
The Cleobury Clarion



JANUARY 2014

A Very Happy and Peaceful New Year to All



THE FINE SPIRIT OF CLEOBURY

Saturday, December 14th and shoppers in Cleobury town centre are entertained.

Cleobury Concert Brass were in evidence before Christmas, as you would expect. And a generous gesture by the award winning band was standing back and letting the very new Junior Band take the spotlight. These younger people have only been playing together for a year, but did the town proud by playing before the seniors moved in.

WE ALL NEED TO ACT ON THIS

It's not the Clarion's style to give the downside of events a lot of publicity, but this is a serious matter for the community. It's a threat to the 292 bus service that runs from Kidderminster through the town and on to Ludlow. For those who do not have a car, including most students at nearby colleges, the bus is a vital part of life.

The 292 service is funded jointly by Worcester and Shropshire councils, as it passes through their joint boundary. Worcester has to cut spending - just as Shropshire must - and the £3 million they put into subsidising transport is a target. The 292 route is 'At Risk'.

Worcester Council are asking for feedback from bus users on all their routes and there's a questionnaire you can download at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/busservice review to make a limited comment. But we should write to all our local representatives, from the Parish Council, to Shropshire

Councillors Gwilym Butler and Madge Shingleton and up to our Member of Parliament Philip Dunne. What these people need to support any argument they can make about keeping the service is evidence of local feeling and need. The more mail you send, the more weight they can carry in their arguments.

CLEE HILL'S OWN DEFIBRILLATOR

There was a very happy gathering at Clee Hill's High Street on December 19th. After a public appeal for funds and a strong response from the community, a defibrillator was installed outside the Village Store and Post Office. Putting it on the front of the building means access to the unit at any time.

A modest heroine emerged as a result of the appeal for money. Rachael Davenhill had completed a charity walk for her mother's church in Bridgnorth and arranged for half the money she raised to go to the Clee Hill appeal. The lady is quite some fund raiser - £930 into the kitty!

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Old Tree Cottage £219,950

Victorian property with master bedroom with en-suite & two further bedrooms. Patio/ garden areas. Worth viewing. EPC rating E



The Cleobury Clarion. January 2014

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Clarion Clippings - The Local News

CRACKING CRUVO FESTIVAL



Andy Goold and Tina Bate teamed up behind the bar. A rotten job, but someone has to do it.

The Cruvo Festival at the Sports and Social Club and out on the pitches made a gentle start, with matches in progress and more talking than supping in the bar. But as the evening and the pigroast warmed up, the range of guest beers and Scotch whiskies added to the draw. There were sounds of much dancing and social activity when I walked the dog at close to midnight.

Andy Goold gave us details of the group's origins and aims: "It's the Cricket, Rugby and

Volley Ball clubs getting together to run fund raising events for their own benefit. The way things are, it's not fair to keep relying on people like Mick and Tina Bate and Nick Davis of Hobson's, so we decided to organise two big events a year, of which this is the first."

"And the Cricket Club are talking about a possible West Indies series in the summer." So we all have time to grow our hair and develop Bob Marley style dreadlocks.

This first event produced a £300 profit. Not big, but a very fine start. Look out for more from CRUVO

AN APPEAL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Wyre Forest Citizens Advice. At the heart of Citizens Advice is a desire to help where there is need and bring about change to unjust situations. Citizens Advice is a charity, not a government department, staffed mainly by volunteers. So we are able to give free, unbiased help to those who contact our bureau seeking help.

We need more volunteers. Maybe you could spare a few hours a week to get involved? It's rewarding, challenging and

fun working with a great team. You can train to become an advisor, help with admin backup, work in reception or get involved with Social Policy, there are so many opportunities to find a role that suits your personality.

Why not start the New Year with a fresh and rewarding role with Citizens Advice? Come and talk to us and find out how you can become involved.

Telephone: 01562 60194, email bureau@wyreforestcab.org.uk..... or call at our offices in New Street. Or we are on the web: www.wyreforestcab.org.uk

David Alliston

CORIOLANUS AT THE CASTLE

SpArC Theatre in Bishops Castle have two live link events of note this month. On the 27th they're relaying a live screening of the Royal Ballet performing and on the 30th it's National Theatre live with their offering of William Shakespeare's 'Coriolanus' with Tom Hiddleston in the title role.

More details from the Box Office at 01588 630321/ 638038 or see all that this lively little local company has on offer on **t h e i r w e b s i t e :**



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Clarion Clippings - The Local News

QUIZ NIGHT

There's a Quiz Night scheduled for Saturday the 25th, starting at 7.30 in Kinlet Village Hall. It's raising funds for St Mary's Church in Billingsley and looks like good value with a hot supper included in the £7.50 per head. Even better, that includes a vegetarian option.

Teams will be a maximum of four people, there will be a licensed bar and the inevitable raffle. All enquiries and team entries to Zoe Baggott on 07974 8 0 8 8 1 7 o r zoe.baggott@hotmail.com

EXPERIENCED SINGERS WANTED

I am looking for experienced singers to form a South Shropshire/North Herefordshire chamber choir with the aim of achieving outstanding performances of the more unusual choral repertoire.

I am a singing teacher, coaching privately and for Shropshire Music Service. I conduct the Corvedale Choir community choir and direct and sing in Voces Intimae, a group of eight. Choral singing has long been part of my life and I have sung in both BBC Symphony Chorus and the Corydon Singers (not Croydon!), one of the top amateur choirs in the country, with whom I made about 35 CDs

This new group will be small and mixed-voice; all members will be auditioned. The plan is to start rehearsals in February, with auditions in January. The rehearsal venue has yet to be decided.

If you are a good singer, have a high level of sight-reading, or brilliant at learning by ear and willing to spend time learning the notes before coming to rehearsals, then please contact me on 01584 841053 or ros.crouch@gmail.com. I have got some very exciting music lined up to do – and you'll have the benefit of my expertise as a singing teacher to help us technically.

I will also need an accompanist – anyone know anybody?

Ros Crouch

THANK YOU

The Friends of Cleobury Mortimer Primary School would like to say a huge thank you to all staff, parents, carers and children who made such an effort to support the school for its annual Christmas Fayre. Thank you everyone for your donations and for coming.

We would also like to thank all our local traders who have kindly donated money and prizes for both the Christmas Fayre and our Christmas Grand Draw; your kindness and

generosity has been overwhelming. The Christmas Fayre was as busy as ever and it was so lovely to see all our local trade stalls getting stuck in and selling such a wide range of products.

So far the Fayre has raised over £1000 towards our funds and we are still waiting for the final total of the Grand Draw. It's been amazing

If any parents or carers of children who attend the primary school would like to come along to a Friends meeting, our next one will be held at 7.00pm on Thursday 16th January 2014 at the School.

Vanessa Auger

THE FINAL FUND RAISER FOR SHAUNAH'S CAUSE

Shaunah Murrell's festive season of fund raising for the Kidderminster Breast Clinic, which Lloyds Bank is supporting with matched funding, comes to its end on Friday the 3rd of this month.

John and Judith Sant have been well impressed by the effort and generosity the campaign has attracted and are organising a Coffee Morning in their home at 10 Church Street, in the heart of Cleobury. It starts at 10.00, runs until 12.00 - unless you want to stay and help wash up - and then they start counting the money.

The logo for 'simplyfresh' features the word 'simply' in a lowercase sans-serif font and 'fresh' in a lowercase sans-serif font with a green leaf icon above the 'h'. A horizontal line is positioned below the text.

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- Smoked Salmon & Cream Cheese Crostini

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- Roast Turkey, Stuffing, Pigs In Blankets & Parsnip Puree
- Roast Beef, Yorkshire Pudding & Parsnip Puree
- Salmon Fillet with Creamy Orange & Dill Sauce
- Cranberry & Nut Roast Pie with Vegetarian Gravy

All Served with Roast Potatoes, Brussels Sprouts, Carrots & Braised Red Cabbage

Desserts

- Christmas Pudding with Brandy Cream
 - Mulled Wine Trifle
 - Chocolate Orange Mousse
 - Three Cheese Platter
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- 1 Course £9.95
- 2 Courses £12.95
- 3 Courses £16.00



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Clarion Clippings - The Local News

THE CHRISTMAS SHOE BOXES

Another wonderful result, with 1184 boxes sent to the children of Kyrgyzstan. I have lovely memories of distributing shoe boxes there in the last two years.

One day we were taken up to a remote village surrounded by a forest of walnut trees; I was given a bag and one is now growing happily in my garden. We gave the boxes out in the village school and when we left the road was full of children going home with colourful shoe boxes; smiles and waves followed us. We had been told that it was unusual for this remote place to get visitors, another lovely memory I think of when I see my little walnut tree.

