place within the western part of the Estate during the winter months. At the same time, carefully selected parkland trees will be planted in the areas known as 90 Acres and Sadlers, and alongside the River Rea.

Following the granting of licences, some commercial forestry plantation has been taken down, and the areas thus cleared will be restored to paddocks in the spring.

The repair of drystone walling in the fields alongside the North Drive and the Estate's cemetery has been completed. Work will begin soon on the repair of walls around the Old Deer Park, starting at the Lower Forge and continuing westwards towards Rookery. Using oak and chestnut – in common with the tree guards which can be widely seen on the Estate – the installation of new fencing continues along the bridle path past 90 Acres, and in due course will continue in other areas. A temporary compound has been created in the field above the walled garden to accommodate machinery and materials. This will be removed entirely once works on the walled garden are completed. Weeks of heavy rain mean that the ground is saturated, and work has been delayed to avoid unnecessary damage to the delicate topsoil structure within the walled garden.

The initial works to repair the infrastructure of the Lower Forge and enhance the fish pass have been completed, although the waterfall suffered significant damage during the autumn floods, with some sections of the stone walling being washed away or undermined. The remaining structure has been stabilised and a temporary dam created along its crest. These measures will restrict the flow of water during the remainder of the winter. The structure is being inspected in detail and lasting repairs will be carried out next summer.

At the same time, Shropshire Council has asked for a closure of the Upper Forge footbridge because of flood damage. The Estate has brought in structural engineers to assess what remedial works are necessary in order to help the Council get the footbridge re-opened as soon as possible.

Extensive masonry restoration of the Coach House continues, with the carved stonework around the top of the building being removed piece-by-piece to effect repairs.

The replacement of the roof covering of the Barn using handmade clay tiles is well underway. The opening up of the original 18thC brick ventilation holes to the exterior walls continues along with general masonry repairs. Carpentry repairs are underway to the large oak beams supporting the floors, with original members being kept and re-used wherever possible.

A temporary covering of the Summerhouse has been constructed to enable the skilled masons who will join the team shortly to work in dry conditions over the winter.

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

www.cleoburyclarion.co.uk

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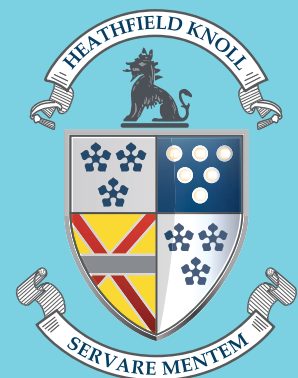
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CLEOBURY FESTIVAL 2020

The Festival 2020 is now in the planning stage. It will be held at Lacon Childe School on June 27th from 11.00 to 5.00

The organisers would like to know what attractions people would like. We would also appreciate constructive feedback on last year's festival so we can improve what we offer in 2020.

We will have forms and collection boxes in the town for your comments. In the short term please leave your comments on the Festival Facebook Page or with me on paulfrench143@yahoo.com.

If you can help in any way with preparation or on the 27th please leave your details at the contacts above. Why not volunteer and be a part of your Festival in 2020?

Paul French

THE FOOTPATH ASSOCIATION

Our festive walks programme enjoyed record numbers. On New Year's Day 49 walkers making an impressive sight weaving around the town. Do visit Page 17 of this issue and

our Facebook page for pictures and "like" us.

This month's walk is on the 2nd at 10.00 from St Mary's Church. Make sure you have suitable footwear as it's likely to stay muddy. The popular Walking for Health walks continue through winter, twice monthly Wednesday mornings; www.cmfa.co.uk for details. The walk on February 12th meets on the Sports and Social Club car park for transport to the Wyre Forest Visitor Centre *Graham Simpson*

CATHERTON COMMON

Reptiles such as common lizard and slow worms are prolific on the common compared to elsewhere in the countryside and are looking for bracken litter to hibernate in over winter. Bracken needs to be controlled on the common, but its use by reptiles at this time of year shows it has value. We have all four of the widespread reptiles at Catherton: slow worm, grass snake, adder and common lizard. One of the most important sites in the county for amphibians and reptiles.

Volunteers have recently been spending at least a day a month

on gorse removal where it becomes tall and dense. We are trying to create diversity where gorse has dominated, by creating more open patches where grass, heather and other plants can establish and break up the dense gorse mat. Small pools and damp areas are particularly valuable, dense gorse can shade the water body and surrounding plants, and on bell pit mounds it can damage valuable grassland habitat.

We have had problems with garden rubbish and green waste fly-tipped over the autumn and early winter. People often tidy their gardens before winter sets in and don't realise the problems it can create if left on the common. If you see any waste dumped on the common please contact me at so that I can deal with it, and please dispose of your own garden waste properly do not leave it on the common where it can damage the local habitat as well as looking unsightly.

Clive Dean, Shropshire Wildlife Trust reserves officer south.

01743 284281 / 07495 564350, E: clive@shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk



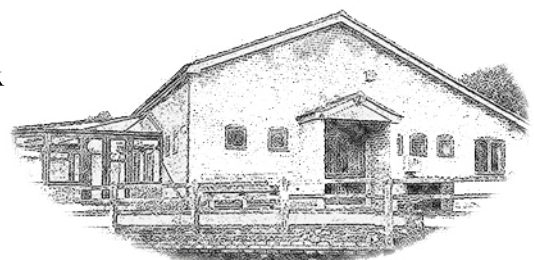
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Cleobury Mortimer Benefice
Services, Events and Activities throughout the Benefice.
February 2020

St Mary the Virgin Parish Church, Cleobury Mortimer.

Services: 2nd-8.30am Said Eucharist & 11.00am The Eleven O Clock.

9th, 16th, 23rd-8.30am Said Eucharist & 9.45am Parish Eucharist.

Events/Activities:

Eucharist to say farewell to Bishop Alistair and renew our baptismal vows– Sunday 2nd at 11.00am.

Dementia Friendly Talk– Tuesday 4th at 7.30pm. All welcome. Please confirm your attendance with Sam in the office.

Drop in at St Mary's– Thursday 20th, 10.30am-11.30am. Hosted by the Pastoral Care Group-a confidential listening service for the whole of the Cleobury Community. All welcome.

Ash Wednesday Services– Wednesday 26th. 10.00am Said Eucharist & 7.30pm Sung Eucharist.

Both services with imposition of ashes.

Prayers for Lent– commencing Thursday 27th & each Thursday during Lent at 6.30pm. All welcome.

St John the Baptist Parish Church, Kinlet.

Services: 2nd-No service, 9th-6.30pm Evensong, 16th-10.00am Matins, 23rd-6.30pm Evensong.

St Mary's Parish Church, Neen Savage.

Services: 2nd-No service, 9th-No service, 16th-6.30pm Evensong, 23rd-9.00am Eucharist.

St Michael and All Angels Parish Church, Hopton Wafers.

Services: 2nd-No service, 9th-10.00am Eucharist, 16th– 10.00am Family service, 23rd-10.00am Eucharist.

Saint John the Baptist Parish Church, Doddington.

Services: 2nd-No service, 9th-11.00am Eucharist, 16th-No service, 23rd-3.00pm Evening prayer.

Events/Activities:

Burns Night-Tickets £ 7.00, 1.00pm at Doddington Village Hall. Contact 01584 318036 for tickets.

All Saints Parish Church, Neen Sollars.

Services: 2nd -No service, 9th-11.00am Eucharist, 16th-No service, 23rd-11.00am Village Worship.

St George's Parish Church, Milson.

Services: 2nd-No service, 9th-No service, 16th-11.00am Eucharist, 23rd-No service.

