

The Cleobury Clarion

THE TOWN'S NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

December 7th was the date for the town to express its view of the Plan. It speaks volumes for the clarity of the work put into the plan that of those who voted, no less than 84 percent were in favour.

That favourable local support will be passed on to the County Council for adoption at their March meeting and will then become part of the planning of our future. Further details in the Town Council Report on Page 63.

OUCH!

At a time when it seems that every price you see has risen since you last saw it, it will come as no surprise that our friends at Badger Print have advised that the cost of producing the Clarion must go up. No change for our many readers, but the advertisers who make it available at no cost to you will feel a slight pinch. Advertising prices will rise by about five percent from April. Sorreee!

CLARION CUP WINNERS



Councillor Phil Clarke hands the Clarion Cup over to Emily of Severn Hospice for safe keeping in 2024. More details on Page 9.

THE BEACON ON THE HILL

Doddington village can be just another local village if you're passing through on your commute to work or maybe to visit a friend or relative. Apart from those traffic lights that seem to be a permanent fixture, a

quiet place with a great outlook across the valley but not a lot to boast about. Don't you believe it!

The latest development is news of a grants towards developing Saint John's church, the one with a Christmas cross that shines out through a clear festive night. The title Beacon on the Hill is well deserved.

Access to the church has been developed with an easy pathway and the programme is ambitious. Windows refurbished, workshops to celebrate the heritage of the locality, creating facilities like a toilet, kitchen, comfortable seating and wheelchair access. A wheelchair access - what a great idea. What so few churches can provide for some of their most ardent members.

The work to get grants totalling £351,000 has been a big task for the people involved, and credit should go to the Gibb family and their tireless energy in working as volunteers amongst others. We will bring you news of the project's growth as it happens, a shining example to us all. More inside on Page 20.

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Fighting Cocks.
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Birthday.
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*The Ancient Art of Pavement
Parking lives on.
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CLOWS TOP GARDENING CLUB

This month we welcome Rosemary Winnall, MBE, to talk on "Exploring the Severn" Rosemary is a well known local naturalist. Her voice is sometimes heard on Radio 4 nature programmes. Together with others she contributed to the "Life Of Wyre," a study of the wildlife of the Wyre Forest. Rosemary is a long time supporter of the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, and a contributor to their magazine.

Photography is also one of Rosemary's skills; her talks are always beautifully illustrated, and relayed in layman's terms. Do come along, you will not be disappointed.

Don't forget your flower for the monthly competition, or your magazines to swap. We look forward to seeing you on the 28th. Doors open at 7pm for a 7.30 start.

Judith Lawson

PAY AND PLAY

Rae Livesey advises us that a Pay and Play session for Over 50s operates at the Highley Leisure Centre on Wednesday mornings from 10.30 to 12.30.

On offer are table tennis, badminton and shorthand bowls. All this for £2.80 a head to help the mature keep fit; that's good value.

NEW FACES AT THE FIGHTING COCKS

There's been big change at The Fighting Cocks in Stottesdon, Annie and Rob moving in and

making the place look and feel welcoming. We had grabbed a few words when they were moving in early in December and decided to give their food a try as soon as they were up and fully running. With the Christmas break over, my lady and I booked a table for dinner.

You can tell when a country pub is working well by the first face you meet. That was Rob, partner to Annie and the first of the many smiles we saw that evening. When Annie asked what we'd like to drink, I explained that I don't drink alcohol when driving, so what did she suggest? "Guinness Zero" was her answer and it was the best non alcoholic beer I've had.



Annie and Rob, with smiles.

There's a good range of pub grub on offer and I went for the chicken breast in batter, while Tina went all traditional with fish and chips. Very good they were, the portions just a trifle too generous for us. Tina sent her compliments to the chef, Phil Long. It might be straightforward pub grub on

offer, but it's properly cooked and served. We'll be back; it's good to see such a once popular pub back in action.

And they are planning to get a band playing once a month at this early stage. On February 17th it will be 'Innocent Criminals'. With that title you don't think they could be politicians, do you?

HYNOTHERAPY

That's a big word, so it should be interesting. The lady to convince you of the benefits is Jennie Kitching, better known as Hypnowoman. She's an advanced hypnotherapist, trainer and practitioner and Senior Hypnotherapist of the General Hypnotherapy Standards Council.

She's coming to Cleobury on March 1st to discuss what most of us think of as everyday little problems or aches and pains that we maybe take pills for. What Jennie will talk about and show is how to make life better by dealing with problems naturally.

She's here to help if you're having trouble sleeping, struggling with anxiety, trying to give up drinking or smoking. She'll explain how to use the power of our everyday lives. This is not a hole-in-the-wall scam, she's a recognised senior instructor and guide. I've seen some of the benefits natural treatment can give and I'm going to go along on March 1st, pay my fiver and see how good this is. You can book your place through Sam at the Market Hall on cleoburymarkethall1@gmail.com

THE READING GROUP

December 2023:

Benjamin Myers' 'The Gallows Pole' was aptly described by one reader as "beautiful and brutal" in its telling of the Cragg Vale Coiners, who made a living by trimming the borders of coins to produce extra coinage. Set in northern moorland, it featured the story of 'King' David Hartley and his followers as they sought to keep their illegal practise safe from excise officer Deighton, who was murdered by hired thugs. Justice prevailed, Hartley and others being hanged, but not the murderers.

Told in language that appeared to be typical of the rough life in rural areas, this was one of several award winning works from Benjamin Myers, a staunch northern writer telling tales of life in an area too seldom recognised. Not an easy read, but one to provoke curiosity despite its earthy language.

The evening was passed in an atmosphere of harmony and goodwill, thanks to a little festive refreshment. One member asked if wine could not be a regular feature of our meetings. Progress on this point should appear in Deana's report on the January gathering, which will feature opinions on Salley Vickers' "The Gardener" when we met on the 15th.

Jim Reynolds

THE READING GROUP

January 2024

One of the joys of a reading group is hearing the different slants on a story, some of which you may not have considered. 'The Gardener' by Salley Vickers was well written and very descriptive. Some loved it,

others thought it was twee, contrived, superficial or having no substance. An undemanding book, appreciated during the Christmas break. A confusing end to the story, provoking a variety of interpretations with no definitive answer. We liked the pieces regarding fresh air and gardening being beneficial. This month we will read 'Marriage Material' by Sathnam Sanghera, I believe it's set in the black country. We get together on February 19th for another genial chat about this and other books recently devoured.

Deana Kimber, 01299 271754

CLOWS TOP WILDLIFE CLUB

Our year started with a talk from Gordon Forest about 'Wildlife in Farming'. February's meeting on the 23rd will kick off at 7.00 with the usual team quizzes; free tea and coffee all night. The speaker will be Paul Wilkinson talking about Reptiles.

Fees are now due. Thirty five pounds for the year working out at £3.50 per meeting or you can just turn up and pay £5.00.

We usually have two outings a year and a well used WhatsApp group where members can post pictures and news of local wildlife.

This is a friendly club, suitable for singles and couples. If you love wildlife you'll love this club. For more information ring Steve Woodison on 07738014884.

PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB CALENDAR

The club have produced a batch of calendars, for members and friends only. And a very fine products it is, using a heavy weight card and drawing on the

members' wide range of shots. The sort of product you'd happily send to a family member or friend to show them our town and the surrounding area from all angles and in a variety of lighting conditions.



We asked if it could be sold to the general public, but print times mean it would appear long after regular calendars would have been shown and sold, so the 2024 version will become a collector's item. But chairman Paul Serrell-Cooke could arrange a wider sale for the 2025 version if there's enough interest. If you could be interested, please let Paul know on 07791 378 240; the price would be about £15, but subject to increased paper costs. We'll print a reminder about this in the September or October Clarion.

VALENTINE SOUP LUNCH - AN INVITATION FOR THE ROMANTICS

A Valentine Soup Lunch will be served at the Melville Chapel on Valentine's Day, 14th February, from 12.30 to 2.00.

And a big thank you to all who supported events during the Christmas period. We were able to send a good donation to Crisis because of your generosity.

Ruth Downes



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THE CHRISTMAS WINDOW DRESSING CONTEST

It's a feature of Christmas time that our main street with its lights encourages traders to put on a special show to celebrate the occasion. As the editor of the Clarion, it's my privilege to join town councillors to judge who we think is the best and the holder of the Clarion Cup for the next year.