Now that Christmas is over, may I ask for your cards so that the pictures can go in next year's shoe boxes? As Cleobury News has sadly closed, may I ask you to take them to the Cleobury Cafe, where you'll find a box covered in Christmas paper to leave them in. Please also save any shoe boxes you can all year.

Finally, I have a certificate for a wonderful lady who did about 12 twelve boxes; she has obviously taken the children

very much to heart. I would like to meet her and give her the certificate like the school and the Pump House have received and to show her my photos of the Kyrgyz children. Please will you get in touch.

Jenny Vanderhook 01299 841379

KINLET FAMILY

PLAYGROUP

After the Christmas break, we begin our new term, fresh-faced, on Wednesday 8th January. The children will no doubt have much to tell us about their break, which we will all hear about in circle times and learn about through their play.

At the end of last term the Committee held two Christmas Coffee fundraiser sessions, and raised almost £350. Big thanks to all the committee members and parents who donated their time and efforts.

For more details about the group, go to our website: kinletfamilyplaygroup.co.uk

PROFESSOR RICHARD JONES, PhD

Jean Jones is a very proud lady, with the news that her son Richard has risen to the heights of professor at Salford University. An ex Lacon Child student, he attended Shrewsbury College before working as a life guard at Stourport. He then moved to

Liverpool University, where he graduated, and subsequently moved to Salford, where he was awarded his PhD. Richard's speciality is Human Science and he travels widely to lecture on the treatment of arthritis. Another Cleobury Mortimer success story.

HUMBLE PIE CORNER

It takes a professional to really make mistakes properly and the editor claims to be a professional writer. He can now add a range of other, less polite, titles.

In the December Clarion he described Charlotte Wallace as showing knitted rugs at the Farmers' Market. Ahem. The lady's name is actually Wallis and her rugs are crocheted and certainly not knitted. If you call in on her "ffiladato" Facebook you will probably find more accurate detail.

The editor has been sent to bed early, without a hot water bottle or his cocoa. His pleas that at least he did not call the lady Grommitt were sternly ignored.

And Mrs Wallis did get a stall at the December Market. But those events are organised by competent young women, which would explain their growing success.

JR



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Clarion Clippings -- The Local News

SAINT MARY'S CHRISTMAS FAIR



This young man was so anxious to tell Father Christmas what he'd like that he was down the steps before the poor old chap could gather his thoughts.

It's the effective start of the Christmas season. Saint Mary's Christmas Fair fits in with the town's Christmas lights being seen for the first time and it's when Proper Christmas Shopping starts. Not Amazon Christmas, but Proper Christmas.

The church was buzzing soon after the 1.00 o'clock start then shortly before 1.30 the shout went up "Santa's here." And a splendidly turned out ambassador for Greenland he

was, in immaculate clothes, polished boots and ringing a large handbell to announce his presence.

Apparently he'd been around the town, merrily ringing away to remind parents that their children should be heading for the town centre. And he'd given up the temperamental reindeer pulling his sleigh through traffic; this year Santa arrived in a Mitsubishi estate. He marched through the crowd, bell still ringing, to settle in his grotto and make a lot of children happy. Then he walked up the road and officiated at the switching on of the town's fine Christmas lights. A very busy old chap.

BUSY IN THE SQUARE

William Henry's 'Simply Fresh' store on Talbot Square was really buzzing on December 14th, when they held their Christmas Festival. The offer of a goody bag to the first 50 customers worked well and the editor was late photographing the Concert Brass Junior Band because he was stuck in the queue for the two tills. There were lots of free tasters on offer, an extension of the established habit on the store's deli counter.

It's become a regular attraction to offer curry dishes at a very good price: £3.50 for chicken curry and rice, £3.00 for

the vege alternative, and the business has grown to a peak close to 200 sold on a busy day. They are home made by William's wife, using only fresh ingredients, and some customers order six at a time and have them in the freezer. If you like curries - and remember that chicken tika marsala was the country's most popular dish at one time - this is an offer worth looking into.

CLEOBURY MORTIMER WI

For our December meeting we had a Christmas themed quiz session which challenged and amused members.

We were surprised by the variety of flowers still found by members in their gardens, rose, iris and anemone. The flower of the month was won by Jill Chesterman and the competition for a Christmas table decoration, by Liz Smurthwaite.

Our January meeting will welcome Kim Stanley, talking about how to care for our hands. This will be followed by a post Christmas celebration, a bring and share supper.

Visitors are always welcome at our meetings, on the second Tuesday in the month, at 7.30 in the Parish Hall.

WORLDWIDE TRAVEL

Some of our up and coming overseas holidays and expeditions...

Adventure Nepal, 13 - 26 April 2014 (Easter Holidays)

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Bayton Church of England Primary School

Christmas at Bayton C of E Primary School is very serious business indeed. Our last week before the holidays sees the whole school taking part in an RE Focus Week, with an emphasis on the true meaning and origin of Christmas. We have mixed the classes up in both Key Stage 1 and 2, with a central theme of "No Room at the Inn", linking to homelessness. Our children have been composing prayers to say thanks for all that we are fortunate to have and to pray for those who are less fortunate. The children have also been creating star decorations linking to the star that the three wise men followed, and making an angel tree or table display.

All this as well as enjoying a whole school Christmas lunch and entertaining our families with the Christmas Play which is held one afternoon and one evening during our final week before breaking up for a well earned rest over the Christmas holidays.

And to complete this very busy week, the children will be taking part in the Bayton's Got Talent show. Our Year 6 children are very excited to be judging the contest and we are hoping that the talent for this show is in line with Health and Safety standards.....

Earlier this month the whole school enjoyed a trip to the Swan Theatre in Worcester to see the Aladdin pantomime. This was a great experience for all our children and I suspect the staff enjoyed it just as much, if not more, than the children.

Our PTA have, as ever, been very busy raising money for our school. Early in November they held a Christmas shopping event at Clows Top Village Hall where they sold items such as tea towels and tote bags decorated with self-portraits drawn by the children themselves (and even some of our staff drew their own self-portrait). There was mulled-wine and mince pies to get everyone in the Christmas spirit.

And on Friday the 14th they held a Christmas Fayre in the school where Father Christmas occupied our new Tipi, and the children patiently (ish) waited to see the man in red himself, and negotiate their Christmas wishes.

For further details about our school, contact the office on 01299 832393. Alternatively, visit our website at www.baytonpri.worcs.sch.uk

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The Clarion Jobs Page

Please Also See Clarion Jobs Extra on Page 52

Cleobury Mortimer Parish Council

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An application form and further information can be obtained from: Mr M Sheehan, Town Clerk, Cleobury Mortimer Parish Council, The Market Hall, Church Street, Cleobury Mortimer DY14 8BX;

Telephone 01299 271154, e-mail: matthew.sheehan@cleobury.org.uk

Completed application forms should be returned to the Chairman of the Personnel Committee at the above address by Noon on Monday 13th January 2014

LOOKING FOR A JOB?

A good source is the Job Centre Plus service on

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You can use one of the computers in Cleobury Country Centre, Love Lane, to look up information to help your search.

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Star of the Small Ads - The Versatile Janet Manley



A Chiropodist, Reflexologist and Reiki Master, Janet has built up a wide range of knowledge.

Janet Manley's come a long way since training with Terence Conran in Art and Design. Then went off to Zurich and trained as a neuro surgical nurse; that tells you where her heart lies.

A native of Hertfordshire, she moved to the Midlands 38 years ago and fitted caring for a young

family in with charity work for Riding for the Disabled. Her love of horses remains with her.

She chose to train as a chiropodist 20 years ago and when the children were old enough to be independent she set out in business on her own. The chiropody is still what she's best known for and I can speak with experience of her gentle touch. A split toenail was impossible to trim with normal scissors and becoming painful; concerned that it might become ingrowing, I hobbled down to No 2, Tenbury Road. 15 minutes later the nail was trimmed, the corn that had been growing underneath had been removed and I was able to walk normally. Painless, precise and effective, it was a professional job.

Janet is currently working two days a week from the first floor treatment room in her house, plus making home visits within a 15 mile radius. Her treatment room is compact without being crowded by the reclineable

couch for reflexology clients, the large arm chair that accommodates both chiropody and Reiki needs, plus the stool she sits on to work and the cupboards that store business records and equipment. It's a model of tidiness and for the less mobile clients, there's a stair lift to make life easier.

The combination of modern chiropody and the ancient craft of reflexology she describes as "Ancient and Modern medicinal practice hand in hand" and some of her clients combine the two treatments. There is no pressure selling here, no setting down a regular schedule unless the client agrees and asks for it. Similarly with the gentle touching of Reiki, in which she is a qualified Master; it is there whenever a client needs it.