The Church Office open Tuesday & Thursday from 9.00am-2.00pm
Contact details: Sam Dolphin, cleoburychurch@hotmail.com, Tel: 01299 272916
Benefice Website: www.cmbenefice.com

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DODDINGTON FRIENDSHIP CLUB

Happy New Year! Doddington Friendship Club will restart on the March 10th. We have a full programme for the coming year, with lots of different things going on. Come and see for yourself as a guest, we look forward to making lots of new friends. The club takes place every alternate Tuesday from 2.00 to 4.00pm at the Village Hall starting with the date as mentioned.

Ann Belcher

THE CHRISTMAS SHOE BOXES

It may have taken us all year but what a result! 1,666 shoe boxes were sent from Cleobury Mortimer and the surrounding villages, some going to Romania and the rest to Moldova. An army of you helped in so many ways and it all added up to such an incredible and record amount. I would like to pass on the happy smiles and thanks from the children who received our gifts. Gabby Franklin and myself went out to Romania for a week just before Christmas to help give out boxes. I looked but did not see any of our boxes. I kept hoping to give out Home boxes to the grown ups as I have

never seen that, but we never did. Still, seeing the children open their shoe boxes is always a magical experience which I can never tire of and which makes the hard work all year so rewarding.

Thank you so very much for your kindness and generosity and for your part in this mammoth and worthwhile task. Here's to next year!

Jenny Vanderhook

THE SOROPTIMISTS

We have a Big Curry Night on February 28th, 7.00 for 7.30 at Baxter Church, Bull Ring, Kidderminster. For tickets at £20 call 07817 808320. Bring your own drinks. All in aid of our National Project, 'Empowering Girls in Nepal.' *Sue Partridge.*

SPECIAL MUSIC AT SAINT LAURENCE'S

David Gaukroger, one time Cleobury resident and internationally recognised as a pianist, composer and judge, will be performing his new work 'Shropshire Journey' in St. Laurence's Church, Ludlow, on Saturday the 15th this month.

The work is built around Housman's 'Blue Remembered Hills'; David wrote the music for the theatre piece featuring John

Nettles and Timothy West. Ulrich von Hecker will play violin and Kim Begley will narrate the story. The performance starts at 1.00, there is no admission charge but there will be a retiring collection. Seats are unreserved.

Churches have been the centre of music for centuries and do suit special performance like this. The musicians will also perform Stravinsky's 'Suite Otalienne' and Schubert's 'Sonatina in A Minor'. Such a setting promises well.

SEVERN HOSPICE

In December Severn Hospice held Advent Lunches in the Market Hall, serving soups and apple puddings. All provided, free of charge, by our lovely ladies and the events raised over £300 for Hospice Funds. The Men's Shed organised a weekly Raffle which raised £130 for their project.

Many thanks to Ashley's Bakery for providing the bread, to Mawley Milk for the cream for the sweets, and to all the volunteers who gave up their time to organise the lunches and help on the day.

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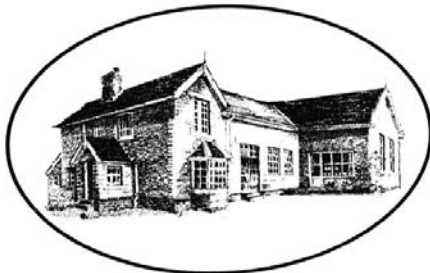
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What can you say about parking like this, even if it was only for a short while? People are walking into the road, and that is dangerous.

We won't give the writer's name, but they say they realise that the driver had a job to do, with a collection to make. "The fact that he completely blocked the pavement and parked on double yellow lines caused problems for us as pedestrians. Three of us, plus a young lady with a baby in a push chair were forced to walk in the road."

"Parking in town and the level of traffic passing through remains an unsolved and quite serious issue," was the final remark from our contributor. Few would argue with that logic.

THE SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB

The Senior Citizens Christmas party on December 6th saw 60

folks attend and by general agreement, a fantastic time was had by all. Thanks go to Ashley and Estelle Pugh and Cleobury Co-Op for their bread and food donations. And thanks to Trevor Wood and Years 5/6 from Cleobury Primary School Choir for entertainment and getting us in the Christmas spirit.

February starts with a Volleyball Club Race Night on Saturday 1st, start time 7.30pm. CM Rugby Club are also at home against Harborne on this day, kick-off 2.15pm.

The Six Nations Rugby Tournament also kicks off on this day with Wales v Italy at 2.15pm. On Sunday, 2nd February, France play England, kick-off 3pm. For this and every England match following on 8th, 23rd February 7th and 14th March, hot beef rolls and Yorkshire Pudding will be served. The Club will be showing all the Six Nations matches on its big screen; come and support your teams in the home of rugby in Cleobury Mortimer.

On February 14th, a Pie and A Pint in aid of Severn Hospice will take place, 7.30pm start at a cost of £10 a ticket.

The British Legion will be hosting a quiz on February 18th at 7.30pm and on February 22nd, CM Rugby Club are at home to Old Saltleians, kick-off at 2.15pm.

Finally, on March 1st, the Club hosts its annual Big Quiz. This year, all proceeds will go to the Sports and Social Club. Register your team of up to six people at 7pm for a 7.30pm start, cost £15 per team.

For more information please call in at the Club, or contact us on 01299 271448 or via our Facebook Page. *Glenys Turpin.*

HOPTON CAROLS

Great to see the church full, around 80 in all. Many thanks to the ticket sellers and those who gave prizes for raffle and auction. Ashley conducted the service and was MC for the evening; Brian Perry auctioneer.

Thanks to Cooks the Florists for the Christmas tree and to all those who donated auction items and mince pies.

On March 7th we welcome the Kidderminster Male Voice Choir at 7.00. Tickets at £10 will include refreshments.

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CLEOBURY W.I.

We finished 2019 with a Christmas meal at the KA and wondered what January's monthly treat might bring. There was much fun to be had in a 'percussion evening' and we actually made music. Our Tutor Tim Scarborough gave everyone an African drum, a bell or a shaker and told us about the importance of African drumming. People use it to call for help, celebrate various occasions and announce what is happening with scores of different drummings. It was amazing how loud and quiet we could get and how well we listened to each other and the instructor. Everyone enjoyed the experience, especially when we made a louder noise than the ringing bells in the church next door. Thank you Tim for coming to Cleobury Mortimer.

We are looking forward to February 11 when Jamie Mackaill will talk about 'Taking a stand against SCAMS'. We all need to become more aware of this kind of terrible fraud. The WI would like to invite you all to our next 'Winter Warmer Lunch' on Thursday, February 19 at the Market Hall. We are

fundraising for 'The Men's Shed' and hope you will enjoy the soups, bread and butter and a variety of puddings. There will also be a raffle. We look forward to seeing you.

Gabby Franklin

BUBBLES AT BITTERLEY

Arts Alive have an event at Bitterley Village Hall on the 21st of this month. It's Nick Cassenbaum in 'Bubbles Schmeisis' and is as Yiddish as it sounds. It's set in the Canning Town Schvitz, the last authentic bath house and takes you on a journey before rounding off with a live Klezmer music gig. Lots of laughs along the way.

It all starts at 7.30, tickets are £10, available from Ruth or Andrew on 01584 318047. There will be refreshments in the interval, but if you want to sip a little alcohol, you'll have to take your own.

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

In January we enjoyed an evening with member Marion Wilson who brought a variety of containers to show how to use what is in the garden in

winter. Talking as she worked, she pictures in her head how the arrangement will develop; she does a sketch if she is doing a presentation, to make sure she has assembled all she needs. She completed her first arrangement, then added a few strategic tulips to add colour, then amazed by creating three more superb arrangements, all different in design. We finished the evening with an auction, as Marion donated her works of art to raise funds for the Society. Our next meeting will be on February 10th, when we will learn the history of the walled garden from William Scott.

Liz Smurthwaite

SOUP AT MELVILLE

The Melville Chapel that is such a landmark on the road from Doddington to Oreton and beyond, will be offering a Soup Lunch on February 12th, between 12.30 and 2.00. That must be worth a visit if you're in the area.