I joined Councillors Martin Winward and Phil Clarke, both of them recent recruits to the town's managing board, to walk up and down the main street and decide who should get the chance to display the silver cup for a year. It was no easy task, with several premises looking very appealing and reflecting thought given and trouble taken. Phil pointed out how The Talbot stood out in the evening with its lights adding to the attraction of this prominent building; the Red Hare salon was a natural candidate, but as last year's winner we felt it should let another taste victory; Cleoburrs had mixed colourful hardware with toys to please children.

The Wash House puts on a good show every year, using a

small and busy space to best effect, and nearby Severn Hospice has long set the standard for what some folks call a charity shop, but always looks so much more. I proudly wear clothes bought there and have donated both clothes and books to their cause. They were strongly in the short list and we walked the High Street twice before coming to a decision - Severn Hospice was presented with the cup on January 20th to display until we do the same thing later this year.



Councillor Phil Clarke hands over the Clarion Cup to Severn Hospice shop manager Emily for safe keeping. You'll see the cup in the shop window this month.

What you won't see is the winning display - that was all sold over the Christmas rush. The shop is there to raise money to help the hospice customers and they were doing the usual great job for the cause.

The thanks of the Town Council as organisers and the Cleobury Clarion as sponsors of the cup go to every trader who organised a special display. And to assistant manager Jayne, who asked when the judging would take place because she wanted to sell the contents of the windows to help raise funds, we hope you're glad you didn't clear the place before we got to admire it.

MONDAY BINGO CLUB CLOSES

Suzanne France advises that her Monday evening Bingo Club gatherings in the Market Hall have ceased. A simple matter of the numbers not meeting the cost of hiring the place and after a good run to assess what support would be, it did not look good.

Suzanne would like to thank all those who supported her and also hall manager Sam for her cooperation and encouragement.

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SHROPSHIRE HILLS CONSERVATION FUND

The Fund is a small grant pot to support community projects in the Shropshire Hills National Landscape (new name for the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

It supports projects to deliver practical conservation work and/or educational and awareness-raising activities relating to the Shropshire Hills and its conservation, especially involving young people.

We are inviting applications for projects to start in April 2024. If you, or your community group, have a project idea please get in touch. Grants range from £500 to £2,000 and are generally awarded for activity within a particular Financial Year (April to the end of March).

The deadline to get project ideas in is 12th February 2024. We can then recommend whether your project should progress to a full application.

There is more information on our website at www.shropshirehills-nl.org.uk, search 'conservation fund'. Or contact Stephanie Hayes,

e m a i l
stephanie.hayes@shropshire.gov.uk or telephone
01743 254746.

THE CLEOBURY MORTIMER HISTORY SOCIETY

The history society was founded by an interested group of local people in about 1980. It has now, unfortunately ceased to exist. A victim, partially of covid/lockdown and partially due to increasing age, decrepitude and inertia of some members. The object of this article is to try and bring about its resurrection.

For very many years the society consisted of 6 to 10 enthusiastic members who met fortnightly in Neen Savage village hall. There were also a larger number of inactive but interested members. We took on various items of research ranging from the history of the Blount and Lacon Childe families to the war records of local residents to the UK censuses, amongst a host of others. The society has published a number of reports of its researches as the "Cleobury Chronicles" starting with vol 1 in 1991 and ending with vol 12 in

2016. A copy of each of these has been deposited in the library but if anyone has difficulty in finding any of them, I have a full set which I'd be pleased to hand over

We also held a number of successful public talks.

What I am hoping is that several interested people will come forward with a view to re-starting a history society. I and other recent members would be prepared to share our experiences mostly without taking an active part. There is a bank account with enough funds to get a resurgent society off the ground. There was a website and this has become inactive but could be revived

I am happy to act as a conduit for interested people to form a small steering committee with a view to booking a local venue and get started.

So, get in touch and let's see if you can get it going again.

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SOMEBODY HAD A BIG BIRTHDAY

Please pardon this example of self indulgence, but a chap doesn't get many chances to celebrate reaching the age of 85. Mine was on Monday December 4th and as Monday is not a good party day, organisers Tina, my lady love, and David, my younger son, suggested Saturday the 2nd. They were the organisers, and he's a lot bigger than me, so who was I to argue?

We chose The Lamp Restaurant because Tina had her birthday bash there and it went down a storm. She got a great cheer for her exhibition of the ancient art of belly dancing. I had no ambition to match that, but I did ask if they could arrange for Led Zeppelin's version of 'Stairway To Heaven' to be played.



Was I supposed to eat all that? I didn't but it does look as if I've had more than my share of something to be that shape!

31 people sat down to eat and drink and a round of applause went for the only award, the Furthest Travelled Guest. Older son Iain flew in from Hong Kong and was presented with a certificate for that after a round trip of about 12,000 miles.

I sat opposite Claire Leavey, a multi talented lady who was the first woman in this country to edit a professional motorcycle magazine. Years later she would act as a judge at the town's Borders Classic Bike Show at Lacon Childe School and on one occasion she came to say goodbye when I was talking to the chair of the school PTA. As Claire left, I explained about her being the first woman editor in my sphere of work and the chair of the PTA replied; 'Oh, were all the others men?'

If the Stairway To Heaven made it I didn't notice, but next day David told me one of his mates had spotted Robert Plant, he of Led Zeppelin no less, entering Spice Empire, two doors down the road from The Lamp. We'll call it a near miss.

'YOUTH MAKES MUSIC' TO AID

BATTLE WITH POLIO

Ludlow Rotary Club are arranging a concert by a range of school choirs at Ludlow Assembly Rooms on March 1st at 7.00. It's part of the drive to raise funds in the battle against polio.

Amongst the schools chosen are Clee Hill Community Academy and Lacon Childe and the evening will feature songs ranging from the 1950s to the present day. All funds raised

will go Rotary International's 'End Polio Now' initiative.

The battle with this horrible disease is a great success story. When Rotary International got involved in 1985 there were 350,000 cases of polio worldwide. In 2023 there were just 12. When the world is confirmed free, it will be the second human disease to be eradicated after smallpox.

Tickets for the Ludlow concert can be booked via the Rotary Club's website www.ludlowrotaryclub.org.uk or donations can be made at www.peoplesfundraising.com/fundraising/end-polionow

FLICKS IN THE STICKS

In February in the Parish Hall we will be celebrating the great dames of British movies: Maggie Smith, Judi Dench, Joan Plowright, Peggy Ashcroft, Eileen Atkins and Helen Mirren, with movies each Saturday. *Tea with Mussolini* on 3 February, *A Passage to India* on the 10th, *Gosford Park* on the 17th and *Travels with my Aunt* on the 24th. Come along out of the cold and watch a great movie for £5, with soup and pudding on offer for £3. Bar, tea and coffee.

PHILIP DUNNE

ADVICE SURGERY

Mr Dunne will be holding an Advice Surgery at the Community Hall in Low Town, Bridgnorth, WV15 6BB on Friday the 23rd of this month. The hours are 4.30 to 6.00 and you can book an appointment to speak to Mr Dunne by calling his Ludlow office on 01584 872187.

PAUL FRENCH

Paul French died on December 17th after a long illness; his passing a great loss to our community. He and Frances moved to Cleobury Mortimer in the late 1980s with infant Matthew part of the family.

Paul worked in the sales side of British Steel, which meant contact with the giant works at both Northamptonshire and South Wales. A big job, with face-to-face contacts at widespread locations and at a troubled time for the international steel market. But he found some calm in his love of the countryside here in Shropshire and his affection for long walks.

It was this affection for walking and appreciating both countryside and wildlife that brought Paul and Bill Duley together. In 1990 the Cleobury Mortimer Footpath Association was formed, its basic aim to walk, trim and preserve the many footpaths in this area. Paul as chairman and Bill as secretary campaigned to get landowners on their side. Some of the problems they cared about and solved are too complex to relate here, but two mature, reasonable and quietly determined gentlemen achieved cooperation and support from both sides.

Today the CMFA boasts more than 77 members and a full calendar of walking events plus the Walking for Health outings for those who just want an interesting walk and a coffee at the end of it.

When Paul retired he joined what was then the Parish Council and worked hard at serving the community, later rounding up his voluntary work by training to serve those who

sought help from the Samaritans. He worked enthusiastically from their Telford base. The onset of lung disease saw him step back from council work and later from the Samaritans. He later moved to a care home near his son Matthew in London and it was there that his life ended.

A thoroughly decent, caring man who will be missed by all who knew him.

CLEOBURY W.I.

There were several events in the lead-up to Christmas. Once again, we provided refreshments for the community during the switch-on of the Christmas lights. A record number of members attended our Christmas social evening, with a festive meal from the Kings Arms and music and magic by Jack Dent. A group of members joined in what has become a traditional Christmas jumper walk and this was followed by a welcome hot 'pot lunch' served by neighbouring Neen Savage WI.