"I love working with people," she says of the job after almost 40 years in nursing. "Most people who come to see me are in pain." They leave with the pain gone, thanks to Janet. JR

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<p>FOR ALL ENQUIRIES PLEASE PHONE JANE OR RACHEL ON; 07816 193933</p> <p>Registered Charity no: 1037191</p>	<p>Ofsted “GOOD” inspection report</p> <p>Government 15 hours funding available for 3-4 year olds.</p> <p><i>PLACES NOW AVAILABLE FOR CHILDREN AGED 2-4 YEARS.</i></p>



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The Severn Edge Vets Pets Page

Happy New Year to all of our readers,

These articles are written well in advance, so I can't report on Bubbles' Christmas, but I do hope that you and your pets all had a lovely time, without too many mishaps!

The New Year brings hopes and dreams for everyone. I wonder what our pets would wish for. Maybe more walks? More swims in the pond? More fox muck to roll in? And perhaps the cats wish all sorts of misery on their local enemies? Most of them, surely, would not hesitate to wish for more food...

Oh yes, just as we do, pets often put on a little weight over the winter. Less walks, and more treats allow for a little festive cheer to develop around their midriff. Whilst dogs and cats are generally unlikely to suffer heart attacks, the effects of obesity long term can still be very profound, and lead to a dramatically shorter life expectancy.

Overweight pets are far more likely to suffer with arthritis, and can even develop Type 2 diabetes. Keeping your kitty, or pooch at optimal bodyweight will not only help to ensure a long and healthy life, but will decrease your pet food bill, and almost certainly your vets bill.

We can advise you if your pet could do with losing a couple of pounds. Pick up the phone and book to see the nurse for a free weight check. It is never too late, and it doesn't have to be expensive to diet your pet. The Nurses will offer all sorts of advice, and we are more than happy to see you regularly to follow their progress. Free!

The nurses at Severn Edge are brilliant, friendly, and full of knowledge to help with all sorts of pet ownership issues. Throughout January, our nursing team are also offering

free dental check-ups for your pets. This will include a check-up, advice, and goodie bag to go home with (while stocks last). Please ring to book your appointment.

Don't forget that our winter neutering offer will continue until the end of January, offering you 20% off the cost of routine neutering. Regular readers have had the importance of neutering drummed into them over the last few years, but if you are new to the Clarion, or have any questions about neutering, we are happy to talk to you over the phone and go through the pros and cons with you, coming to a mutual decision on the best course of action for you and your pet.

Requests for more news about Bubbles (my cat) have been pouring in over the last couple of months. Rest assured that the little monster is fine. Having loved the loft for the last few years (to the point of not being able to tempt him down), he is now not bothered. I would love for him to go back up there to scare away the other visitors, but he is just not interested. It is far more appealing to sit on the warm bit of floor outside the airing cupboard! Lets see how he copes with his third Christmas...

Jeremy

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Clarion Clippings - The Local News

CLOWS TOP GARDENING CLUB

January – New Year! Start making plans for the year ahead. Flicking through seed catalogues and making notes about changes to your garden on the plants and layout to improve its look.

In the colder spells don't forget our garden birds. Food is in short supply this time of the year and they need our feeding stations to survive the cold.

Garden Tools are often taken for granted. Now is the time to get them cleaned, sharpened & oiled ready for use in the spring.

Gardening is one of the few hobbies that are relaxing, enjoyable and very rewarding. Our Garden Club has a very friendly atmosphere, everyone is welcome. It's a great way for exchanging knowledge, learning new ways of doing things and sharing tips.

Our first meeting of the year will be on Wednesday 22nd January and the speaker for the evening will be Rachael McDonough with a talk and demonstration on 'Cut Flowers'.

Diary Dates

Wednesday 26 February, Easy Garden Design, Jill Guest

Wednesday 26 March, Spring Show & Quiz

Pauline Bowen

THE HAPPINESS COURSE

Now that does sound like a good idea....

New Year – New Resolutions, or more often last year's resolutions rolled out again. It is a time of year when we are encouraged to improve ourselves. So what would you like to improve in your life? A healthy diet and a bit more exercise may be good for all of us, but do they change how we feel inside?

Why not try a bit of mental and emotional keep fit with The Happiness Course? This was developed in London by a man who is both a doctor and a priest, and Helen Roberts is one of the first people to be trained as it begins to escape from the south east. Despite the church links the course does not have religious content and is suitable whatever your views and beliefs.

Everyone wants to be happy, but what exactly is happiness, and what enables us to grow in it? Is happiness really what we should aim for, or does it come as a by-product of something deeper?

Some people seem naturally happy; others are apparently programmed to be grumpy. Is there any point in trying to change?

What affects our well being and can we bring any change at all?

These and many other questions are explored over the four weeks of 'The Happiness Course'.

1. A Happy life: what makes us happy, and can we get happier?
2. A Successful life: what exactly constitutes a 'Good Life'? How can we discover it?
3. A Relational life: are relationships important? Why (not)?
4. A Meaningful life: can we know purpose and meaning, and do they matter?

The course takes people on a journey from the starting point of "what makes you happy?" and "what is happiness anyway?" through issues of a "successful life" and the importance of relationships, on to deeper questions about the meaning of life.

Thursday mornings through February. 10.00 to 11.30 at the refurbished Methodist Hall, Lower St, Cleobury.

To find out more, sign up, or to express interest in a course at a different time of day/week call me on 01584 819649 or just come along on Feb 6th at 10.00am. *Helen Roberts*



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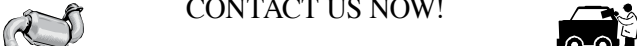
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Happenings on High Street

THE TOWN CENTRE CHRISTMAS TREE

The Christmas Tree outside Carrot Tops has very quickly become a festive tradition. The mounting point and a power supply were built in during the Town Centre Enhancement Scheme work and make the installation of the tree much easier.

The first tree supplied this Christmas was a gift from Bill White Nurseries in Far Forest, but Bill himself wasn't sure if his stock could provide a big enough specimen. And he was right, the trees he grows for homes like yours and mine look lost in a big space like that. So Bill's tree was installed in the Market Hall, where it looked just right. A nice generous touch by the man.

The larger tree was another kind gift to the town, this time from Yvonne Herbert. Our grateful thanks to her.

AND THE LIGHTS

Didn't Cleobury's main street look great at night in the run-up to Christmas? There are some very kind comments from visitors every year, who clearly appreciate a small town keeping up this festive habit.

It's not easy to recruit volunteers for the job of getting them up, and the injury to one of the Fire and Rescue crew in

recent times rather put the damper on their involvement. The Chamber of Trade used to handle the job, but when that body was dissolved early last year there was a big gap that needed to be filled.

Up stepped the Parish Council after talks with Cleobury Country, and they agreed to take on the job. With the invaluable help of Alan Guest and his cherrypicker lift, plus Rugby Club members and Council chair Sean Thorogood, the job got done in time for Father Christmas to switch them on after his duties at Saint Mary's Church Christmas Fair.

Thanks to a generous grant from the old District Council, we have some very fine lights and it would be a crying shame if they were not used properly. Our thanks to everyone involved in getting them in place.

CLEOBURY NEWS - SAD NEWS

It came as a shock to most of us when the notice that Cleobury News was to close on November 30th appeared in their window. Lesley Burnside had been running the place more than ten years and it was a true family affair with three generations working behind the counter.

The news trade has changed a great deal in the past decade,

with papers available at most general stores. With hindsight we could say that Cleobury News should have looked at other areas of trade, but that's easy if you're not the one under pressure. It was premier outlet for the Clarion, but that mantle has passed along the road to the Post Office. Lesley has written:

Lesley, Joe, Albert and all the staff at Cleobury News would like to express their thanks for the loyalty and support received from our customers over the last ten and a half years. It has been a pleasure to serve the local community for all of those years and we will all miss chatting to and helping you.

We are sure that William and his staff at Simply Fresh will continue to serve the community with their newspaper deliveries as we have done

Thank you again.

Lesley and Joe

MORE CLARION OUTLETS

With the closure of Cleobury News and reduction of activity at Baldwin's Bookshop, we have been looking at a wider spread of pick-up points for your Clarion.

A big welcome to the Severn Hospice Shop and Carrot Tops, both of them new sources for your local newsletter. As ever, we'll be in there on the 1st of every month, and thank them both for their valued help.



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Another Page of Clarion Smalls

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Parcels Star - Sandra Cooper

Amongst all those Mercedes Sprinter vans that invade the area six days a week - seven days at Christmas time - is a modest little Suzuki car. It's nothing super special, there are loads of them about, but this one comes with parcels that are sometimes crammed into every space. It's Sandra Cooper at work, the ever smiling local agent for more parcel companies than you could list.