BINGO CLUB

Just a memory jogger about the Bingo Club at the Sports and Social Club every Monday night at 8.00. £1 to get in and £4.30 for eight games, with cash prizes if it's busy. Great value.

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Roads in South Shropshire

Last month, following the wet autumn and winter, I was struck by the unusual volume of complaints I have received from folk concerned – quite properly - about the very poor state of many roads across South Shropshire.

Having visited relatives over Christmas in other rural counties, I am convinced Shropshire’s roads include some of the most pothole-ridden in the country. So I am clear urgent action is needed not just to prevent further deterioration and damage to vehicles – but also for durable improvements, with repairs which will last.

A report from the County Councils Network highlighted the significant disparity between urban and rural areas, in how much funding they have available to tackle potholes and road repairs. London Councils are able to spend 83% more than the West Midlands on road repairs.

I have taken this issue up with the Roads Minister – a task made easier by the Conservative Party manifesto pledge at the General Election to a flagship £2bn pothole fund over the next four years – as well as other key transport issues for South Shropshire. For example, I have also urged the Minister to ensure Shropshire is included in any future pilot of the Superbus Network – a scheme currently being piloted for the first time in Cornwall - to improve public transport in rural areas.

But on potholes, the government is both aware of the scale of the problem, and has committed to making funding available to local authorities – two key elements to delivering action on this issue. The last Pothole Fund was allocated 74% to rural shires, and I will press Ministers to allocate the resources in the same manner for this £2bn fund.

That isn’t to say Shropshire has received no funding from central government to fix the state of our roads. In September last year Shropshire Council were awarded £7.3m, through which stretches of 46 of the county’s roads were resurfaced, 25 of which were in South Shropshire. The government also provided over £1m in 2016/17, and over £1.3m in 2017/18 to improve our roads through the Pothole Action Fund. But I am making the case that the recent condition of Shropshire’s roads is so poor, we need our next allocation sooner, rather than later.

Responsibility for maintaining local roads is split between Highways England and Shropshire Council, with funding from central government. So I also raised the issue of potholes with other Shropshire MPs at our regular meeting with Shropshire Council last month, to make clear we need further action from the Council through its highways contractor to rectify the problem and improve the condition of our roads.

We can all play our part by reporting potholes we see to Shropshire Council - since there are over 3,100 miles of roads, cycle ways, and footpaths in Shropshire, which clearly cannot all be continuously inspected. You can do so online at <https://shropshire.gov.uk/roads-and-highways/highways-maintenance/pothole-maintenance-and-repair/>.

We have seen colder Springs in recent years, including 2018’s Beast from the East, which left us playing catch up in maintaining local roads. So this is an issue that does need urgent action, which I shall be pressing the government and Shropshire Council to deliver.

Philip Dunne



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Sat 1 st	08.00	Sale of Household Goods at Knowle Sports Club, Clee Hill. Great bargains!		
	7.30	Volleyball Club Race Night at the Sports & Social Club. PAGE 27		
Sun 2 nd	10.00	The Footpath Association step out from the Parish Church. PAGE 21		
	6.00	Open Mic Night at the Kings Arms, Church Street. Acoustic only		
Mon 3 rd	7.00	The Town Council meet at Cleobury Country Centre to conduct town business, members of the public may bring matters of concern before the council, 3mins per person		
	8.00	Bingo Club meet at the Sports & Social Club		
Tues 4 th	2.00	NHS Hearing Aid Clinic at St Mary's community room		
Wed 5 th	10.30	Rhyme time for tots, led by Ever After Nursery, at The Library		
Thurs 6 th		BLACK WHEELIE AND RECYCLE BOXES EMPTIED TODAY		
	10.30	Rock Pathfinders walk out from Droitwich Canals Gateway Park. PAGE 13		
Mon 10 th	6.30	The Creative Writing Group meet at The Library to read, listen and discuss.		
	7.30	The Horticultural Society hear William Scott talk about the walled garden. PAGE 29		
	8.00	Bingo Club Night, Sports & Social Club		
Tues 11 th	7.20am	Breakfast Club dine at Lacon Childe School. PAGE 7	Angela	01299 270636
	7.30	Cleobury WI welcome Jamie Mackaill, talking about scams. PAGE 29		
Wed 12 th	10.00	Walking for Health meet at Sports Centre car park. PAGE 7		
	10.00	CoCo Coffee Morning in the Market Hall. Great cake and coffee!		
	12.30	Soup Lunch served at the Melville Chapel, Oretton. PAGE 29		
	7.30	Neen Savage WI meet in the Village Hall. PAGE 35		
Thurs 13 th		GREEN WHEELIE BINS EMPTIED TODAY		
Fri 14 th	7.30	Pie and a Pint in aid of Severn Hospice at Sport & Social Club. PAGE 27		
Sat 15 th	1.00	Premiere of David Gaukroger's "Shropshire Journey" at St Lawrence's, Ludlow. PAGE 25		
		"Show the Love" event at Attingham Park. APGE 5		
	7.30	Flicks in the Sticks presents "Downton Abbey" at the Parish Hall		
Mon 17 th	8.00	Bingo Club Night, Sports & Social Club		
Tues 18 th	7.30	British Legion Quiz, Sports & Social Club		

'PIE AND A PINT'

7.30 Friday, February 14th, at the Sports and Social Club, Love Lane.

This evening is much more than its title suggests. It will feature Doctor Mark Baldwin with one of his thoroughly researched and interesting lectures. This one is titled "Wish You Were Here - The Social History of the Postcard" and it is worth the entry cost alone to hear this renowned speaker.



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Thurs 20 th		BLACK WHEELIE BINS AND RECYLCE BOXES EMPTIED TODAY		
	10.30	Rock Pathfinders step out from The Sun and Slipper at Mamble. PAGE 13		
	12.30	WI Winter warmer Lunch at the Market Hall. PAGE 29		
Fri 21 st	7.30	"Bubbles Schmeisis" sounds like a real Yiddish fun night! PAGE 29		
Sat 22 nd	12noon	Pancake Day for St John's Church at Doddington Village Hall		
Mon 24 th	7.30	Half Dead Poets Society gather in the Library. Word lovers welcome		
	8.00	Bingo Club Night, Sports & Social Club		
Wed 26 th	10.00	Walking for Health step out from the Market Hall. PAGE 7		
	10.00	CoCo Coffee Morning in the Market Hall. Good social occasion		
	7.30	Clows Top Gardening Club welcomes Los Bisell, who'll talk about Moors Meadow. PAGE 35		
Thurs 27 th		GREEN WHEELIE BINS EMPTIED TODAY		
Fri 28 th	7.30	Soroptimists' Big Curry Night in aid of this year's National Project. PAGE 25		
		AND LOOKING FORWARD TO MARCH.....		
Sun 1 st	7.00	Sports & Social Club's Big Quiz – should be a great night. PAGE 27		
Mon 2 nd	8.00	Bingo Club Night, Sports & Social Club		
Thurs 5 th		BLACK WHEELIE BINS AND RECYCLE BOXES EMPTIED TODAY		
	7.00	Annual General Meeting of the Friends of St Mary's, Market Hall		
Sat 7 th	7.00	Kidderminster Male Voice Choir at Hopton Parish Church. PAGE 27		
Mon 9 th	8.00	Bingo Club Night, Sports & Social Club		
Tues 10 th	2.00	Doddington Friendship Club is open again! PAGE 25		

IN THE MARCH 'CLARION'

We'll have a new feature page:

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

It will be all about the popular pastime of walking through the wonderful local countryside. It will naturally include our own Footpath Association and its members and events, plus the Rock Pathfinders and their story as well as the hugely successful annual 'Pound the Bounds' that raises funds for the County Air Ambulance. And we'll have guest contributors to tell you about the benefits of walking.