Our January meeting was a session with Sophie Ward, who guided us through a series of yoga-based breathing and stretching exercises. Members were invited to vote for next year's national resolution.

Sarah Wilde has kindly agreed to run a craft group (around 12 sessions), supporting participants in the art of quilting and patchwork. There may still be one or two places on the course for interested members.

Events for February include:

February 13th 7.30pm in the Market Hall – Drum workshop. A fun and uplifting evening of drumming for members. Visitors are welcome (£5).

February 21st 12-2pm in the Parish Hall – Winter Warmer Lunch. All are welcome to enjoy a home-made soup and a dessert for £5. This will be our last fundraising event in support of the First Responders Charity.

February 29th – Members' trip to the Carpet Museum in Kidderminster. Details of times etc will be sent by email to those who have signed up.

A little further ahead is our Annual General Meeting and Bingo evening on March 12th at 7.30 in the Market Hall.

Prospective new members are welcome to contact Judy on 01299 270983 or email judysant10@gmail.com. Check out our Facebook page *Val Sniadowski*

YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD

Last September we featured Peter Jackson and his plan to climb Kilimanjaro in September. In the meantime he's covered 1,000 miles from January to November, including climbing Snowdon several times, he'll be up Ben Nevis at Easter and walking 31 miles in a day on the Worcestershire Walk. That's quite a record, even more so when you remember that he'll be 76 when he does that big climb up Africa's biggest mountain.

You can help Pete's fund raising for charities that research support for people with heart conditions and Raynaud's Syndrome via his gofundme link:

www.gofundme.com/f/an-old-trekker-needs-a-bit-of-help

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THE LATEST FROM CORAL & TOM...

The 2024 housing market has got off to a positive start with January bringing buyers out in swathes. We have seen a marked jump in new properties coming to the market and sales being agreed, to blow away the blues from the end of 2023. Rightmove have reported that in the first two weeks of the year, the number of new properties coming to the market for sale is 15% higher than the same period last year. The number of sales agreed is 20% higher than during the first week last year also, which gives plenty of hope for the coming months.

Competitive pricing from sellers will still be vital, with the number of new properties coming to the market, as is typical in January, giving the buyers searching plenty of choice and not yet stripping supply.

Mortgage rates have continued to lower as lenders compete increasingly to win business from buyers and homeowners looking to remortgage, with some of the best rates available edging closer to 4%. The notable difference in rates available compared to points in last year, is increasingly helping buyers return to the market and aiding affordability.



If you would like to talk about the market and how it's affecting your property value or about an impending move, please do not hesitate to contact us for a chat

Coralie Walrond MNAEA MARLA

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HOBSONS BREW ALCOHOL FREE BEER FOR UK MENS SHED

Building on a suggestion made by member Bill Duley, Cleobury Mens Shed have been in talks with the UK Mens Shed Association to provide an alcohol-free beer to the Association.

At this stage the plan is that all funds raised from the sale of the brew should go to the UK Mens Shed Association, with the Cleobury branch benefitting in the long term. All credit to our local Mens Shed branch for the idea.

CLEOBURY GARDENERS

We started our new year of meetings and speakers on January 8th, with a presentation by Pip Smith, on Planting for a Fragrant Garden. Pip was Head Gardener at Woollerton Old Hall for a number of years, and you might have seen him on TV in an episode of "Great British Gardens" with Carol Klein. He is now a Landscape and Garden Designer, and his specialism is reimagining gardens and open spaces to enjoy and socialise.

He explained the two-way bargain between plant and pollinator. Fragrance is produced by the release of compounds of specific interest to certain groups of pollinators. The plants produce their nectar and perfume, and the pollinators come for the sugar sweetness, taking away more pollen to other plants. Bargain honoured. Those plants which give off their fragrances early evening are invariably of interest to moths, whilst those that produce their fragrance earlier in the day are of interest to butterflies and flies, for example. Once a plant has been pollinated, compound release ceases.

Pip really brought his ideas to life with a visual presentation, supported by a comprehensive list shown by season, so we were able to recognise the plants even if we did not recognise their latin nomenclature. The presentation included full information on planting and care conditions, and pruning warnings – be careful not to prune at the wrong time thereby removing future flowering growth. Pip's list is in our files and available for a

small fee for funds if it is of interest to you.

Our next meeting, of what looks to be a very interesting programme created by our Social Secretary, Carol Franklin, is on Monday 12th February when Kit Smith will present the latest information on "Fungi – the Miccorrhizal Network" or how plants and trees talk to one another. We meet at our new home, the Parish Hall at 7.30pm for a speaker-start at 8pm. Entrance is of course free for members, and £5.00 for visitors including light refreshments.

Look forward to seeing you.

Linda Ashman

DODDINGTON COFFEE MORNINGS

Mrs Sonia Pearsall, whose whist drives and bingo sessions are a well established features at Doddington Village Hall, is now offering mornings, 10.30 to 12.00 noon, every month. This years dates are: February 28th, March 27th, April 24th, May 22nd, June 26th, July 24th, August 28th, September 25th, October 23rd and November 27th. These dates will naturally appear in the Clarion Social Calendar.

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St John's Doddington – The Beacon on the Hill – Exciting News!

We are really excited to share the news that the final piece of the permissions and funding jigsaw is in place and we are preparing to start our £351,000 project! Thank you to everyone who has helped us get this far: St Johns Church Doddington will receive £137,150 from the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund; and, thanks to National Lottery players, the National Lottery Heritage Fund have confirmed a grant of £170,554. You, the community, have helped us raise £2,400; and we have had 6 other grants of between £2,100 and £5200. The logos of all our funders are shown on this page.

Our project includes:

- Conserving the church's heritage - including repairing the 6 windows not yet refurbished.
- Delivering a programme of activities, talks, workshops and events to capture, celebrate and share our heritage.
- Working with the community, including Cleobury Mortimer Men's Shed and local young people, to create new heritage interpretation within the church and for visitors on the hill.
- Creating community facilities - accessible toilet, kitchen, seating & wheelchair access.
- Through all this making St John's more sustainable as an organisation and making the building a valuable community asset for the future while retaining the worship space.

Keep an eye on our website and Facebook page as well as our noticeboards for further updates.

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February means snowdrops, hazel catkins and frogspawn, usually in that order. I think I write about them every year, mainly because I get very excited about each sign of spring. The common snowdrop, *Galanthus nivalis*, is probably not* a native of the British Isles but has naturalised itself very happily in woods, hedge banks, parks and gardens: wherever the soil is damp.



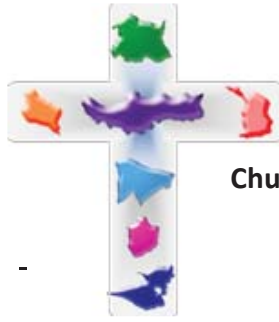
(* My older books such as Roger Phillips' 'Wild Flowers of Great Britain' and Richard Mabey's 'Flora Britannica' differ, coming down on the side of the snowdrop probably being a native.)

Anyone who has gardened around them will know their little white bulbs, which proliferate and hang on to life in the most unpromising situations. This is their means of spreading, benefiting from being washed along streams during floods for instance, rather than relying on pollination of the flowers and the dispersal of seeds, pollinators being few and far between at this time of year.

The Woodland Trust website says: 'Traditionally, snowdrops were used to treat headaches and as a painkiller. In modern medicine a compound in the bulb has been used to develop a dementia treatment'. It would be unwise to self-medicate with this remedy as the bulbs are poisonous.

They can make a spectacular show this month, earning one of their old names, 'February fairmaids'. Another, 'Snow piercer' is a translation of their French name and refers to the strong leaf tips which can push their way through snow. This is a very useful adaptation as they can be seen flowering in January and even December in some years. 'Candlemas bells' refers to their association with the feast of Candlemas on 2nd February (the feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary after the birth of Jesus). Snowdrops were planted around churches, abbeys, priories etc. and bunches were brought in as decorations for the feast day. Even where these ecclesiastical buildings have gone the flowers persist among the ruins. The site of Dowles Church by the River Severn in Bewdley is just one of the many places where their pure, white beauty can be enjoyed.

Linda Iles



Cleobury Mortimer Benefice
Church services throughout the Benefice in February 2024

St Mary's Cleobury Mortimer

Sunday 4th February: 10.00am Family Eucharist
Sunday 11th February: 8.30am Said Eucharist
10.00am Parish Eucharist
Sunday 18th February: 10.00am Parish Eucharist
Sunday 25th February: 10.00am Benefice Eucharist

Every Wednesday: 10.00am Eucharist
Every Thursday: 10.00am – 11.30am: Drop in at St Mary's. Drop in for a free cup of tea/coffee, relax and have a chat.