This lady does much more than deliver. If there's nobody at home and it's a regular customer, she'll know where to leave the package so that it's easily seen by the person it's meant for, but not by any casual passer-by who might take a fancy to whatever's in there.

We talked to her in the Christmas rush. "How many parcels yesterday, Sandra?"

"A hundred and forty eight, it was busy."

Excuse me, but 148 parcels in one small Suzuki sounds like fantasy land. How many journeys did that take? "Four. It was a bit of a long day."

What makes this lady rather special is her unfailing smile. Even when she's had real grief at the end of a long day, she can still laugh as she explains the sarcastic comment delivered late in the evening when someone can't wait until tomorrow and

calls late. We're not talking about 7.00 o'clock late here, she sometimes deals with calls after 10.00. Or there are the early ones, soon after 7.00, when she does have other things to do.

"I've had these cards printed, saying I missed the customer and can they call me between 9.00 and 5.00." Those are normal(ish)business hours and it's not an unreasonable request.

Her other half, Paul the Post, looks after the generally lighter stuff and probably too much junk mail. He's another grafter who puts in long hours to get the job done, always with a smile and a little dog biscuit to keep his canine fan club happy. In our little dog's world, Paul is second only to Pedigree Chum as the top Pooch's Pinup.

But Sandra doesn't have the Royal Mail's limitation on parcel size to protect her from some of the extremes. So what's the biggest thing she's had to deliver from the confines of her Suzuki? She takes a while to answer that, probably trying to recall which muscles ached the most and who was to blame....

"I think it was a 50inch telly, I do know it was much bigger than our 42 inch one and I had a bit of a struggle to get it in the car!" It would have been, as any Suzi driver could tell you. Is it a Suzuki Tardis?



Sandra Cooper, Parcels Lady Extraordinaire and her compact little Suzuki transport.

What people like about Sandra is her reliability, her smiling positive attitude and a no-nonsense attitude to returns. "Got something to go back? Give us it here, luv," and it's on its way.

A regular customer of Viking Direct for stationery, I've seen the other side of parcel delivery in a man who couldn't speak about that company without swearing. Totally out of order and wrong, he didn't last long.

Not like Sandra, five and a half years on this round making friends all the time. A real star, a Diamond Lady. *Jim Reynolds*

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Letter from Westminster - Philip Dunne MP

As a New Year begins, we have a chance to reflect on the year gone by, and whether to undertake a New Year's resolution to give renewed purpose and drive. Economic signs have turned positive, and I am hopeful of more evidence of business and jobs growth in Shropshire as the recovery starts to take hold locally in 2014. Unemployment in the constituency is declining, with jobseeker claimants down 25% since the General Election, apprentice take up increasing and vacancy rates rising.

I remain determined to help all local people who want to find stable, full time work within our local area. So I will be holding more of my local Jobs Fairs in both Bridgnorth and Ludlow to help employers and jobseekers connect. I want to see real employment opportunities for young people, so I am pleased employer National Insurance contributions are being scrapped for under 21s and a commitment made to help 17 and 18 year olds with training through the Jobcentre. This is a good step to help our young people to make their way in the world.

As those who have met me will know, I am a keen supporter of local small businesses. I want to see business in Shropshire help drive forward economic growth, so it is good news that from April 2014 up to £1,000 allowance will be available in 2014/15 for retail premises with a rateable value of up to £50,000 – including shops, pubs, cafes, and restaurants. This will help keep high streets competitive and boost small businesses. Small Business Rates Relief is being extended to April 2015 and from April of this year the Government will be supporting the expansion and growth of businesses and charities, offering them £2,000 towards their employer National Insurance contributions.

Within my role as Minister for Defence Equipment, Support and Technology my main focus over 2014 will be the safe return of our troops and equipment as the campaign in Afghanistan winds down. The war has been long, but our brave men and women can return home next year - duty done - knowing that they have done their country proud. Locally I will be engaging with different NHS bodies as well as GP practices across Shropshire to ensure that the needs of people in South Shropshire are understood and provided for. Last year's decision to cancel the proposed new health facility in Ludlow was disappointing, but I will not give up the fight for quality healthcare for local residents across the constituency.

Within Westminster I continue to fight for South Shropshire and rural issues. The archaic funding formulae that were devised by the previous Government can often still not take into account unique rural pressures in education, healthcare and emergency services. So I and other Shropshire MPs will continue to make the case for rurality to be taken into account in funding decisions to make sure that people in the countryside are not losing out.

I wish all of you the very best for 2014.

Philip Dunne MP



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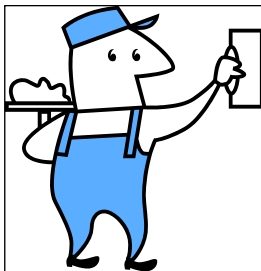
The January Social Calendar

Date	Time	Details	Contact	Telephone Number
Thu 2	10.30am	Rock Pathfinders walk starts opposite Stottesdon School. Ordnance Survey reference 674828. Everyone welcome.	Alan	01299 400304
Fri 3		BLACK WHEELIE BINS AND RECYCLE BOXES EMPTIED TODAY		
	10.00am to noon	Coffee Morning at the Sants' household, 10 Church Street, raising funds for Kidderminster Hospital Breast Unit. See Page 7.		
Tue 7	7.30pm	Cleobury Mortimer W.I. meets in the Parish Hall, Church Street, to hear Kim Stanley talk about Care of the Hands.	Gillian Senior	CM 270470
Wed 8	7.30pm	Neen Savage W.I. meet at the Village Hall to hear Pippa Bannister talk about the remarkable Nineveh Care Farm		
Thu 9		GREEN WHEELIE BINS EMPTIED TODAY		
Wed 15	8.00pm	Cleobury Mortimer Royal British Legion meet at The Bell Inn in Lower Street.	Ron Breakwell	CM 270830
Thu 16		BLACK WHEELIE BINS AND RECYCLE BOXES EMPTIED TODAY		

In the February Clarion we hope to bring you full details of the funds raised by Shauna Murrell's efforts on behalf of the

CLEOBURY'S PARISH PLAN

There will be a meeting in the Market Hall, Church Street, at 7.00 on January 15th. This should be the final meeting before the draft wording of the Plan is presented for public exhibition in mid February.



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The January Social Calendar - continued

Date	Time	Details	Contact	Telephone Number
	10.30am	Rock Pathfinders walk starts from The Dog Inn, Dunley, DY13 0UE. O S Reference 787690. Everyone welcome.	Alan	01299 400304
	7.00pm	Cleobury Mortimer Primary School Friends' meeting. At the school, of course.		
	7.45pm	Whist Drive at the Sports and Social Club, Love Lane. Proceeds go to the annual OAPs' entertainment.	Alan Evans	CM 270114
Wed 22	7.30pm	Clows Top Gardening Club meets in the Victory Hall. Speaker Rachel McDonough on Cut Flowers.		
Thu 23		GREEN WHEELIE BINS EMPTIED TODAY		
Sat 25	7.30pm	Quiz Night, Kinlet Village Hall, hot supper included in the price of £7.50 See Page 7.	Zoe Baggott	07974 808817
Thu 30		BLACK WHEELIE BINS AND RECYCLE BOXES EMPTIED TODAY		
		AND LOOKING FORWARD TO FEBRUARY		
Thu 6		GREEN WHEELIE BINS		
	10.00am	The Happiness Course starts today, in the Methodist Church Hall. See Page 21	Reverend Helen Roberts	01584 819649

HOPTON WAFERS PARISH MEETING

There will be an Open Parish Meeting on Monday 20th January 2014, 7.00pm at Hopton Wafers Village Hall to discuss proposals for future planning and development together with infrastructure priorities as part of the Annual Place Plan review. There will also be an update on proposals for the vacant School Building; a review of the Community Led Plan and an update on the new Medical Centre.

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Clarion Coppers - with PCSO Nick Morris

Since the incidents reported in the last issue, and up to December 13th, there have been six reported crimes in the area. Three heavy yellow grit boxes were stolen after being emptied of grit from a roadside in Billingsley on November 19th. At Chelmarsh on November 22nd, a padlock to a mobile home was forced and planning drawings and personal documents stolen. It was reported on November 27th that eleven ewes worth £1100 had been stolen from a field at Chelmarsh. This had occurred between 9:00am on November 8th and 9:00am on November 14th. At Chorley, three separate telephone cables sustained shotgun damage at some point between early November and November 25th. There is concern that someone would have been shooting over the road. This resulted in 250 metres of copper cable needing to be replaced. The front and rear registration plates were stolen from a vehicle parked at a house in Billingsley during the night of November 29th/30th. The number is:- FP02 DTX. At Lower Baveney Farm there was a burglary between 10:00pm on December 6th and 6:00am on December 7th. Locks were cut off the gates and off the diesel tanks. Red diesel worth £8500, white diesel worth £2500, power tools worth £3000 and a metallic silver Ifor Williams twin axle trailer worth £4500 was stolen. If anyone saw or heard anything suspicious which could have been connected to this crime,

the incident number to quote is:- 189S071213. In Cleobury a young adult was issued with a fixed penalty notice for £90 as a result of purchasing alcohol for under 18s.