In the usual outlets on March 1st



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Jobs to Do This Month

Wash seed trays and pots thoroughly, for reuse

Set potato tubers to chit (sprout) in egg boxes in a light frost-free position

Plant lily bulbs in dry weather in well-drained soil enriched with compost

Cut back ivy on walls before birds start nesting

Repair and repaint any fences that need overhauling

Put clothes or fleece in position for early outdoor sowings or transplants

Weed and mulch round the base of any fruit trees

Clear dead leaves away from hellebores and other bulbs

Prune weak growth from early summer-flowering clematis

Cut late-flowering clematis back to 15-30cm from the ground

Our next meeting will be on February 26th and the speaker will be Ros Bissell on 'Moors Meadow'.

Pauline Bowen

FRIENDS OF SAINT MARY'S

The year starts with our AGM on March 5th, 7pm in The Market Hall. We will have a vacancy on our committee and

welcome nominations or volunteers to join us.

A Quiz Night with Fish and Chip supper is to be held on Friday 13th March starting at 7.30pm in the Sports and Social Club. Teams of four, tickets £10 available from members of the committee or from our usual outlets: Cleobury Country Centre, Cleobury Pharmacy, Spire Hairdressing.

Alec Osbaldiston

NEEN SAVAGE W.I.

Our December meeting showed off the talents of members Anji and Sandra, who helped us make festive wreaths. Wonderful to see everyone join in and make creations.

In January we welcomed Anni Roper and Chris Jones to talk about Anni's business Confidantes and Chris's 'Bras by Appointment' which will take over Anni's clients when she retires to spend more time with her grandchildren. They offer an amazing service for women who have needed shape altering surgery. Over the years Anni has also supplied lingerie to many women without these needs and it was shocking to learn that 80% are likely to be wearing the wrong size bra. This can lead to poor posture, back and neck pain and skin sores. We were also horrified to hear most bras

have a life expectancy of just six to eight months! The final tip for all the female readers of the Clarion is to carry out the 'Amanda Shimmy' when putting on your bra in the morning – lean forwards and shake your shoulders to settle everything into place.

Our next meeting is February 12th, 7.30pm at the Parish Hall, Neen Savage when Mary Warrilow will be talking about her work with Lipoedema UK to raise awareness of this condition, mainly affecting women. Visitors are always welcome so if you want to learn more please come along. Visitors are charged £4 to include a light supper and raffle ticket.

A New Year means a new programme and we have a wide range of speakers and activities planned for 2020. Please look out for details in The Clarion or on our Facebook Page – Neen Savage WI.

Catherine Evans

CANCER RESEARCH

In the West Midlands - and they include us in that - Cancer Research were so successful in raising money in 2019 that they could invest £546 million in research. That covers ways to prevent, diagnose early and treat the disease. Thank you to everyone who donated.

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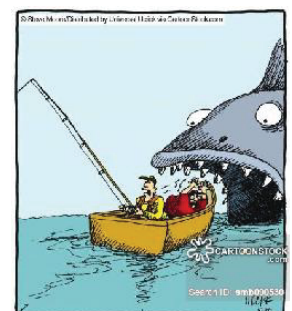
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Is that possible? It seems so, because Tina Hobin has plans to produce just such a thing and is looking for local people who would be interested in taking part. As you'd expect, it will involve comedy, singing and dancing. Expect guidance from Tina herself, who produced the same kind of event when she lived in Oxfordshire in the 1990s.

So step forward, all of you who fancy helping, either with a part on stage or in the backstage crew. Contact Tina on 01299 272882 or tina.hobin@uwclub.net

SIAN'S OFF RUNNING AGAIN

The devoted Sian Powell is off running to raise funds for charity again. She explains:

On April 26th I will be running the London Marathon for the Severn Hospice in memory of Pat Williams. Pat was a dear friend of mine who sadly passed away last April having received support from the Severn Hospice in her final days. I know you did a fantastic write up when Pat passed away and the Severn Hospice is such a

great charity, unfortunately used by many people locally.

I have been doing some fundraising already, like selling Christmas quizzes before Christmas with help from the local Brownie and Guide leaders (Pat was a Guide leader for many years) which has raised £362. I drew the winner and Kendon Polak won.

I have also sold 26 memory ribbons - dedicating a mile of my run to a loved one.

My sponsorship link is www.justgiving.com/sian-powell12

JIM'S A HERO



Rock British Legion Appeals Officer Jim Woods, with shed.

Photo: Nigel Caldicott

The Far Forest and Rock branch of the Royal British Legion have a great reputation for their fund raising efforts in support of the Poppy Appeal. In 2018 they

raised a total of £9,000.13, an amazing amount for a rural branch of the movement. Then came 2019...

In October the branch launched their campaign at The Collier's Arms and the M5 Strensham North Services area. It just grew from there, including a Carriage Drive in the Wyre Forest as a big effort was made. And at the New Year branch meeting the total raised was announced - £19640.01! More than double 2018's result.

Jim commented "We were hoping to exceed our 2018 total this year and are absolutely amazed at this incredible public support for our efforts."

There's a running joke in the branch that they need to build a shed to keep all the collection boxes and stuff in. So secretary May Carter made a mini Poppy Shed that was handed to Jim at the meeting.

Far Forest and Rock branch meet at the Rock Cross Inn on the second Monday of each month, starting at 7.00. You'll also find them on Facebook. They naturally welcome those interested in the work of the Legion and this remarkably successful branch in particular.

Congratulations to Jim and all his fellow Poppy Appeal workers.

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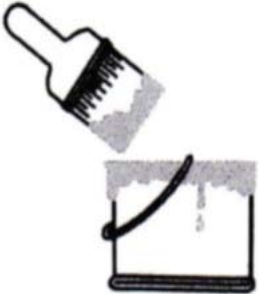
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Spring has come! Well, let's say that by mid-January there were plenty of signs that our wildlife was behaving as if the time had come to burst its buds, flower, mate or whatever seemed appropriate for spring. There were snowdrops and primroses in my garden, hazel catkins opening along the hedgerow and birds calling excitedly everywhere



The female Tawny Owl, one of the varieties you can spot right here in Cleobury Mortimer.

For several weeks now Tawny Owls have been hooting loudly nearby. The hoot is the true song of the bird but the female often answers with the sharp, ascending 'whit-whit' contact call. (The British Trust for Ornithology's website has a 'Learn about Owls' page which, helpfully, has recordings of all the British owls.) They will already be nesting and may have eggs by the end of the month. Their natural nest site is a hollow tree but they will readily use a nest box with a large entrance hole (150mm or wider), at least 2.5 m high and with a clear flight path. A piece of

dowel or branch attached to the side of the box makes a helpful perch for adults and fledgling young. Once the eggs are laid they are incubated one at a time, with food supply determining how many are hatched. One of my sources mentions grey squirrels as one of their foods but I feel this is wishful thinking: voles, shrews, worms and small birds are more likely to form the bulk of their diet.

Mandarin ducks, which don't even feature in our older books on British birds, have established themselves firmly on the River Severn, Dowles Brook, Trimpley Reservoir and smaller pools in the forest. Like Tawny Owls they nest in tree holes but not so early in the year. Some years ago a pair chose to nest in an old, hollow apple tree at Unclyls but the eggs were abandoned. The nest was so deep that I would imagine the ducklings would have found it extremely difficult to exit safely. At this time of the year a pair of Mandarins make their presence felt by circling over the farm at dusk on their way to the reservoir, flying rapidly and making shrill, squeaking calls.

The aforementioned BTO website will also tell you how you can take part in their Nest Box Challenge. Volunteers are asked to monitor the birds in their garden through the breeding season and the data gathered will give important information on the status of our native birds and the success of our efforts to help them. So get those nest boxes cleaned out now to be ready for the real spring!