St Michael and All Angels', Hopton Wafers

Sunday 4th February: 9.00am Eucharist
Sunday 18th February: 6.00pm Even Song

St John the Baptist, Doddington
Benefice

Sunday 4th February: 11.00am Eucharist
Sunday 18th February: 3.00pm Evening Prayer

All Saints', Neen Sollars

Sunday 4th February: 11.00am Village Worship
Sunday 11th February: 11.00am Village Worship
Sunday 18th February: 11.00am Village Worship

St George's, Milson

Sunday 4th February: 6.00pm Even Song
Sunday 18th February: 11.00am Parish Eucharist

St Mary's, Neen Savage

Sunday 4th February: 6.00pm - Evening Prayer (BCP)
Sunday 18th February: 9.00am – Parish Eucharist (BCP)

St John the Baptist, Kinlet

Sunday 11th February: 11.15am – Parish Eucharist (BCP)

Leadership Team:

Rector: Reverend Prebendary Ashley Buck: 07477 165602
Curate: Reverend Sarah Lupton
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Philip Dunne

Last month, in common with many parts of the country, rivers and waterways in South Shropshire including the Severn, Teme, Corve and Worfe broke their banks in places. For some poor households affected by the rising flood waters, this was the second time in 12 months they had flooded, including some of those I visited in the immediate aftermath of Storm Henk.

2023 was not only the warmest year on record globally, but here in the UK we also saw higher levels of rainfall, more persistently from September to December. This followed a year of unusual drought conditions in 2022.

This goes to show climate change is impacting us here in South Shropshire, and highlights the importance of managing water resources and treatment, to ensure safe drinking supply, stewardship of our waterways, as well as ensuring we have good treatment to reduce risks from our sewage systems being overwhelmed, as they have been.

Managing our water systems is a topic on which I have focussed during my time in Parliament since the last General Election and as Chairman of the Environmental Audit Committee. Last month I hosted an event in Parliament for the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management, which was launching its new independent review "A Fresh Water Future", with recommendations for the next government, of whatever complexion, to maintain improvement of water infrastructure and regulation high up the agenda.

I have also been supporting my neighbouring MPs in our River Severn Caucus to seek government support for a holistic catchment wide response to manage flooding of the River Severn valley, to manage excessive rain levels from the Welsh hills through to the Severn Estuary. This is an ambitious £500m set of measures, which would help communities across Shropshire by reducing the flow of water, and the risk of localised flooding.

I am also pleased to be able to report by the end of December the government was able to announce that all Combined Sewer Overflows and treatment works were now fitted with event duration monitors (only 7% had them installed in 2010 - now 100%) so that comprehensive data will

now be available to water companies, their regulators, and the public when sewage spills occur. This was something I was determined to push through in my Private Members Bill on sewage pollution, which the government then picked up in the Environment Act 2021. While I warmly welcome this progress, the key is to upgrade our water infrastructure to prevent sewage spills damaging aquatic life in our waterways in the first place.

To that end, the Government has a 25-year Plan for Water, under which water companies are together developing plans which amount to £96bn of investment over the next 5 years, once approved by Ofwat. Severn Trent is at the forefront, having pledged a record £12.9bn investment, with improvement of at least 562 storm overflows, as they try to meet the Government's target five years early.

Looking around at the impact of Storm Henk last month, it was clear the impact would not only be for households and business, but also for farmers whose fields had been submerged, with grants up to £25,000 to farmers whose land had flooded and damaged crops. There has also been recent progress in bringing water management more holistically into the wider DEFRA support mechanisms for agriculture, with the latest iteration of the Sustainable Farming Incentive published in January including 15 new measures to help farmers manage water flows and reduce the impact of farming practices on water courses and nature.

There is also further government support available for homes and businesses, provided certain thresholds are met. I raised Shropshire's case with the Flooding Minister in the House of Commons last month, to seek to ensure the Flood Recovery Framework scheme is activated in Shropshire. In order to do so, it is vital that for any floods in in South Shropshire every homeowner affected informs Shropshire Council if their home or business has been flooded.

Flooding is a terrible experience for anyone who has to live through it, and it is right that we do what we can to mitigate the impacts and adapt to reduce the risk for those communities where it is becoming increasingly likely as climate change becomes a reality.

Philip Dunne



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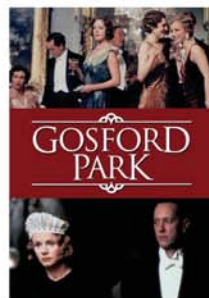
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3 February
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Joan Plowright)



17 February
Gosford Park
(Eileen Atkins,
Helen Mirren)



10 February
A Passage to India
(Peggy Ashcroft)



24 February
Travels with my Aunt
(Maggie Smith)



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ROCK PATHFINDERS

February's walks for this popular local club. They apologise, but no dogs allowed.

Thursday 1st, starting at 10.00, from Bodenham Arboretum. Bodenham Lane Kidderminster DY11 5TB

Thursday 15th, starting at 10.00 from the Rose and Crown, Boraston Lane, Tenbury Wells WR15 8HA

Further details: www.rockpathfinders.uk or ring Alan on 01299 400304.

THE FOOTPATH ASSOCIATION

The popular New Year's Day walk was well attended with 35 adults, 2 children and one very large dog. After many days of very heavy rain choosing a route was challenging. Combining local lanes and the drier cross field paths we walked a circular route though the Caravan Park, Catherton Road and Common Lane avoiding the worst of the mud! The rain started halfway into the walk and the rather wet walkers were grateful for the hearty hot food afterwards at the Kings Arms. As in previous years we would like to thank the staff at the KA for their hospitality.

Walking for Health attendance has remained steady since the Covid pandemic. Numbers during 2023 fluctuated between 11 and 26, averaging 18, same as 2022. 2024 has started in the same vein with 18 people

coming to the first walk although it was quite a cold day. We will be keeping the same format this year with local walks commencing at the Market Hall, then joining the CoCo coffee mornings for after walk refreshments. We will be increasing our 'Away days' this year to five with Cleve Hill, Wyre Forest, Upper Arley, Highley and Bewdley the proposed destinations.

Attendance at the monthly CMFA led Country Walks averaged 13 which is a significant increase compared to previous years. These walks are based on but not limited to CMFA published walks. Last year our May walk was based on Three Coppices Leaflet No 23, featuring swathes of bluebells, supported SustFest Wyre Forest, a two week event that promotes a greener, happier, healthier lifestyle. We hope to repeat it this year. The walk on February 4th is usually our popular Snowdrop Walk through the Mawley Estate. Unfortunately the collapse of the weir at Lower Forge together with the temporary closure of the bridge and footpaths will result in a change for this year. The start outside St Mary's at 10.00am remains the same.

The work parties take a break during January and February returning with renewed enthusiasm in March. If anyone would like to help with this rewarding work please contact the footpath officer though our

website. There is also the Footpath Guardians Scheme to consider if committing to monthly work party is difficult.

There is a calendar on the home page of the CMFA website with the dates of all the walking activities. Useful for forward planning!

Many articles have been written on the many benefits of walking both for physical and mental health. Walking is beneficial at any time of year even during the Winter. If the muddy fields put you off then try a National Trust or English Heritage property. In addition to the beautiful architecture the paths in the grounds are usually well maintained making easy Winter walking. So wrap up warm and head outside!

Veronica Hargreaves

WALKING FOR HEALTH

Alan Kimber has provided us with this year's programme:
February 14th and 28th;
March 13th and 27th
April 10th and 24th
May 8th and 22nd
June 12th and 26th
July 10th and 24th
August 14th and 28th
September 11th and 25th
October 9th and 23rd
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December 11th only.
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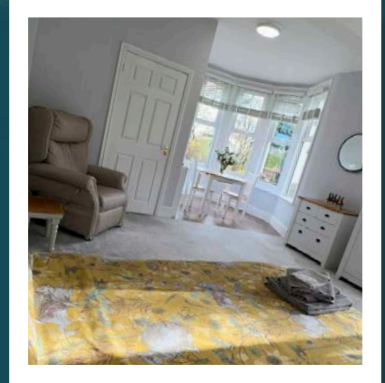
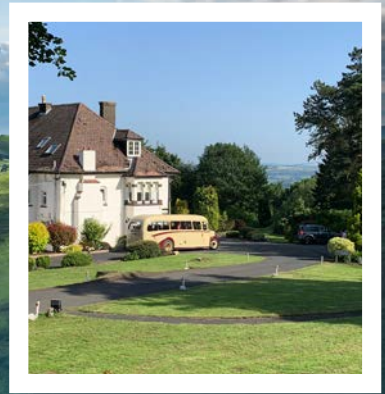
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Doddington Lodge is a place where friendships are made and special moments are shared. We organise many fun activities that everyone can get involved with, whether that's a sing along, arts and crafts, collecting fresh veg from the allotment or just simply helping each other with a crossword in our daily newspaper. Each day is different, we certainly have many happy moments...