At the beginning of December the Safer Roads Partnership issued a reminder for drivers to be careful when they come across mud on the road, for which there have been many reports in Shropshire and Herefordshire recently. Harvesting of certain crops and other field work at this time of year causes a risk, especially if the ground is wet, of mud being deposited on the road. Farmers have a legal obligation under the Highways Act (1980) to ensure that their vehicles are cleared of mud and other debris before entering the public highway. Most farmers put warning signs out and take steps to keep the problem to a minimum by clearing up after themselves, but a few don't seem to be too bothered. Motorists are strongly advised to heed the warnings and to slow down, as the road can be very slippery. If you are one of the farmers/landworkers, please put warning signs out and clear the mud from the road as soon as possible.

As always, if you see or hear anything which you think could be suspicious, call the non-emergency number, 101. The email address for Cleobury and Highley Safer Neighbourhood Team is:- ch.snt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

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The Farming Page - An Appreciation of Pain



Chris Pain as his customers will remember him, with a ready smile.

Rachel Robinson summed it up well: "We can't let Chris just leave without thanking him for doing such a super job. Hard working, reliable, honest and helpful." She was talking about Chris Pain, until recently the daily face of Mawley Milk in the area.

He was more than just a milk roundsman, as I found when I spent a morning with him many years ago as editor of the Cleobury Bulletin. He collected me at 6.30 but had already been out for hours.

It was the attention to personal detail that stood out. Like putting on the kettle for one elderly lady and laying and lighting the fire for her as part of his call. Or putting the bottles on top of a coal bunker at Mrs Barratt's house in the large garden that is now the Barratt's Orchard development.

"Why do you put the bottles up there?" I asked. "Because she has pretty bad arthritis and has trouble bending down," he explained. "This makes it easier for her." There were lots of little details like that, people's lives made better by a little friendly

banter and small tasks like making a cuppa and having time for a chat. His way of working would give a Time And Motion Study man a heart attack with the time it took, but it made him many friends. As an unofficial ambassador for Mawley Milk he was without equal.

His family background has a long history of dairy farming, going back close to 100 years and maybe more. Grandad Aubrey Pain was a pupil at the village school as a very young lad around 1915, and would deliver milk in big bottles as he walked to school from Newhouse Farm on the Tenbury Road. And on the way home he'd collect the empty bottles; an early sign of good



logistics?

Pain's Dairy, Cleobury Mortimer, says the legend. Part of the town's history and quite a collectable memento.

Chris's dad Tony quit work at the Central Electricity Generating Board to take over the milk round and had the same thoughtful touch. In the 1970s we returned from holiday and could find no milk on the doorstep; I phoned Tony on

Sunday night (just try that with Tesco) and he reassured me: "It's under the stones by your door - it keeps much cooler there in this hot weather." And Tony can remember the Robinsons buying Mawley Town Farm in the 70s and a contractor saying "I don't know about this new chap at Mawley. He's having all the herd checked and throwing out any that have mastitis." That standard of quality first is what has made Mawley Milk such a success. It's the dairy farm that carries on growing while others give up the struggle.

The last part of this tribute should come from Chris himself:

I just wanted to say a big thank you for all the kind gifts, cards and Good Luck messages, it was very kind of you. I just fancied a change and an opportunity came along, nothing more. Maybe my 'mid-life' crisis, rather than buy a sports car or find a young female blonde, I just changed jobs.

I want to thank the people of Cleobury for letting me be part of their lives for the past twenty years. I have made a great many friends. Thank you for your concern when I have been late and the numerous offers of hot drinks and food in the bad weather.

I would also like to thank the Robinson family for putting up with me for the last ten years and everybody else who works up at the farm for giving me the support to deliver your milk. I couldn't have done it without them.

It has been a pleasure and privilege to have delivered your milk. You are one of a kind.

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Does anyone have such a building that they would be willing to rent out or know of anyone who has?

Please phone Sue on 01299 841360

HOPTON WAFERS NEWS

Hopton Wafers Parish Council thanks the Editor for allowing us a little space to keep you informed.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council meetings take place on the second Monday of every month in one of the three village halls. The next meeting is on Monday 13th January at 7.00pm in Hopton Wafers Village Hall. All residents are welcome.

RECENTLY RETIRED

Thanks to recently retired councillor Dave Davies who served on the Parish Council for 30 years.

WELCOME

Welcome to new Councillor Mrs Sue Turner.

OPEN PARISH MEETING

There will be an Open Parish Meeting on Monday 20th January 2014, 7pm at Hopton Wafers Village Hall to discuss proposals for future planning and development together with infrastructure priorities as part of the Annual Place Plan review. There will also be an update on proposals for the vacant School Building; a review of the Community Led Plan and an update on the new Medical Centre.

COUNCILLOR SURGERIES

Councillors will recommence their surgeries in the Spring. Details will be notified on the Notice Boards and the web-site. www.hoptonwafers.org

HIGHWAYS

MAINTENANCE

The Council has obtained a grant to help with minor works such as ditch and drain clearing and gritting footpaths in winter. Thanks to our Lengthsman for undertaking these duties.

Parish Clerk, Mrs Dorothy McBride on 01299 272 717.

THE CHRISTMAS LUNCHESES

These have been going so long, you wonder why you haven't been before. Shaunah Murrell and her many friends have years of experience of this

charity fund raising, with the lunches still the main source of involvement. They were in the Market Hall again this year, with a bowl of home made soup and crusty bread, plus home made apple pie and optional cream.

There are a lot of homes involved in this, because apart from volunteers preparing the food, there are others who help with the room rent for the day. What all this generosity amounts to is no overheads for the event, so more for whatever cause is supported.

And it must be said that the lunches are very pleasant. Not too filling, served hot with a smile and in pleasant company. We chatted to Chris Kippin, whose End-to-End cycle ride is going to be joined by his eventually walking the same marathon, but over a long period of time. He has been methodically walking part of the route whenever holidays have allowed, and estimates roughly half the distance covered so far. And when he's fitted in all the Scottish bits, he talks about doing some of the southerly parts again. The lunch was good value, with just a £3.00 donation asked and more donated. The tale of one man's long walk made it even more enjoyable.



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- Pupils achieve well because they are well taught and have positive attitudes to learning
- Pupils enjoy lessons, behave well and say learning is fun
- Good care, guidance and support provided for individuals
- Strong team of staff and governors
- Exciting topics
- High proportion of pupils take part in extra curricular activities

CONTACT DETAILS

Cleobury Mortimer Primary School

Love Lane, Cleobury Mortimer, Nr Kidderminster,
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Email: admin.cleoburymortimer@shropshirelg.net

Website: cleoburymortimerprimaryschool.ethink.org.uk

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Introducing Shropshire Healthwatch

Information Officer Catherine Pritchard outlines this new service:

Healthwatch Shropshire is a new organisation set up to act as the county's independent consumer champion for health and social care. Our remit covers a wide range of services including hospitals, GPs, mental health services, community health services, pharmacists, opticians, residential care and children's services.

Healthwatch gathers information and opinions from patients, carers, service users and the wider public about health and social care services across Shropshire, then makes sure those views are used to improve services for everyone. We need you to tell us what you think about the services you receive – both good and poor experiences are useful in building up a picture of what is happening across the county.

We also provide information and signposting services to support the people of Shropshire in making choices about health and social care services and how to access them.

Healthwatch Shropshire has a statutory authority to visit locations where health and social care services are being delivered for the people of Shropshire, observe what is happening, and report on its findings. Reports will be published on our website.

We are keen to hear from anybody who is interested in volunteering with us to be trained as a visitor but we also have other volunteering opportunities in the form of community champions and specialist leads. If you don't want to be so actively involved but would like to know what is happening, you

can become an Associate Member, either as an individual or an organisation.

We are out and about across Shropshire at various events so please come and meet us. Details are on our website or you can call us to find out what is happening in your area.

Email:

enquiries@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk ;

Tel: 01743 237884 Twitter: @HWSShropshire ;

Facebook: www.facebook.com/HealthwatchShropshire

HealthwatchShropshire

Website: www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk

Healthwatch Shropshire has grant funding available, but you will need to make your application very soon:

The Healthwatch Shropshire Research Fund is open for research project proposals to examine the experiences of a hard to reach group(s) in health and social care. Healthwatch Shropshire will consider applications that will work with hard to reach groups including those aiming to:

- Identify the challenges of accessing (specific) health and social care services
- Identify particular health and social care needs
- Discover experiences of health and social care services
- Identify gaps in provision

The Research Fund is seeking research proposals between £1,000 - £4,000.