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Happy New Year. Just after the last 'Clarion' went to press, we were told that R&B were pulling out of both the 291 and 292 services and surrendering their operators licence with effect from 5th January. The service was re-tendered by Worcestershire (why?) and you know who was successful. This seemed a strange move as not long ago, Diamond were desperate to get rid of the 292 (although not as desperate as we were to see them go). It may be that, because of the more sensible route and R&B's efforts, passenger numbers had improved enough for money to be made. Even stranger was their success, as we have been told that cost is only one factor that is taken into account when appointing operators. Other considerations include reputation and competence and if this was the case, Diamond shouldn't have got a look in given their past performance (or lack of it) on this route not to mention their repeated appearances before the Traffic Commissioners. Having said this, I have now been told that, despite expressions of interest, only Diamond submitted a bid so there was no alternative and we have been delivered back into the clutches of the Beast.... The good news for users of the 291 service is that they have been spared as this is now being run by Yarrantons.

True to form, by the end of the first week, a number of services had run late, one bus had caught fire, another was spotted struggling up Hopton Bank at walking pace with its hazard lights flashing and drivers were demanding various sums including the full £5.90 fare from the unfortunate users of the 08.54 to Kiddy. Their usual standards of customer service included ejecting an 82 year old woman from the bus when she refused to pay. This seems to confirm that there is little prospect of competence from our favourite bus company although at the start of week 2, this problem was said to have been resolved (Thank you Madge) and there should be no charge on the 08.54 for holders of wrinkly passes like me (but

let me know if this is not the case). As I write this (17 Jan), they are not charging.

Perhaps we should take a cue from Berlin as the buses there are known to be unreliable with grumpy drivers. Far from this being regarded as a problem, it is apparently considered by Berliners as a fine tradition which should be celebrated. Perhaps users in Cleobury could greet drivers arriving late by demanding that they be even later and grumpier. (On reflection, this might not be a good idea as I'm sure they don't need further encouragement).

A recent survey has shown that bus use now represents only 4% of road mileage covered, down from over 40% in the 1950's. This should not come as a total surprise as, if you want people to use buses, you need to provide them. This is not helped by the condition of the roads around Cleobury which is a disgrace. I have just read that two petitions had been presented to the House of Commons complaining about the state of the roads from Cleobury to Bridgnorth and Tenbury and asking for repairs to be funded. This looked a promising development until I saw the date which was 1761... So, 260 years later, nothing has changed although you would have thought that even Shropshire Council would have sorted this by now... They are probably basking in their success in the 'Life in the Fast Lane' category of the 'Private Eye' annual 'Rotten Borough' awards. Details of their entry were set out last month but they have now beaten all comers so congratulations to those concerned.

A project in the North of England to provide an integrated 'pay as you go' travel system using contactless cards across the north has fallen at the first fence due to the refusal of bus companies to take part. This was due to cost £150 million. The organisers, Transport for the North are now proposing to focus their attention on rail travel, so not very integrated then.

The Clarion is on the World Wide Web

From the fourth day of the month, on www.cleoburyclarion.co.uk complete with all the adverts, so Julie's 'His n Hers' dog grooming service may get an enquiry from New Zealand. If she does, we feel her normal service of collecting the pooch may not be on offer.



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Kass Elliott's lovely little warm and welcoming Masquerade shop has graced the High Street for 15 years and she's having a special celebration with a price reduction from Friday February 18th to Friday March 27. 20 percent off of all the fabric ranges in the shop! That's quite a bargain if you're looking for a quality curtain or fabric job.

"I'd like to say 'Thank You' to all the customers who have supported me in that time," she explained. And a very generous way of saying that is.

DODDINGTON CHURCH UPDATE

Disappointed but not discouraged, That's how we are at St John's. Disappointed that we didn't achieve funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund at the end of last year for our project to improve and repair the church. But not discouraged because they told us we were very close to getting the funding, and should definitely apply again. Many projects have had to apply several times before gaining the funding, so encouraged not just by NLHF but also by the

several other grant bodies who have promised us funding, we shall try again. We are currently working on that application and won't hear anything before the summer.

The main elements of the project are to significantly improve access to the church, add a toilet and catering area, and create an area to display information about the fascinating history of Titterstone Clee Hill. It will include its industries and natural history, as well as the history of the local communities and the church. If you would like to know more, call 01584 318036 or email stjohnsdoddington@gmail.com.

As always we continue with monthly events at the Village Hall, open to all. Our next one is Pancakes, on February 22nd at 12.00 noon - just drop in - and on March 21st we will celebrate both St David & St Patrick with another of our lunches.

Celia Gibb

THE READING GROUP

'Spill, Simmer, Falter, Wither' by Sara Baume. A first novel, with an intriguing title, from this Irish writer. Powerful, emotive and stark, it tells the

tale of a 57 year old man, Ray and One Eye, a rescue dog. Both outcasts, they have an intense relationship. The story is well written with lyrical prose describing wildness, nature and sea.

Following a pleasant start, a sense of unease and some traumatic developments before an ending which is still under debate. A clever writer to engage the reader so thoroughly and be able to convey sad lives with tender care. It was a poignant, compelling book, though not a cheerful Christmas read. Would we recommend? Not certain.

We have a selection of poetry books to read this month and will convene to chat about them on 17th February.

Deana Kimber 271754

CLEOBURY MORTIMER BRITISH LEGION

The Branch's next social event will be a Quiz at the Sports and Social Club on February 18th at 7.00 for 7.30 pm. Entry £3.00 per person, maximum team size five, booking not necessary, proceeds to the Poppy Appeal, details from Lesley Ravenscroft (01299 271135).

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Congratulations to Shropshire Council for winning a national award in a long running annual competition. Normally this would be good news and recognition of a job well done but sadly, the award in question, is for the 'Life in the Fast Lane' category of the Private Eye 'Rotten Boroughs' awards given to the most deserving examples of incompetence and shady dealing by Boroughs and Councils throughout the land. It relates to the spending of over £80,000 on resurfacing the lane leading to a Shropshire Councillor's home (and not much else) even though the lane in question was not even on the local Parish Council's list of areas needing attention. This despite the fact that even the main roads around Cleobury are disintegrating fast and £80,000 would have filled a good few potholes. Still, they say that all publicity is good publicity, so well done to all concerned....

Great lies of our time #1. 'Your call is important to us!'. No it isn't. If it was, I wouldn't be number 19 in the queue because you haven't adequately staffed your call centre. And when did you last hear the message 'We are not experiencing a high volume of calls at present so we can answer you straight away?'. And no, I wouldn't rather go to your unfathomable website which is guaranteed not to have the answer to any question I might have.

#2. 'We are upgrading our IT system to improve your customer experience'. No it won't. It will be either worse or much worse. Speaking from bitter experience, there are only three things that are certain with any new IT system. It will be delivered late, it will be over budget, and it won't work properly, if at all, as TSB customers have found to their cost. Not to mention £12 Billion spent on a new NHS system which didn't work either – that could have built several much needed hospitals.

#3. 'We have introduced self scanning tills to make your shopping experience swifter and more enjoyable'. No, you have done it to save money on staffing. The whole experience is a nightmare and I'm sick of an admonishing

voice telling me that 'there is an unexplained item in the bagging area' or 'please wait for assistance' which often doesn't come very quickly. It's also a nightmare to get the useless plastic banknotes into the appropriate slot if you can locate it. I did once try the 'scan it yourself' system using a hand held scanner which worked OK until I got to the checkout when I was selected for a 'random check'. This involved dragging half the goods back out of the trolley and scanning them again to confirm I had done it in the first place (I had). So much for 'swift and enjoyable'.

I see that Dominic Cummings, Boris Johnson's guru/organ grinder, has launched a request for 'misfits and weirdos' to join the ranks of Government advisors. He takes a swipe at the Civil Service dominated by 'Oxbridge humanities graduates' which seems a little odd as he is one. I am wondering whether I should send him my CV although I have little in common with him except that we both look like we get our clothes from charity shops...