Our home is a loving community and family, where you can consider Doddington Lodge a home away from home. We will provide you with all the key information, guiding you through every step of the process, whether you are staying with us for a short or long stay.



**Come along!
Coffee morning
on Friday 9th
February 2024**



Join us for a warm cup of cheer and plenty of laughs at our monthly Doddington Lodge Coffee Mornings!

Every 2nd Friday of the month, come together with residents, family & friends over tea or coffee. Enjoy freshly baked cakes as well as the Doddington Lodge monthly raffle.

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We look forward to seeing you!



Doddington
Lodge
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HOUSEKEEPER OF THE MONTH' IN THE LEADING CARING TIMES MAGAZINE!

We are thrilled to share the wonderful news that our amazing Debbie has recently been featured as 'Housekeeper of the Month' in the leading Caring Times Magazine! As a vital member of our team, Debbie, in her role as a Domestic Assistant at Doddington Lodge, plays a critical part in maintaining the well-being of both residents and staff. Her dedication and passion for her work shine through in the recent well-being feature in Caring Times Magazine.

Debbie goes the extra mile to ensure a comfortable and welcoming environment for everyone at Doddington Lodge. In a heart-warming quote from the feature, she shares a beautiful sentiment: "No matter what I did in my life, when I told her that I had got a job in a Care Home Laundry, I'd never seen her so happy and proud because she said to me, 'You can make a difference!'"

Debbie's recognition as 'Housekeeper of the Month' is a testament to her unwavering commitment and the positive impact she makes every day. We couldn't be prouder of her well-deserved acknowledgement in Caring Times Magazine.



Lots of happy moments...



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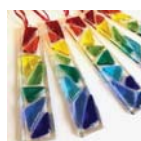
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Gardening Trends for 2024: From Exciting Progress to Eye-Rolling Buzzwords

Around this time of year, the gardening press gets terribly excited about predictions and trends for the following twelve months. I'm sure this happens in every hobby niche and that there will be model railway publications getting similarly hot under the collar about the latest fake tree trends or new rolling stock, um, stock, but the gardening lot seems to take it to the next level. Every newspaper, magazine, and gardening website appears to have its own list of what's in and what's out, and I, of course, devour each one hungrily. I have, however, noticed a bit of a trend. The lists tend to fall into two categories: those that are worth taking note of and those that are irritating beyond belief.

In the first "*Actually, that's quite interesting*" category, we find those trends that deserve a round of applause. For instance, the much-heralded peat ban is finally kicking in at the end of the year. The reasoning is wonderfully simple - peatlands are essential and incredibly efficient carbon sinks, soaking up all the bad stuff and doing their bit to combat climate change. Stepping away from peat-based compost is a huge step towards sustainability. It's not rocket science; it's just the right thing to do.

Another trend on the "*Bravo - well done!*" list is the rise of public wellness gardens for mental health. The search for a refuge from the stresses of modern life (emails, social media, most politicians) led me to the peace and tranquillity of gardening. It's one of the long list of pastimes that have been recognised for its therapeutic benefits, and seeing that I don't have the patience for knitting, the legs for jogging or the intellect for chess, gardening fits

the bill rather nicely.

However, it's not all rosy in the world of gardening trends (see what I did there?). In the second category, we have the "*Stop it! No, really, pack it in!*" trends. Exhibit A - the term "Edible Landscaping." It's essentially a glorified way of saying "a vegetable patch", which is like calling a sandwich a "breadwich." And to make matters worse, they've coined the term "Edimentals." I'm still trying to figure out precisely what this means, but I know it's not good. Newsflash - gardening has always involved growing edible plants, whether in rows or beautifully arranged beds. Let's not overcomplicate what has been a timeless practice, eh?

But here's the thing - all these lists forget to mention the stuff that makes gardening truly special. The joy of creating a garden, nurturing it, and watching it thrive is an experience that transcends trends and fads. The simple pleasure of sitting in the middle of your garden, surrounded by the fruits of your labour, with family and friends, enjoying a barbecue and a cold beer, is what gardening is all about (at least for me).

So, as you embark on your own particular gardening journey in 2024, try not to be swayed by the latest trends and buzzwords. Instead, focus on what truly matters - the love and care you pour into your garden and the moments you create within it. Trends may come and go, but the timeless pleasures of gardening are here to stay. Cheers to another year of growth, beauty, and the simple joys of the garden.

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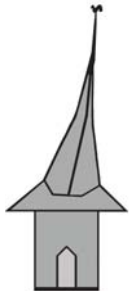
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Every time a Council has gone bust (and it is happening more and more frequently) they blame a reduction in grants from central government. However, this may not be the entire truth. Lord Morse, Chairman of the Office for Local Government and former controller of the National Audit Office, has said that, in every case to date, the situation has also arisen due to failures in management and governance. These include speculative investments funded by borrowing. As you know, Shropshire Council is putting Council Tax up by the maximum allowable again (5% or 24/25) so it might be worth asking about such investments. Shopping Centres come to mind...

Good news? Cleobury Post Office was due to open before Christmas according to a letter from Post Office HQ received by Gwilm Butler. This was followed by a press release from Philip Dunne confirming this. Only it didn't happen, with no sign of life, intelligent or otherwise, on the premises. No idea why this was promised but the latest rumour says that someone is under training to take over although no date is mentioned. Believe it when you see it...The recent ITV series on the Horizon scandal has created a storm of activity with even politicians finally waking up to the scale and depth of the scandal. Given that all the main parties have had Ministers responsible for this area, even the Lib Dems in the person of their current leader, no party can claim innocence. Instead they are running around blaming everyone else involved. Civil Servants, Post Office staff, Fujitsu, all are now being targeted rather than politicians asking themselves why they stuck their fingers in their ears and shouted 'not listening' as the evidence mushroomed. One MP, James Arbuthnot (now Lord Arbuthnot), deserves special mention as he took up the case of his constituent in the early days and refused to be browbeaten into believing the lies he was constantly told. And you wonder why it is difficult to get anyone to run a Post Office...In a new twist, the Post Office is now being investigated for possible tax evasion as they

have offset the compensation that has been dragged out of them against profits, 'saving' up to £100 million which is apparently an accounting 'no no'. Too big to fail? Hopefully not.

Still, thank goodness that all life's essentials are still available in Cleobury. When you need a tattoo, a vape or a sunbed, you are well catered for. Just don't be unreasonable and ask for a luxury such as a bank, Post Office, butcher, clothes shop or any other useful outlet as you have no chance...

Just what are Police and Crime Commissioners for? Introduced by David (call me Lord Dave) Cameron, they made policing into a political football. This goes against all the principles of policing by consent introduced by Sir Robert Peel 200 years ago. Rumour has it that the West Mercia PCC has around 100 staff, some on substantial salaries, with the cost being around £2.4 million a year. A rough 'back of a fag packet' calculation indicates that this sum would pay for some 400 front line officers so which would you prefer? With a general election coming up soon, it could be a useful question for prospective candidates.

The water companies are still busily pumping sewage into our waterways and failing to do things that they promised. By now, they should all have produced live maps of sewage spills. Thames Water has done this but most others including Severn Trent, haven't. In addition, ST have refused to give any data on spills and also refused to conduct an internal review as to why the map hasn't been provided. They have just admitted pumping 'dirty water' into the Rea but there is no definition of this. Clearly nothing to see here then...

Mullers have announced how sad they are to have left Cleobury – the reason given being the 'lack of skills' in the area. This has upset the ex Cleobury workers as the reverse is true. If there was a problem at Wednesbury, they would need someone from Cleobury to sort it as that is where the skills were...

Ariadne J Grumpy

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Clarion Clippings. - The Local News

THE PROMISE

An Easter Play

At 7.00 pm, on Friday March 22nd at St. Mary's Church, a small company representing the churches of the area will be presenting a play for Easter based on the Gospel of John. The Promise offers an opportunity to listen to the words of Jesus as the audience eats and drinks with the disciples.