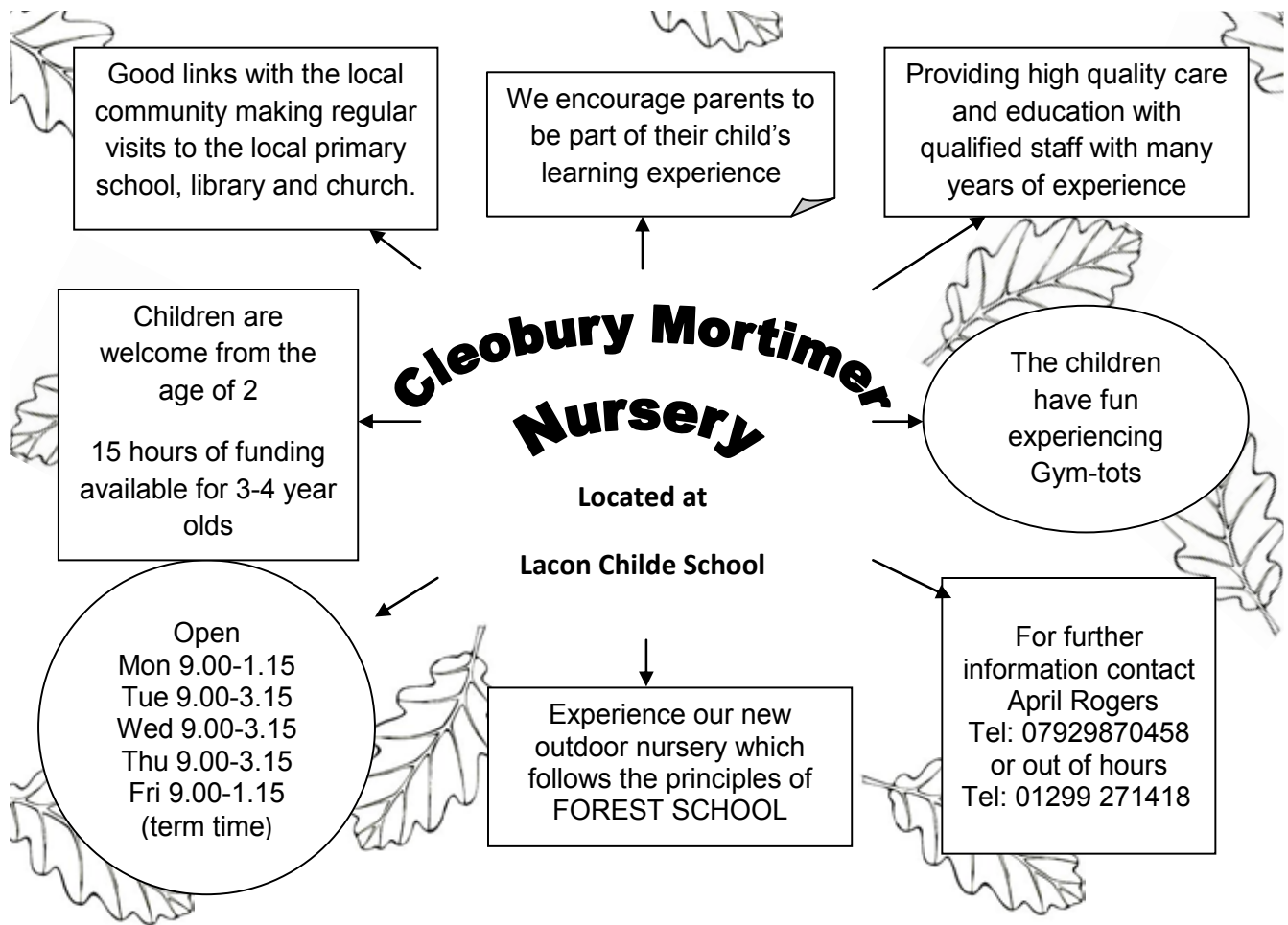
The hard to reach group(s) must be based in Shropshire. Applications are welcome from Voluntary and Community Sector organisations. The project must relate to the aims of Healthwatch Shropshire.

Full details are available on the Healthwatch Shropshire website www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk/content/research or by calling 01743 237884.

The Clarion is available on the web from the 4th of every month.

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The Clarion Weekly Social Calendar

Day	Time	Event	Contact	Phone	
Sun	08.30	Holy Communion, Parish Church		CM 270624	
	09.45	Parish Communion, Parish Church		CM 270624	
	09.00	Mass, St Elizabeth's, Lower Street	Canon Walsh	01584 872906	
	10.30	Cleobury Country Archers, Lacon Childe Sports Field	Lesley Burnside	CM 271374	
	10.30	New Life Church – for venue call	Derek Morris	CM 270787	
	11.00	Morning Service, Methodist Church	Rev H Roberts	01584 819649	
Mon	08.00	Kinlet Family Playgroup, Kinlet School Mon to Fri		07794 166514	
	08.00	Chorley Family Playgroup, Stottesdon School Mon to Fri	Zoe Day	01746 718769	
	09.00	Peter Rabbit Nursery, Lacon Childe School Mon to Fri	April Rogers	CM 271418	
	09.00	CM Playgroup, Primary School, Mon to Fri	Jane Preece	07816 193933	
	09.30	Morning Workout, Sports Hall	Deena	CM 271317	
	10.00	Age UK, Monday Club, St Mary's Place	Sarah Wilde	CM 272638	
	15.45	Gym Club with Ann Davis, Lacon Childe Mon & Wed	Don Carter	CM 270312	
	17.30	Cubs Meeting, Old Pump House, Church Street	Kate Pearce	07772 102986	
	18.30	Karate Club, Lacon Childe School	John Nelson	CM 879210	
	19.00	Tai Chi Class, Lacon Childe School	Rose Jacks	01584 875544	
	19.30	Rangers Meeting, Old Pump House, Church Street	Helen Smith	CM 270912	
	19.45	Bingo, CM Sports & Social Club	Alan Evans	CM 270114	
	20.00	Women's Clog Dancing Classes	Linda Small	01746 718624	
	Tue	10.00	Nippers, Moths & Tots, Methodist Hall, Church Street	Emma	CM 272959
14.00		Friendship Club, Parish Hall, Church Street	Janet Rolston	CM 270353	
15.45		Ballet Class, Lacon Childe School	Liz Broadway	CM 251246	
17.00		Sports Roundabout, Sports Hall, Love Lane		CM 271317	
17.30		Beavers Meeting, Old Pump House, Church Street	Becky Keeley	CM 271416	
18.45		Bridge Club Hopton Wafers Village Hall	Wendy Duley	CM 270562	
19.00		Bell Ringers' practice night, St Mary's Church	Liz Walker	CM 271808	
19.30		Chas Beale Dance Club, Lacon Childe School	Betty Ladek	CM 270332	
Wed		10.30	Over 50s Relaxing Exercises, Doddington Village Hall	Freda Childe	01584 891180
		16.45	Gym Club for 6 & over, Lacon Childe School	Don Carter	CM 270312
	17.15	Brownies Meeting, Old Pump House, Church Street	Rebecca Barnes	CM 272945	
	19.00	Guides Meeting, Old Pump House, Church Street	Dorothy McBride	CM 272717	
	19.00	Yoga Class with Anna, Lacon Childe School	Don Carter	CM 270312	
	19.00	Zumba Class with Emma Forni, Lacon Childe School	Emma Forni	01746 862842	
	19.30	CM Concert Brass Band practice, Parish Hall	Stella Wilcox	CM 270560	
	19.30	New Life Church prayer meeting. For venue call	Derek Morris	CM 270787	
	19.45	Choir Practice, Parish Church	Philip Engleheart	CM 270627	
Thu	09.30	Little Tiddlers, Kinlet Family Playgroup, Kinlet School	Zoe Pearson	07794 166514	
	14.00	Scrabble Club, St Mary's Place, Non residents £1.00	Jo Booton	07969 104808	
	16.45	Cleobury Comets Netball, CM Sports Centre term time	Mandy Smith	CM 271809	
	17.30	Brownies Meeting, Old Pump House, Church Street	Rebecca Barnes	CM 272945	
	19.00	Bell Inn Band improvers rehearsal, Bell Inn, Lower Street			
	19.30	Tums and Bums, Lacon Childe School	Don Carter	CM 270312	
	19.30	Adult 7-a-side Football League, CM Sports Centre	Dave Hinves	CM 271317	
	20.00	Bell Inn Band rehearsal, Bell Inn, Lower Street			
	20.00	11-16s Badminton Club, CM Sports Centre		CM 271317	
	21.00	Over 16s Badminton Club, CM Sports Centre		CM 271317	
	Fri	10.00	Tiny Stots, Chorley Playgroup, Stottesdon School	Zoe Day	01746 718769
10.00		Tiny Tots, Parish Hall	Bettina Poole	CM 271868	
17.30		Rainbows Meeting, girls 5-7 years, Old Pump House	Jean Basham	07792 813774	
19.00		Scout Meeting, Old Pump House, Church Street	Chris Andrews	CM 270937	
20.00		Badminton, CM Sports Centre		01584 881359	
Sat	10.30	Junior Coaching, CM Golf Club, Wyre Common	Robert Watkins	CM 271112	



CLEOBURY MORTIMER SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB NEW WINTER & SPRING ENTERTAINMENT

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Saturday 15th March 2014 - **SHERYLL**
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Saturday 19th April - **EASTER SATURDAY SHOW**
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Saturday 7th June - **BONNIE DIAMOND & COE**
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A Clarion Exclusive - Confessions of Father Christmas



Few can tell who it is behind those flowing whiskers. Or so I thought.