There is a developing tendency in the USA for passengers scared of flying to be allowed to take an 'Emotional Support Animal' with them in the cabin. These are usually quite small such as puppies and kittens but in one recent case was a pony... I don't think it was a large example but I wonder where this will end – I wouldn't like to be an airline rep asked to approve the carriage of an Emotional Support giraffe or elephant...

What is the most valuable product on Earth by weight? Diamonds? Platinum? No. It's printer ink. I had to replace my printer recently due to an unfortunate boot/printer interface incident as previously mentioned by the Editor. The replacement was the same make (HP) and a similar spec, just a later version. All was fine until I came to replace the ink cartridges. They cost over twice the price of those for the earlier model even though they look identical and do the same job. Why?. I eventually found some pattern ones at half the price and have installed them despite dire warnings from the printer. So far, they seem fine.

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See the Social Club's Facebook page for each weekend's activities

Saturday 1 February
CMRFC v Harborne 2.15pm
Six Nations Rugby kicks off 2.15pm



Horse Racing Night 7pm tickets £5 incl curry
Cleobury Mortimer Volleyball Club hosts its annual Horse Racing evening. First race 7pm. Curry supper included.

Sunday 2 February
Six Nations: France v England 3pm
Have your Sunday lunch early. Watch the match at the Club with a pint and a beef roll.



Monday 3 February
Bingo 8pm
Every Monday at the Social Club. Eyes down 8pm. Cash prizes; over 18 only please.



Saturday 8 February
Six Nations: Scotland v England 4.45pm
Watch the match at the Club with a pint and a pulled pork roll.



Friday 14 February
Pie & Pint Night 7.30pm tickets £10
Fundraising evening for Severn Hospice. Pie & Pint included in ticket. 'Wish you were here' presentation by Mark Baldwin



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Saturday 22 February
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Sunday 23 February
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Friday 28 February 7.30pm suggested donation £10
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Martin Davey is running the London Marathon and is hosting this fundraising event in aid of SCOPE



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f: [plattersandplates](https://www.facebook.com/plattersandplates)



Every year my older son invites me to fly out to Hong Kong to greet the New Year; this time it was the Chinese one, with flowers throughout the apartment and decorations in stores and restaurants.

But was the political situation safe? TV news suggested not, but Iain's simple advice was to ignore what Western media was shouting about, as life was not far from normal. The Metro was sometimes held up if protesters stood in doorways and the train's safety system prevented travel; it didn't happen when I was there in early January.

The flight out on a BA A380 Airbus was quiet and smooth, but the so-called Traditional English Breakfast was a plastic tray with an egg powder dollop, bacon that looked like it was lightly ironed and a small sausage that was wrinkled, like your fingers if you've fallen asleep in the bath. Consolation came with the approach over the hills of Kowloon and into the airport; really scenic.

Grand daughters Sophie and Holly were excited that Grandad was coming and the unpacking of books brought enthusiasm and a little wrangling over who should have which. They both speak Chinese and English and seem to love being at school together.



The riots have hit trade pretty hard, Hong Kong being a tourist centre in normal times, but numbers were well down with the perceived threat. The South China Morning Post reported the decision to close the 10,000 square foot Louis Vuitton outlet in Times Square, a busy tourist spot in normal times. But business was bad and the company asked the landlords to reduce their rent - a mere £500,000 a month - while the trade was so poor. They refused and the biggest LV shop in the area will close. That will leave just seven other local outlets for the company. Prada are to close their shop as well, another victim of the effects of rioting.

There were signs of damage done to pavements as rioters tore up tiles to use as weapons and some graffiti, but the only other signs of trouble were big concrete barrier systems lined up ready block access to vital buildings, like the local police station and the entrance to the airport.



These are not decorative shapes. They're concrete barriers, ready to be moved into place to protect the police station if needed.

I got one glimpse of police action, when we were sitting in the Kowloon Taproom, people

watching and sipping gently. A squad of police ran past, people stopping to watch them. After a while, with not a sound of any sort of disturbance, the same squad strolled down to their base. We ordered another pint and discussed where to eat that evening.

We visited an Apple showroom for Iain to buy me a TV adapter to watch computer programmes on the bigger screen. Deal done, details entered on the assistant's hand held unit and paid for with a swipe of the card. No cash in sight; good security.

I find Hong Kong welcoming, easy to move around in the constant crowds because they are generally polite. Shops are open until 10.00 or later, there is a big range of foods to cater for a very mixed race public and if you buy an NCR card it covers trains, buses and ferries. There are high buildings being constructed in the busy urban area, where previously 12 storeys was the tallest allowed as jumbo jets came over on their way to the old airport. With the new landing place approached from the sea side, high rises are emerging. In such a crowded place, building higher is the answer.

Ten days in this bustling, busy place was enough to accept the way of life, but the easier pace of Shropshire life called. Enough to make me sad to leave a family that I love, but glad to sit back and count off the twelve hours until we touched down at Heathrow at 4.40 am on Monday. A steady drive home to familiar places and the next edition of the Clarion waiting to be finished. A good week. JR

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E: clsartcontact@gmail.com

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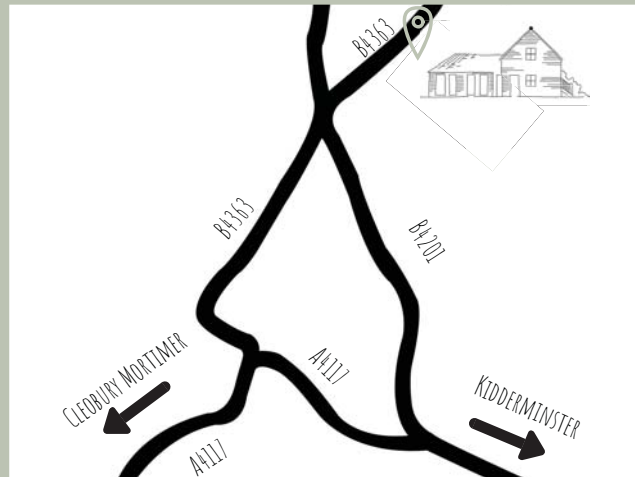
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Sally graduated from Keele University in 2018 with a Master of Arts.

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EDWIN SAYERS

This community has lost a remarkable talent with the passing of Edwin Sayers, 'Eddie' to his friends. He lived a quiet life here, but his life story is one of a very determined young man who rose from humble beginnings to lead major engineering works in this area.

Gill Guest knew him well and writes:

Eddie Sayers was a true gentleman. Both kind and creative, he had an irrepressible twinkle and a ready sense of humour. He was equally likely to be found tinkering in his workshop, giving a lift to someone less able than himself or penning the latest of his books – He lived at the bottom of Ron Hill, and was the well known author of the 'Coracle Boy' tales. These were based on his boyhood meetings with Harry Rogers, the coracle man of Ironbridge. They were not written and published until Eddie was 80, when they earned five star reviews on Amazon. If anyone remarked on this, Eddie would say, with a shrug and a twinkle, 'It keeps me out of mischief.'

He was a civil engineer by trade, and his specialities all lay underground – tunnels, aqueducts, cellars and suchlike. He worked on the Elan valley pipeline and, once, famously, on a bank vault. This vault had reinforced concrete walls over a metre thick and was built long before the bank itself. This sent Eddie's vivid imagination into overdrive and he spent a lot of time driving backwards and forwards from the site wondering how he might 'design in' a secret entrance, for later use

in a spectacular and daring bank heist! Surely a plot worthy of any book.

Gill Guest

What neither of us knew was that Eddie and Doreen built their house on Ron Hill. He drew up the plans on the dining table of the family home in Alveley and over two years the weekends were devoted to working on the new house, sons Chris and Martin helping where possible and talking with pride of the memory when they both gave an address at his humanitarian funeral at Wyre Forest Crematorium. Grand daughter Rhiannon also paid tribute with her own speech and was applauded by those present.