This play already has been successfully presented at two other churches and I had wondered if St Mary's would like to offer it to our community. It requires a monumental feat of memory from the actor portraying Jesus and after convincing Nigel Hodgson to take this on, we set about recruiting the disciples. So many people have been enthusiastic about this project. We have a team of ladies running up costumes, the Men's Shed are producing scenery, and gems have been unearthed from charity shops for our props.

So please come and share a special evening as we move towards Easter. Wine, soft drinks and nibbles will be on the tables and hot drinks with hot cross buns will be available in the interval. Tickets are free and are available from The Hub, the Market Hall and St Mary's. There will be opportunity for a voluntary donation on the night.

Avril Kemp

ALADDIN SUCCESS

The Christmas holiday was a busy time for the enthusiastic team of professionals and volunteers at the Regal theatre, with 5,500 tickets sold for their pantomime. I was knocked out by last year's presentation and

was looking forward to another big laugh. But I overlooked the fact that my youngest local granddaughter is now at Lacon Childe School and politely declined a second pantomime experience. Even an offer to pay for her best mate did not change her mind. They do grow up quickly these kids, don't they?

I have tickets booked for my lady to hear the music of Peter Green on the 24th this month. The Regal do have a good touch of presenting entertainment for almost every taste.

100 NOT OUT



Congratulations to Phil Westwood on donating blood for the 100th time. He's very modest about it and tells me that when enough donors have hit the magic century they'll have a gathering to acclaim them all and hand out donor cards, medals, badges and certificates. Plus a meal for each centurion and guest.

Great idea, thanking people for their generosity in helping people they will never know.

PAVEMENT PARKING

I have a vague memory of folk talking about a parking warden working in Ludlow who would be paying visits to Cleobury. I

never did see him or her; perhaps the body was removed under cover of darkness. If I'm asked at a medical consultation if I have any allergies, I normally include "Traffic Wardens" to the list. We could do with an occasional warden visit to deal with the disease of Pavement Parking that's emerging.



Like this Fiat (I think it was) spotted blocking the footpath at Love Lane on January 22nd at lunch time. It was still there at 4.00, during which time the pupils at Lacon Childe School would have walked down the road, dodging around this minor inconvenience when the passage of cars, delivery vans and school buses would allow. Not that school buses are a problem; their job includes making safe passage for children simple.

What would that legendary traffic warden have done, you wonder. Back in the 1980s there was a woman warden in Kidderminster with something of a reputation. Local gossip had it that she'd issued a ticket to a car that overstayed its time, the driver of which was her mother! I wonder if she's still available for a little freelance work...

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With the General Election looming it is only fair for new candidates to have space to introduce themselves. This is the first message from Chris Naylor, Liberal Democrat.

I'm Chris Naylor and I will be standing on behalf of the Liberal Democrats in the South Shropshire constituency. I was born in the Kent countryside and have lived in the heart of South Shropshire for some years now. I've been a local council Cabinet Member for Housing, supporting 40,000 residents in 20,000 local authority homes. We modernised 3000 flats and created new council housing for the first time in years.

I'm 100% focused on South Shropshire, on making life better for residents here. As your MP I will spend at least 3 days a week working with residents and agencies here. I will donate at least 10% of my salary to local organisations.

The NHS and our residents' health

There's no major hospital in South Shropshire.

I will fight to save our vital community hospitals in Bridgnorth, Ludlow and Bishops' Castle (where beds are already closed).

Unacceptable ambulance response times.

I will work with West Midlands Ambulance Service and First Responder teams to ensure quicker arrival times, with more use of local standbys.

We're not doing enough for mental health.

I will champion more resources for ex-services' veterans, for farmers, teenagers and others in need.

The cost of residents living here

Housing costs are way too high: I will demand Housing Associations stop selling off stock, and press Shropshire Council to build new low-rent social housing.

Many of our pensioners and those less well-off can't afford to stay warm and struggle to eat: I will insist on wider promotion of low-cost energy tariffs, insulation roll-out for cold homes and will work with Food Banks and Community Shops to help those most in need.

Our rural communities

We must support the farmers at the heart of local communities, cut through the confused grant system.

Our rural residents' need to access services: I'd challenge rural transport, phone and broadband providers to ensure reliable low-cost provision.

Our rivers should be cherished - not dying: I will demand urgent action to save the Severn, Teme, Clun and more, for anglers, swimmers, and wildlife.

I'm full of hope that we can do better. I'm good at making things happen. I'm straightforward and honest, compassionate about those in need. I'll give South Shropshire everything I've got.

Chris.

BRUCKNER'S BIRTHDAY BASH

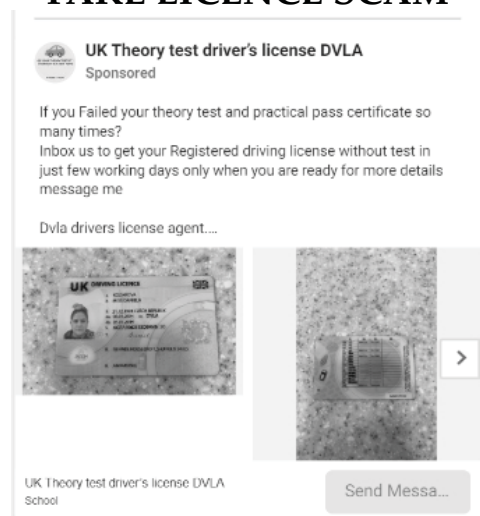
The Edge Chamber Choir will mark its 10th birthday this February with a concert celebrating 200 years since the birth of Bruckner. In this, the choir will be assisted by the addition of the English Trombone Consort. Come along to St Laurence's church, Ludlow at 7.30pm on Saturday 17 February to hear a feast of music by Bruckner interspersed with items by other composers beginning with B – including Brahms, Beethoven, Bairstow and Briggs, and in particular the concert will include the beautiful Agnus Dei by Samuel Barber, his arrangement for choir of the Adagio for Strings.

Bruckner's music will reverberate magnificently around the walls of St Laurence's, with the addition of the four trombones, creating a birthday concert not to be missed!

Tickets are £12 in advance (under 16s free) from www.trybooking.com/uk/DAVZ and will also be available on the door at the higher price of £15.

Celia Gibb

FAKE LICENCE SCAM



Grateful thanks to Linda Fowler at 'West of the Cleve' for this picture of a DVLA Driving Licence scam. It appeals to those who want a fake licence, never ever worth falling for.



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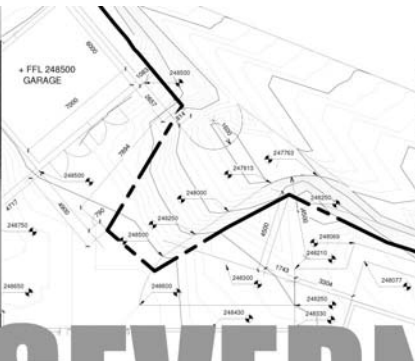
Farlow & Oretton Village Hall

Saturday February 24th

Adults £12.00, Young people £6.00

Doors open at 7.00

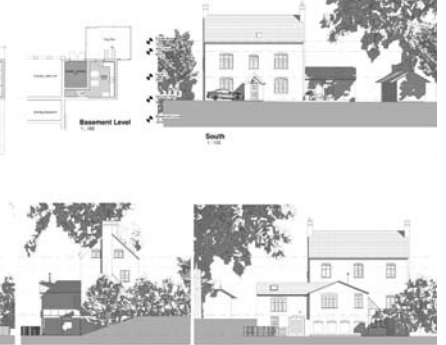
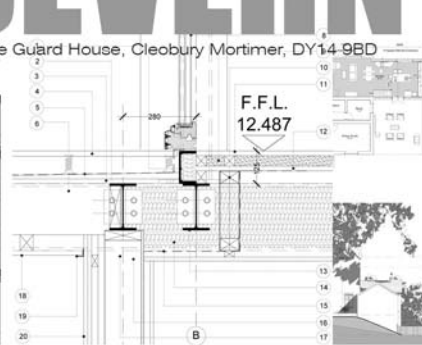
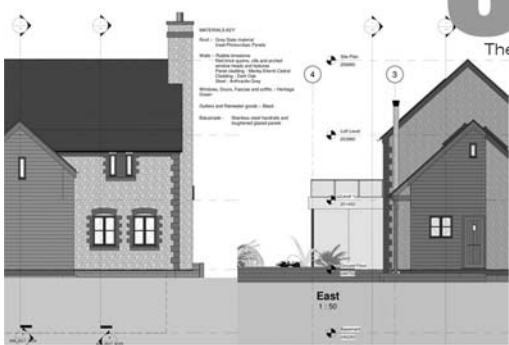
There will be a bar and raffle