There is only one reason to agree to act as Father Christmas around here. You certainly don't do it for money in rural areas like this, and with such erratic hours the pension fund is not good.

You do it because you love children, from the big-eyed two year old looking around for Rudolph to the knowing ten year old who is only there because he wants to see what Mum's contribution to the school or church funds will bring.

One lad with the early signs of street wisdom listened politely while that fat, whiskered old fool asked him if he'd been a good boy that year, only to get an emphatic "No!" that wasn't quite in the script. We'll draw a veil over the rest of the discussion for this delicate readership.

When I first ventured into the Winter Wonderland that is the grottos of primary schools, churches and nurseries, it was for a nursery that my granddaughter attended. A very independent young lady, she sat alone and looked quizzically at me, as I went through my well

rehearsed Yo Ho Hos and Happy Christmas lines. Her father could see signs my fading eyesight missed and quietly told me "She knows who you are." The child was barely two.

Four years later I had graduated to Cleobury Primary School's Christmas Fair and my design talented daughter in law had transformed part of a classroom into my grotto. Inevitably that involved some pieces of our home furniture, as well as her own accurately painted plywood additions; the overall effect was impressive to adults, so the children naturally loved it.

My grand daughter was six by now and appeared with her friend Evie, both keen to meet and speak to this legend of the season. Grand daughter looked around, pointing to my chair saying "We've got a chair like that at home," and picking out a number of other familiar items. And finally a finger at the fireplace with its warm glow of a log fire: 'My mummy painted that this morning.'

They left clearly unconvinced, Evie looking up at me and saying: "You're a fake Father Christmas really, aren't you?" Who did I think I was kidding if six year olds could see through the whiskers and reveal the truth? My grand daughter explained that evening: "I recognised your ring, Grandad."

The following year I thought I'd hide the obvious ring and turned it around my finger so that the decoration wasn't visible. That night she explained "You turned your ring around, Grandad, didn't you?"

At nurseries the younger children can be very nervous of that strange figure and many do not want to sit next to him. The

answer is simply for the parent to hold the child to give reassurance, while Santa tries to grin through his beard as the



child feels almost safe.

You have to remember to point the children towards Mum or Dad and their cameras.

When some youngsters at the Little Learners Nursery were too nervous to come near Santa this year - I must do another check on the need for aftershave - the answer was to just hand the gift to mum. I don't remember any child refusing the present, though the low droop of the hood made visibility limited.

In a noisy open hall conversation with the children is very difficult, while in the more intimate and friendly atmosphere of the grotto a little chat is possible. Santa at the recent Christmas Fair - not me - was thoughtfully asking what children wanted for Christmas. One little lady was in no doubt: "I want a labrador," she told him as her mother's face expressed horror. Santa did a gentle letting down on that one.

In conclusion it should be made clear just what Christmas is all about. It's for thoughtful young children to show how well mannered they are by joining in the fantasy world and

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Linda Iles'

January In The Forest



Shaping an oak beam with an adze is a craft few have seen and even fewer can practise. Unidentified craftsman.

“What are they going to do about the forest?” asked a friend recently. Momentarily puzzled by the open-ended question, I soon got to the nub of the matter. Once again it was the state of the tracks and paths following timber extraction. The Hitterhill area of the forest wasn't a pretty sight, especially as the work was done when the ground was very soft after a period of rainy weather. Since then some effort has been put into repair and mud removal: things have improved considerably and we can rely on nature to do the rest.

Still, it's an interesting question, which led me to think about attitudes to the

forest and the management planning exercise currently being undertaken by the Wyre Forest Landscape Partnership (son of Grow With Wyre). For most of us, the forest features in our lives as a place of recreation in whatever form appeals to us, from horse riding to sitting with a coffee in our hands while the kids play on the big wooden hedgehog! We know it's there, we're glad it's there and we expect it always to be there.

Elsewhere, discussions are going on about the form of the new body which will hold the publicly-owned forest in trust for the nation. Here in Wyre, our understanding and evaluation of the forest is being translated into a plan that will decide where and how it will be used and protected in the future. As in the past, trees will be felled, my friend will take her dog for walks, and different

interests will have to make allowances for each other. What I hope for, this time, is that the beauty and wildlife of Wyre Forest will take centre stage in a comprehensive approach to decision making which will benefit everyone.

Here at Uncly's Farm we are looking at ways of using more of the oak for quality products: beams for construction, countryside and house furniture and flooring, for example. There could be more opportunities for people to be trained in the skills needed and to start small businesses. If so John Ruskin, whose dream for this part of the forest was that it should be “beautiful, peaceful and fruitful”, would be delighted! And thank you to those who have enquired: yes, we are thoroughly enjoying our new mains electricity.

Happy New Year
Linda Iles

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Clarion Clippings - The Local News

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT



The jubilant Cleobury Meteors with coach Steve Adams and assistant Shannon Smith at rear.

Three years ago a group of nine-year-olds started to play netball with Cleobury Netball Club. This week saw the fruition of all their hard work in the High Fives competition, the Cleobury Comets winning Division 1 after a tough final game against Kinlet and Cleobury Meteors winning Division 2. In their first competitions the teams used to lose by 30 points but this term saw Cleobury Comets win every game, bar one draw. In addition, Cleobury's Ailsa Smith was joint highest scorer with Gabrielle Ramsey third and most Cleobury

players on the shooter's score board.

The team are coached by ex Lacon Childe pupil Steve Adams and supported by Shannon Smith and Lucinda Ramsey. Next term will see the teams final time in High Fives before they move on to Lacon Childe. Training takes place on a Thursday from 4.45pm to 5.45pm with the High Fives competition on a Monday night.

COURSE COMING UP

Cleobury Country have another of their invaluable training courses scheduled for Wednesday the 29th this month. It's a one-day gathering to learn about Control of Substances Hazardous to Health, from the basics of identifying, measuring and controlling exposure to harmful substances, runs from 9.30 through to 1.00 pm and costs £65.00 plus VAT. You come out with a Level 2 Award if you're successful, which can be a handy addition to qualifications in modern manufacturing.

For more details or to book a place, call Clare Todd on CM 272300.

HOW DARE THEY

Stand back, it's the Editor's Angry Bit and he's in a fine old

temper. Apparently the Post Office are going to cease using Shropshire's name on postmarks, so letters from this fine county won't be properly identified.

It's bad enough that rural counties get a rough deal when the money's being handed out; not that there's much of that coming out of Westminster at the moment. But to actually remove a county's identity from its mail is an insult to anyone who lives or works here.

I'm not standing for that. I'm not a native of this county, but my wife and I chose to live here and are proud to do so. When this nonsense comes into operation from around April 1st - so no irony there, then - any letter that leaves this address will carry the legend 'Posted from the Wonderful County of Shropshire' and I will have labels made stating that.

I will send some to Shropshire Council Leader Keith Barrow, they will be made available for our own Parish Council and any local business who wants a supply can have them. No charge at this stage, not unless the demand is huge, but plenty of anger behind the move. Daft beggars!

Jim Reynolds



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Clarion Clippings - The Local News

FAITH IN THE PUB

The December gathering welcomed an old friend in the form of ex curate Kelvin, to talk about 'A Just War - Is There Such A Thing?' An ex soldier, he is well qualified to explain both sides of such a question.

There was little doubt in members' minds about going to war in the face of threats such as that from Hitler's Germany in the late 1930s, but the later blanket bombing of Dresden was not so readily accepted. The two Iraq Wars produced little sympathy for the politicians who decided to take action, the West's thirst for oil seen as the main driving force. There was general agreement with the suggestion that in war the victor takes the spoils and has the first chance to write a history of the conflict; only years later are the questions asked.