One story from Martin: Eddie was running a pipeline scheme that was held up by slow progress on a brick built station. Asked on Monday how long it would take to finish, the bricky quoted one week.

Eddie got down into the work area, took over the bricklayer's tools, mixed his own mortar and proceeded to lay bricks better and faster than the man paid to do the job. With a section completed, he climbed out and said to the bricky "Shall we say finished by tomorrow?" The man and his mate agreed and got on with the task. You can see why people who worked with Edwin had such a high regard for the quiet man who really knew his job.

As Gill Guest put it: "We'll miss him."
JR

PAT SMITH

Pat Smith, one of the bundles of energy and ideas who drove the Parish Hall forward, died in January. In later months she was a familiar sight in her mobility

scooter, still out shopping and organising work for the Hall.

She was born in Worcester and moved on into Birmingham before heading west in 1966 to take over managing the busy Running Horse pub at Bewdley. It was five years later that she moved to Cleobury and really settled.

She was secretary of the Parish Hall committee, but did a lot of work beyond what that title asked. Janet Short worked with her for ten years or more and saw how valuable an asset she was: "Efficient, always had the minutes out on time, and did a lot of work besides, like bringing in new ideas. She started the Bridge Club and developed the Friendship Club"

It was in Cleobury that she met and married Tony, finding love and security that made her sing his praises so much. To him and to her three sons go our sympathy for the loss of such a lovely, warm lady.
JR

MUSIC AT THE BENNETTS END INN

I like the Bennett's End Inn in Knowbury, a place where they smile and are happy to hand over a copy of the Clarion if they haven't run out. Good reputation for food, though I haven't tried it yet.

They have a rather special evening on Friday the 28th, with live music by singers Bekki Cameron and Jenny Hallam. They'll be in fine voice from 8.00 and there's no admission charge for the privilege of listening and enjoying. 'Drinks, music and general merriment' is what they promise.



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February 2020 Clarion Report

Annual Town Meeting and Community Champion Nominations

This year we are starting earlier and inviting nominations from the public for the Cleobury Community Awards to be presented at the Annual Town Meeting on Friday 15th May.

As last year there will be an overall **Community Champion Award, Business/Organisational Champion** and an **Environmental Champion Award**.

New for 2020 is an **Unsung Hero award**.

Nominations for all are open from the 1st February until the 29th February. Details of the categories, eligibility and how they will be judged will be available on the Town Council Website - www.Cleobury.org.uk , Facebook Pages and Information points in the town from the 1st February.

If you are part of a community group and want to recruit new members, volunteers or show off what you have achieved in the past year, now is your chance to apply to be part of this lively Friday early evening community event. There will also be the **Primary School Expo** after school closes so that young people and their families can get involved.

Once again there will be a coin token vote for community groups for the chance to apply for **2 x £1,000 council grants**, this allows all to be part of **resident consultations** and is your chance to be a part of Town Council's priorities in the coming year

To exhibit please contact the Town Clerk to secure one of the limited number of places without delay. Call 01299 271154 or e-mail matthew.sheehan@cleobury.org.uk.

We would also wish to thank the volunteers who turned up to help take down the Christmas lights.2019 was once again a super display and we are already looking to improve next year with some additions.

Since the start of the year Council have been assisting the Primary School on most days with traffic management at dropping off and picking up times. This arrangement cannot be permanent and we have sought support from Shropshire Council at a high level including a joint visit to the school to obtain assistance with regard to enhanced and enforceable parking restrictions and the possibilities of a School Crossing Attendant.

The safety of children is paramount and we will continue to work with the School in the short term.

The new play area is coming on well and we will be having an opening event which will be advertised. Funny seeing parents having to drag their excited children past in a morning.

Many projects asked for have been delivered in the last year with grant funding and we must thank the volunteer councillors who have worked very hard to support the staff and move everything on. We see the outdoor gym equipment is getting well used as is the dog training area and thank you all for your and kind words of thanks.

We continue to pursue Shropshire Council on the subject of road surfaces (Pot holes), The Manor House, Disabled parking, Talbot car park and much more and will keep you informed with any updates.

M Sheehan Town Clerk
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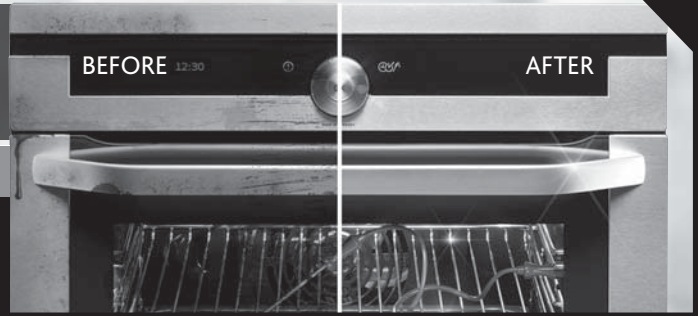
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IN BUSINESS - Cleobury's Market Hall

The Market Hall, that fine building that stands out next to the Parish Church when you walk up Church Street, has seen a lot of changes since it was built in 1842. It started out as a single storey structure, designed to accommodate the weekly produce market and provide sheltered storage for the town's fire engine. In 1875 a second storey was added, providing a reading room, assembly room and a billiard room. A billiard room! How times have changed.

At one time in the last century there was concern about letting some of the rooms, which the Cleobury Mortimer Lodge of Freemasons solved by renting the upper floor. Sadly there was some friction between the Masons and their landlords, the Parish Council, and very little normal maintenance work was carried out. This came to a head in 1996, when the wiring was declared dangerous and the hall fell into misuse. It was restored as a centenary project and reopened after some delays.

Today it offers two large assembly rooms, the upper floor with a capacity of 60 people and the ground floor 30. There are offices, some rented and one available for rent now, which provides income to keep the building in good order. It's run

by a committee comprising three Town Councillors, with support from church member Roger Skelhorn, janitor Derek Pead and manager Ali Sheffield, who is responsible for the day to day running of the place.



Ali Sheffield, the smiling face of Market Hall management.

Ali's been in charge for three years now, combining this post with running a home along with husband Jon, looking after two infant sons and working for national charity Social Farms and Gardens. We asked her what she does in her spare time and she laughed - you can see why.

The Hall has a financial target of paying its two staff, Ali and Derek Pead, plus the overheads of the place, and breaking even. No small task and regular lettings of the two large rooms helps that. A show or meeting

place on the main street, with wifi throughout both floors, plus modern toilets and small kitchens on both levels, for just £9.00 an hour is a good deal and the place is busy every day.

It's the natural centre for the Food Bank, where volunteers run the service every Friday, and it's where you can take your unwanted teddies for the Teddies Trust to collect and pass on to needy children abroad. The Mens' Shed committee meet there; Sing, Laugh and Breathe brighten the day each Wednesday and the Tourist Information Centre finds a natural home in such a handy town centre location.

So what was a sad liability 25 years ago is now a notable asset, offering a Local Artisan Market every month, alongside the Cleobury Country Farmers' Market. And it's growing in stature with Ali's fresh pair of eyes overseeing its operation. She got the telephone facility sorted and reduced in cost by a swap from BT to Vodaphone: "A third cheaper," she explained, and when finances allow a window will convert a storage room to an another office on the first floor. If you don't climb stairs easily, the lift will get you there. The place has come through good and bad times, but the future looks fine.



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DRESS IS MORE

A lot of people stopped when they saw a display of very fine dresses in the window of what was Bowketts shop over the Christmas period. It was a short term 'pop up' venture by Millie Dyer and certainly added to the colour and appeal of the street.

It was thanks to landlady Bergitte Jones that Millie could catch people's eyes and get them wanting to know more. An ex Lacon Childe pupil, she knows what a problem it can be, trying to find a dress that suits in this rural area, plus the travel time between distant boutiques. No fool, this young lady, and she could see a business opening.