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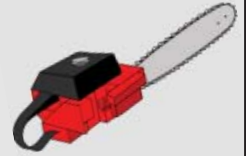
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Community Contacts for Clarion Readers

CEMETERY ADMINISTRATOR	Theresa Ray	07703 965 064	theresa.25016@hotmail.co.uk
CLEOBURY COUNTRY CENTRE		01299 272300	In Love Lane, 9 to 5 Mon to Fri.
CLEOBURY DENTAL PRACTICE		01299 271747	www.cleoburydental.co.uk
CLEOBURY CARERS	Michelle	01743 341995	carerssupport@shropshire.gov.uk
CLEOBURY COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES	Katja Jones	07966 080111	Tuesday and Thursday at the Medical Centre
CLEOBURY MORTIMER LIBRARY		01299 272301	Open 9 to 7 Mon, 9 to 5 Tues/Fri and 10 to 1 Sat.
LOCAL POLICE	PC Wayne Strangwood	07773 054 587	wayne.strangwood@westmercia.pnn.police.uk
CLEOBURY MORTIMER GUIDES	Fiona McCallum	07805 737 555	theresa.25016@hotmail.co.uk
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	Kim	01299 272732	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 MEN'S SHED	Pete Blackburn	07776 243 584	petblack@me.com
THE PHARMACY		01299 270219	Closes for half day on Saturday. Delivers prescriptions
ST ELIZABETH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH	Angela Flowers	01299 270318	Sunday Mass at 9.00am
NIGHTINGALE NURSING FUND	Rosemary Abbiss	01746 718451	
TOWN COUNCIL	Clerk Dorothy McBride	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		01584 874922	
VOLUNTARY CAR SCHEME		01299 666119	Mandy Smith
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THE CLARION SOCIAL CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY

Thu. 1st. 10.00 Rock Pathfinders walk out from Bodenham Arboretum,	PAGE 29
Sun. 4th. 10.00 The CMFA Snowdrop Walk starts from the Parish Church.	PAGE 29
Tue. 6th. 2.00 Carer Peer Support Group meet at St Mary's Place, Love Lane	
Wed. 7th. GARDEN RUBBISH AND FOODWASTE BINS EMPTIED TODAY	
6.00 to 7.00 Late Night at the Food Bank, Market Hall.	
7.30. Whist Drive at Doddington Village Hall	
Mon. 12th. Deadline for Conservation Fund grant applications.	PAGE 12
7.30 Cleobury Gardeners meet at the Parish Hall with guest speaker Kit Smith	PAGE 18
Tue. 13th. 07.30 The Breakfast Club meet at the Golf Club.	PAGE 43
7.30 Cleobury W.I. meet at the Market Hall for a drum workshop.	PAGE 15
Wed. 14th. DOMESTIC RUBBISH BINS EMPTIED TODAY	
10.00 Walking for Health step out from the Market Hall.	PAGE 29
10.00 CoCo Coffee Morning, Market Hall	
12.30. Saint Valentine's Day Soup Lunch at Melville Chapel, Orton	PAGE 7
Thu. 15th. 10.00. Rock Pathfinders walk from Rose & Crown, Tenbury Wells.	PAGE 29
Fri. 16th. 8.00. Bingo Night at Doddington Village Hall	
Sat. 17th. 7.30 Edge Chamber Choir concert, St Laurence's, Ludlow.	PAGE 47
9.00ish. 'Innocent Criminals' entertain at the Fighting Cocks, Stottesdon.	PAGE 5
Mon. 19th. 7.30 The Reading Group meet at the library on Love Lane.	PAGE 7
Wed. 21st. GARDEN RUBBISH AND FOODWASTE BINS EMPTIED TODAY	
12.00 Cleobury W.I. Winter Warmer Lunch in the Market Hall.	PAGE 15
7.30. Whist Drive at Doddington Village Hall	
Thu. 22nd. DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MARCH CLARION	
Fri. 23rd. 4.30. Philip Dunne's Advice Surgery at Community Hall, Lowtown, Bridgnorth	PAGE 14
7.00 Clows Top Wildlife Club meet at Victory Hall to hear about reptiles.	PAGE 7
Wed. 28th. DOMESTIC RUBBISH BINS EMPTIED TODAY	
10.00. CoCo Coffee Morning, Market Hall, Church Street.	
10.00. Walk for Health starts from the Market Hall.	PAGE 29
7.00 Hypnotherapist Jennie Kitching advises at the Market Hall	PAGE 5
Thu. 29th. Cleobury W.I. visit the Carpet Museum in Kidderminster	

LOOKING FORWARD TO MARCH:

Fri. 1st 7.00 'Youth Makes Music's local schools at Ludlow Assembly to aid the fight to end polio	P.14
8.00 Bingo Night at Doddington Village Hall.	
Wed. 6th. GARDEN RUBBISH AND FOODWASTE BINS EMPTIED TODAY	
7.30. Whist Drive at Doddington Village Hall.	

REGULAR EVENTS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Tuesday at 2.00: The Friendship Club meets at the Parish Hall.
Wednesday. 10.30 to 12.30 Pay and Play for Over 50s at Highley Leisure Centre. Charge £2.80.
Thursday at 11.00: Drop-in morning, Parish Church. Take tea and share a quiet chat.
2.00. Tina Hobin's Exercise for the Mature, St Mary's Place, Love Lane
7.30. Tina Hobin's Ancient Egyptian Dance and good health. In the Market Hall.



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How many Curlews and Lapwings are there?

Please help us to find out

If you enjoy seeing Curlew and Lapwing, and would like to do something to help stop their disappearance from the local countryside, we would like your help, please.

We need to know how many breeding pairs there are, and where, before we try to help them.

The group is centred on the open hill land of Titterstone Clee, and Clee Hill and Catherton Commons, extending approximately as far as Knowlegate and Knowbury to the south, Bitterley to the west, Cleedownton and Bromdon to the north, and Doddington to the east. The bird survey has been carried out every year since 2012, and we are doing it again this year.

People who have helped previously will be asked to help again, but new helpers will be very welcome, please.

The Curlew results in 2023 were the most encouraging for some years: 7 – 8 pairs were found in the original area, one more than last year, and two more in the extension. Three nests were found, one a relay by the same pair, but although all three of those nests were predated, a chick fledged from each of two other nests, one on Magpie Hill and one near Coreley. This is great news, the first fledged young for some years!!! A distribution map can be found on our website. Let us know if you know of any other pairs, please. For other species, there were 2 - 3 pairs of Lapwing: at Hollywaste, the only known site since 2017, and 8-9 pairs of Kestrel: Clee Hill is a county hotspot, and we are supporting a nest box and ringing project. Five nests were found. At least two Cuckoo territories were located, but there must be more, and there were more Barn Owl: sightings than for many years. There were probably 3 pairs, and one nest was found with 3 fledged young. Two Red Kite nests were also found, in the same places as last year. A full report for 2023 is being prepared. If you can recognise Lapwing and Curlew (and preferably their calls), you can make an important contribution to our work. If possible, we would also like you to record Kestrel, Cuckoo, and other target species, but that's an optional extra. The survey is easy to do, and only involves three 3-hour visits between the beginning of April and mid-June. Simple instructions and a map to record your observations are provided, and there will be an outdoor training session if you want to come. Whether you join in or not, please let us know if you see Curlew, Lapwing or Kestrel anywhere in the area.

Our survey contributes to the Curlew monitoring carried out across Shropshire, by 10 Community Wildlife Groups altogether. You can read about this, and the work of the Shropshire Ornithological Society (SOS) *Save our Curlews* project on the SOS website www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/. This describes the results in detail, our future plans, and the overwhelming evidence that predation by foxes and other predators is the main cause of Curlew's continuing decline. It is clear that the annual release of millions of pheasants for shooting, only a third of which are actually shot, results in an over-abundant food supply which maintains the numbers of the Curlew's main predators well above naturally sustainable levels.

We still need to monitor the local Curlew population, and check all the pairs we do find, to see if they produce young, and if any fledge, so if you can do so, please help..

A Bird Group meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Monday 18 March, at the Recreation Rooms, 22A, Clee Hill High Street, to present the results of our work in previous years, and plans for 2024.

All welcome!!!

For more information, please see the Clee Hill pages on the Community Wildlife Groups website <https://www.shropscwgs.org.uk/clee-hill-wildlife-group/>

You can find more information about how to report a Curlew, Lapwing or Kestrel, arrangements for the public meeting on 18 March, on our website www.shropscwgs.org.uk/ or contact Chris Bargman 01299 270514, email: chcwg@shropscwgs.org.uk

THE BREAKFAST CLUB WAS BUSY OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON.... IN DECEMBER

Despite the season and the weather, there was a record (or near-record) attendance – 27 altogether – at December's meeting of the Breakfast Club. Paul Serrell-Cooke was our speaker, and he had chosen the intriguing title of 'Glasnost and Handbags at Dawn'.