One member argued with Kelvin's description of the translation of the Scriptures, claiming that such records should be accepted without question by those of the faith. Our guests's explanation made the valid point that the scriptures themselves are a translation into Greek and so to some extent the subject of the scholar's views. A lively evening that lasted beyond 10.00.

GOOD FRIENDS

I am writing the final pages of the January Clarion in my printer's house at Heightington. Because my computer has given up the ghost two days before this 60 pages was due to be sent off for printing. I thought I was looking at late publication for the first time in Clarion history, but calling Glint Print to explain the problem I met a wall of optimism about sorting out the problem.

Linda Fowler's partner Mike Spencer is one of those good guys who enjoy sorting out a snag. He found me space in their conservatory, loaned me a laptop and managed to download a lot stuff from my sulking Mini Mac. Phone calls to lots of people brought reports in again and while I struggled to cope with a strange machine, Mike took the old one away and came back with the news that its illness was just about terminal.

I spent the best part of three days in their home, trying not to get in the way and marvelling at the endurance of Linda as she printed what seemed to be most of the local newsletters. One day she started at 8.00am, didn't stop for lunch and finished at 6.30 in the pm.

What these two people did was save the day. The January

issue was produced under circumstances that would have seen me turned away by a big company. Small local businesses, you just can't beat 'em for service when the chips are down. Even more when your computer's down.

Great people. Good friends.

A GLAMOROUS LIFE?

An unsung hero of motorcycle racing will be talking to the Borders Classic Bike Club at the Blount Arms on Thursday the 9th of this month. He's Keith Whiting, who has worked as a technician for the Honda British Superbike and World Superbike teams, as well as a galaxy of stars like Joey Dunlop and Carl Fogarty. Today he's a self employed engine tuner whose customers include local lad Gary Harding of Falco Heating.

Keith measures his success by Isle of Man TT results, with 20 podium places won through his work, including seven race wins. He's not a self publicist, but does have a huge range of experience and stories to tell. He'll be interviewed in the bar, starting at about 8.00 o'clock. Get there early if you want to hear about a working life that started as a chef and took him around the world before coming back to the Midlands for a quieter life.



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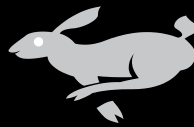
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Clarion Clippings - The Local News



Wassailing is an ancient tradition to encourage a good crop of apples from the year's growth

THE BEWDLEY WASSAIL

Bewdley will be alive and singing, not to mention eating and drinking, on Saturday the 11th. It will be the annual celebration of the Wassail.

This is a fine old tradition in apple growing counties, when toast soaked in cider would be hung in the trees to feed the robins and a jug of the best mulled cider from the previous year's brewing would be offered to the oldest tree in the orchard. In ancient times this was seen as a plea for a good crop to come; cynics might say the modern version is offering

a bribe, but its origins were in much more simple times.

In Bewdley the day starts at 10.00 with a free children's workshop in the museum's Education Room. They will learn the Cornish Tinner Rabbit's Dance and get to wear a rag jacket; that might offend the junior fashionistas amongst them. They'll then join the dancers and musicians in the town's lovely Community Gardens. In the Gardens will be stalls offering food, mulled wine and apple juice, plus the Bewdley Apple Co-operative, woodland demonstrations and

rare breed animals from Wyre Common Land Trust.

At 3.00 the Torch Lit Parade will travel through the town to the Community Gardens, where the Wassail will take place at about 3.30. Children are naturally invited to bring a torch and adults are welcome too.

It's a family centred day, with local groups in traditional dress and singers with black faces trying not to frighten the younger ones. What counts most will be the friendly atmosphere and lots of people smiling. Enjoy.



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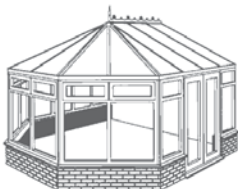
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IN BUSINESS: The Royal Fountain Inn



It's not normal to photograph the proprietors of a successful pub in the cellar, but this is where Helen and Al Rodgers got their first award.

The Royal Fountain in Church Street has long been a little bit different from most pubs. And since Al and Helen Rodgers took over last year they've concentrated on making it more so.

The Rodgers are not tenants. They've bought this place, it's their home, the place where their family is growing up. Committed people, here to stay.

They've invested time and money in their staff, and when Carlsberg came to train the bar staff, their man took one look at the refurbished cellar and gave it a Gold Award. The people

behind the bar, local man Ed Lawley with Charlotte and Abi, know what they're doing, working with a cellar where the beers, lager and ciders are all kept at their optimum condition. A Quality award by Guinness followed in December after a surprise visit by their rep.

Al and Helen praise the loyalty of their reliable staff. When Helen went into premature labour two weeks after they reopened, it was a real test of that belief. "I just gave them the keys and said 'You're in charge, we're off to the hospital' and they carried on with no problems," says Al.

Despite the extremely premature Miles requiring a lot of attention, Al and Helen have been able to improve the fabric of the building and garden, as well as instigating some of their many event plans. Like the Fountain Fun Runners, who meet every Thursday and run out before coming back to slake their thirsts. They get about a dozen running in the winter, when hi-vis jackets and head torches supplied by the pub keep them visible and well lit along their way.

They've had themed food nights to test the reaction and assess what cuisine the locals prefer. The kitchen is next in line

for refurbishment and will be redesigned from one where food went from freezer to microwave. In future it will be laid out for the preparation of fresh produce.

That new standard showed when we tried their Christmas meals in December. Service was attentive but not intrusive, Helen took our order and the three courses hit the spot. Good news here - this is a forerunner of full evening meal service in the New Year. Good quality, limited menu at this stage and reasonable prices.

They're running Classic Album nights starting at 7.30 every Sunday, with customers' choice of vinyl albums played in full - hooray, music to listen to! And there's a pop music quiz that's £1.00 to enter, with the kitty going to the winner. Look for other ideas as they roll them out to entertain.

The Royal Fountain is in caring hands and growing in popularity. As Simon Hector put it: "They came in and did it right from the beginning, like good professionals." It's spotless inside and out, the rear gardens too, and every week the pumps get cleaned, so no stale beer smells here.

Look in and try it for yourself, you'll be impressed and pleased as a popular pub is revived.

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The Cleobury Clarion Local Information Page

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Missed your Clarion? Cleobury Mortimer Library keeps the current month's copy on file.

THE DEADLINE FOR THE FEBRUARY ISSUE IS JANUARY 23rd

Clarion Contacts - Useful Local Telephone Numbers

CEMETERY ADMINISTRATOR - 077 039 65064 Mrs Theresa Parfitt.

CLEOBURY COUNTRY CENTRE - 01299 272300 In Love Lane. Open 09.00 to 5.00, Mon to Fri.

CITIZENS ADVICE - 08444 991100.

CLEOBURY COMPASSIONATE CARERS (CoCo) - 01299 270018. Katja Ward is the contact; office hours 10.00 to 12.00 noon, Monday to Friday.

CLEOBURY MORTIMER POLICE. WPC Anne O'Leary; ann.oleary@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

CLEOBURY MORTIMER SCOUTS AND GUIDES: Iain Smith CM 271809

CRIMESTOPPERS - 0800 555 111. Free Police contact. Talk in confidence, to report any crime.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINE - Women's Aid, 24 Hour support: 0800 783 1359

HOME FROM HOSPITAL - 01584 878046. For help over the first few weeks back home.

JOB VACANCIES - 01299 272300..See the local list in Cleobury Country Centre.

MARKET HALL- Dorothy CM272717, 07761 976650 mobile, or dorothymcbride@cleobury.org.uk

MEDICAL CENTRE - 01299 270209. At weekends and out of surgery hours, the Shrop Doc Service.

SHROP DOC - 08444 068888

THE PHARMACY - 01299 270219. Closes for half day on Saturday. Delivers prescriptions.

NIGHTINGALE NURSING FUND - 01746 718210. Rosemary Abbiss is the contact.

PARISH COUNCIL -Clerk Matthew Sheehan is in the Market Hall from 9.00 'til 2.00, Monday to Friday. 01299 271154. The Council meets in the Market Hall on the first Monday of the month; meetings are open to the public. Website: www.cleobury.org.uk

POST OFFICE - 01299 270201. Many services in Cleobury: car tax, foreign currency, cash point

SAINT MARY'S YOUTH PROJECT - Mark Greaves 07828 116810, mark.stmarys@live.co.uk

SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL - 0345 678 9000

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VOLUNTARY CAR SCHEME - 01299 666119. Mrs Val Simpson is the coordinator.

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