She started by acting as a Prom Ambassador for a shop in Kenilworth and working with them when they brought their collection to our Market Hall. A few months later she took her

courage and bank balance in both hands and started on her own.

She concentrates on Prom and Special Occasion wear, buying stock from boutiques that are closing, samples from bridal shops and directly from private individuals. Just how good they look you'll have noticed as you walked past the display.

The result is a stock of more than 100 dresses, some of them brand new, others worn just once. Some have slight imperfections, but they're all inspected and then priced accordingly. And the prices are very impressive and affordable - from £25 to £70. For dresses that originally were up to £250, that's a very good buy.

Millie's aim is to make events like the local Prom or other big occasions more accessible in terms of both price and location.

She'll be displaying her range through pop-ups like we've seen already, visiting schools and sometimes vacant local shop premises. The first event here will be at Lacon Childe School, to tempt this year's young ladies with an eye for style. No date fixed yet, but there will be posters, we're sure the school's newsletter will cover it and you can see the range on Millie's Instagram account : dress.is.more.boutique.

Isn't this a great idea? A young woman recognising a need and setting out to provide the touch of glamour any girl wants at such an event as her school Prom. Even better, at prices that appeal the young woman and her parents.

We wish Millie every success and hope to report on the Lacon Childe event. Watch this space, as they say.

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PLASTIC AWARDS WINNERS

The Plastic Not So Fantastic group have been carrying their drive against single use plastics into local business. If a trader agrees to make a change in their operation in some positive way, their support is recognised with a special Plastic Pledge certificate, and their picture in the Clarion when we have room.

So congratulations to the first three winners and thank you for making a move to support the long term life of the planet.



Rachel Robinson at Mawley Milk has pledged to introduce milk refill stations like you can find at The Hub in Cleobury and Broad Bean in Ludlow. And they are looking to introduce glass bottles for some milk sales.



At Hobson's Tap they've pledged to source suppliers who don't use plastic packaging



And the editor should have cropped the picture to get the third caption properly in place, but how could anyone with heart cut down such a display as Sue Brown of Cleobury Chiropractic gave. Her certificate is for pledging to use compostable paper cups, refill soap dispensers and email receipts to customers.

Isn't it surprising what you can do when someone offers an onlooker's view of your business operation? The Plastic Reduction Group will be calling locally, chatting in a friendly way and pointing out how your business could be part of this essential drive to reduce single plastic use. If you make the pledge, you'll get a certificate to display and tell your customers that you care about our planet.

If you want more information, they'll be happy to hear from you at neil.tysall@cleobury.org.uk

SILLY BIT

"Fiona May only lost out on the Gold Medal because Niurka Montalvo jumped further than she did."

David Coleman states the obvious, as he often did.



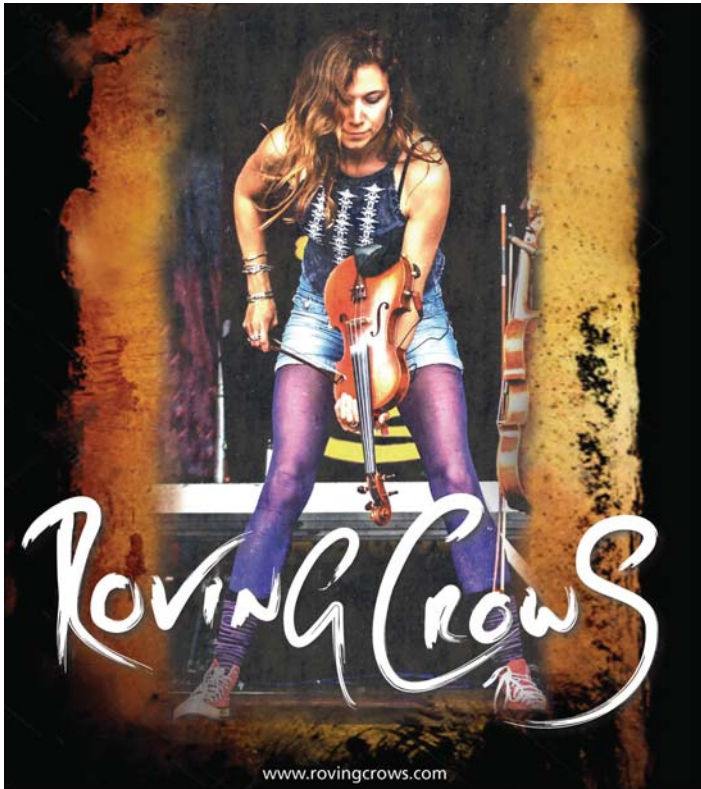
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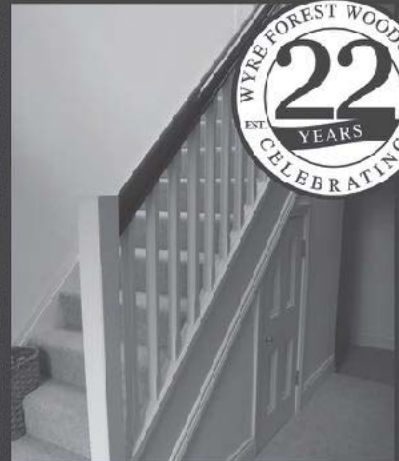
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CLEOBURY COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES	Katja Ward	01299 270018	10.00 to 12.00 Weds
CLEOBURY MORTIMER LIBRARY		01299 272301	Open 9 to 7 Mon, 9 to 5 Tues/Fri and 10 to 1 Sat.
LOCAL POLICE	Constable Anne O'Leary		ann.oleary@westmercia.pnn.police.uk
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CLEOBURY MORTIMER SCOUTS	Iain Smith	01299 271809	
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	for bookings
WASTE DISPOSAL		0345 678 9007	The contractor is Veolia
WATER SUPPLY EMERGENCIES	Severn Trent	0800 783 4444	

Collect the Clarion in Cleobury from: Select and Save Grocery, Butler's Store, Cleobury Cafe, The Severn Hospice Shop, Mid Counties Co-op, Cleobury Fruit and Veg, Purslows, The Library and Simply Fresh.
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.

Missed your Clarion? Cleobury Mortimer Library keeps the current month's copy on file and all back issues are available to read as pdfs from www.cleoburyclarion.co.uk.

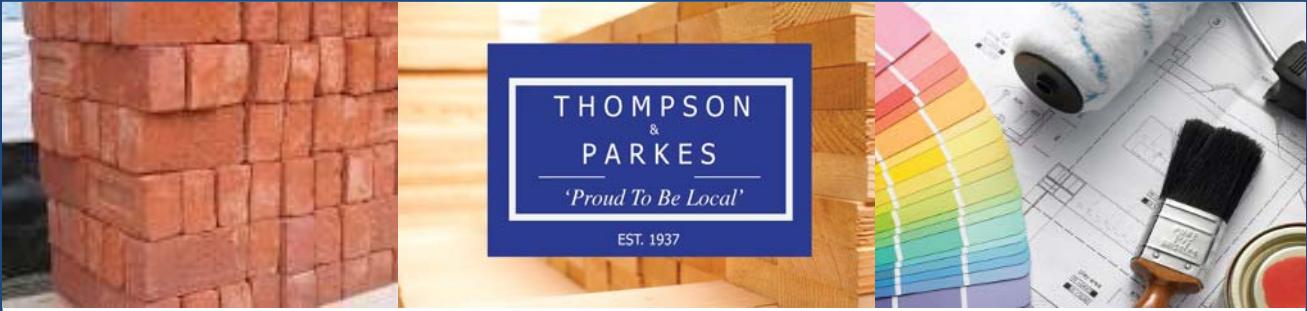
THE DEADLINE FOR THE APRIL ISSUE IS MARCH 22nd

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