Looking back 36 years, Paul reminded us of the Cold War era, when many were relying on peace being maintained by the deterrent value of nuclear weapons, as these could or would be used to create Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD for short), irrespective of who struck first. UK forces, including the RAF, were actively practicing the operations they would need in the face of an invasion by the USSR.

1987 presented the vision of a thaw, as USSR's Mikhail Gorbachev, for various reasons, wanted a step-change in East-West relations, and had agreed to fly to the USA for talks with Ronald Reagan. As this flight would require a re-fuelling stop in UK en route, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher spotted an opportunity for a face-to-face encounter, so this was arranged to happen at RAF Brize Norton. Paul was then the RAF officer in charge of the handling of all explosives and fuels at Brize Norton, so was intimately involved with Gorbachev's brief visit, as this would include refuelling three IL-62s, the Russian version of a VC10.

As Russian technology was twenty years behind the West, special 'old-fashioned' fuel had to be sourced for the IL-62s, and de-icing fluid had to be added. Since the Russians would not trust the RAF's version of de-icing fluid they brought their own in 45 gallon drums, which were used instead. De-icing fluid is an additive that is mixed with aviation fuel to prevent the fuel from freezing or crystallising at the extreme temperatures found at high altitude. Paul's team would add the de-icing fluid to the fuel *via* a 'Zwicky' trolley which was placed between the fuel inlet pipe and the aircraft.

They had been told to meet any requests (or orders) made by their Russian guests, which led to Paul giving a lift across the base to a Russian who took the liberty of trying to eat Paul's packed lunch, as well as being driven around. Paul was not amused.

Thanks to the competence of Paul and the RAF at Brize Norton, Gorbachev's touch-down and meetings went well, thus furthering his aim of achieving *Perestroika* (re-structuring) through *Glasnost* (openness). Paul can thus be said to have played a real part in the break-up of the Soviet Union!

AND THEN IN JANUARY...THE BREAKFAST CLUB AGAIN

On January 9th we heard Eddie Humphries explain how, thirty years ago, he came to be 'Talking to a Space Station'. 29 members and friends were present – possibly a record.

It started his story in the 1970s, when he was always keen

to take things apart to see how they worked. Mechanical devices were no problem, but when he was confronted with a Bush transistor radio, he was floored because after taking the back off he could deduce nothing from the maze of wires, almost devoid of any moving parts.

Enlightenment about things electronic eventually came when he was given a kit from which various devices could be built – not just radios but things like metal detectors. Eddie's scientific insights and interests later took him to university to read Music & Physics – a great combination for a radio ham who played in an Oompah Band.

In the 1980s, the USA was flying numerous space missions with their space shuttle 'Columbia' and on some of these the cargo bay was used to accommodate a 'Space Lab', in which experiments were carried out. Mission No 9 included a radio ham amongst the crew, and it subsequently became common for an astronaut to operate a radio station from the bay. On one occasion, radio hams on earth were asked to apply to be able to link up with the Space Lab directly. Eddie was lucky enough to be chosen, and thus a student ended up 'Talking to a Space Station'.

The Club's next meeting will be held on 13 February, when Pete Blackburn will be our speaker. Anyone wishing to attend should contact Angela Drennan (270636) to book a place.

Mark Baldwin



Ludlow Motors

Vauxhall

The **New Corsa** is available with a petrol or fully electric engine. A next-generation 51kWh battery with all-electric range of up to 246 miles.



The **Astra 100% Electric**. 114kW Electric motor (158PS) with 54kWh battery. 258 miles of Electric range. 0 grams of CO2 emissions.

Mokka Electric is powered by a next generation 50kWh lithium-ion battery. It'll take you up to 209 miles (preliminary WLTP)1 on a single charge.



Suzuki

Enjoy the power of an 83 HP engine, with a CO2 output as low as 106 g/km (WLTP combined). When you choose a **Swift** with mild hybrid, a little goes a long way.



Designed for all conditions, and we don't just mean the weather. From school runs to weekend getaways, the **Vitara** takes you anywhere you want (or need) to go.

Our latest **S-Cross** comes with the choice of either Mild Hybrid or Full Hybrid technology, supported by a dynamic and responsive petrol engine.



Service

Routine servicing is an important part of keeping your vehicle at its best condition, delivering a top driving experience. Drive confidently knowing your vehicle is working at its best with us.



We service all popular makes & models.

All Makes & Models Serviced from £199. Fully Electric Servicing From £99.

Spread the cost with a Service Plan from £17.99 per month.

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Nothing should stop you living a full life, with independence and freedom. The Motability Scheme opens the doors to those things, with worry free motoring that helps you to keep moving.



Motability from Worcester Car Sales - 400523 means:

The everyday freedom of having everything included.

Your insurance, servicing, maintenance and full breakdown cover included.

Deputy Town Clerk

We would like to give a warm welcome to our new Deputy Town Clerk – Mrs Anna Shaw.

Neighbourhood Development Plan

The result of the referendum held on Thursday 7th December 2023 was 84% in favour of the Neighbourhood Development Plan. Shropshire Council are due to adopt the Neighbourhood Plan at their March meeting. When it comes into force it forms part of the development plan for the area alongside the Local Plan. Local planning authorities and planning inspectors considering planning applications or appeals must make their decisions in accordance with the policies of the Neighbourhood Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This is the first time that residents in Cleobury Mortimer have been able to influence the type of housing to be built and the provision of open amenity space.

Proposed Sewage Treatment Works

The planning application for the proposed sewage treatment works off Station Road has been approved by Shropshire Council. We have asked Severn Trent to arrange a public drop-in session as soon as possible to present their final plans and the likely construction timeline. This is a significant investment in the ageing infrastructure within Cleobury Mortimer and will ensure that we have sufficient capacity to treat the wastewater from our growing community whilst protecting the biodiversity in and along the River Rea.

Councillor Surgery

Cllr Greaves, Cllr Tysall, Cllr Abbatiello and Cllr Clarke attended the monthly Councillor Surgery which is held in The Market Hall alongside the Farmers Market. We were visited by a small number of residents who discussed various issues around the town; the main issues being excessive vehicle speed along Tenbury Rd from New House Farm to Eagle Lane and the ongoing issues with the erratic sequencing of the traffic lights at the Catherton Rd junction. If you have an issue you want to raise, you can contact the office on 01299 271154, email us at council@cleobury.org.uk or drop into the monthly councillor surgery.

Interested in becoming a Town Councillor?

Cleobury Mortimer Town Council is made up of nine Councillors all of whom are unpaid volunteers who are elected every four years (next election is May 2025). We currently have a Town Councillor vacancy. If you are interested, please phone on 01299 271154 or email us at council@cleobury.org.uk.

Maintenance Assistant Vacancy

The Town Council currently have a vacancy for a Maintenance Assistant. If you are interested, the Job Advert & Job Description are available on the website www.cleobury.org.uk. Alternatively, please contact the office on 01299 271154 or email us at council@cleobury.org.uk. To apply, please email your CV and a covering letter to council@cleobury.org.uk no later than Monday 5th February 2024.

Next Council Meeting.....Monday 5th February 2024 at 6.30pm, at Cleobury Country Centre. All public are warmly invited to attend.



eme CLEOBURY

FACILITIES INCLUDE:

- Gym 
- Exercise Classes 
- Sports Hall 
- Outside Astro Pitch 
- Netball 
- Tennis Courts 

OPENING TIMES

MON	7.30am - 10am 10am-12.30pm GP Referral 3.30pm - 10pm
TUE	3.30pm - 10pm
WED	7.30am - 10am 4.30pm - 10pm
THU	4.30pm - 10pm
FRI	7.30am - 10am 3.30pm - 10pm
SAT-SUN	7.30am - 1pm

Pre booking not required for Gym use.
Induction or Disclaimer required
in advance of use.

CLASS TIMETABLE

MON	9.15 - 10am 6.30 - 7.15pm	GENTLE AEROBICS BODY PUMP
TUES	9.15 - 10am 10.15 - 11am 6.15 - 7pm	YOGA YOGA TRX
WED	5.15 - 6pm 6 - 6.45pm	PILATES CIRCUITS
THU	6 - 6.45pm 7 - 7.45pm	STEP SPIN
FRI	6 - 6.45pm	STRETCH & RELAX

Pre-Booking required for Exercise classes
Book online or at the Centre



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