

SKY LANTERNS

We had a report on April 15th that a company selling Chinese night lanterns is encouraging people to release them every Sunday night to show support for the NHS. The company say the money made will be donated to the Health Service.

There's been a strong reaction from the farming community, who have seen livestock panicked by these. And if the dry spell when this report is written continues into May, the fire risk from lanterns falling to earth will be high, to both crops and livestock.

Fay Jones, MP for Brecon and Radnorshire, is quoted in Farmers Weekly as saying: "These lanterns are a menace to rural areas. They start fires, pose a huge threat to livestock and litter the countryside. Please don't use them."

South Wales Fire and Rescue said: "At a time of increased pressure on all emergency services, sky lanterns pose a significant fire hazard."

Do we have to say more?

NO NEED TO BE LONELY

On page 31 of this issue you'll find a feature telling how the community support group is working to make life easier for anyone needing help or advice. Part of that is a team who call those they know are living alone, just to check that all is well and they are not lacking anything. Read our report on their work to discover just how much simple kindness and help is available.

But there is a very low number of people calling the contact point to simply have a chat or ask for help. Maybe they are too shy, proud or just don't like to bother others in this strange time. Katja Jones tells us that she is concerned at the low level of calls and asked us to emphasise that there is help out there, at the end of the telephone line. Note the number, manned seven days a week, there simply to help:

07483 112 290

WHO SAYS THERE'S NOTHING TO DO?

With the lockdown extended for at least another three weeks and the majority of shops closed as well as the pubs and restaurants, you might think it's a good excuse for complaining.

The streets are certainly quiet and there's very little traffic, but there's still plenty of activity and life out there. We have a small army of volunteers out shopping and delivering for those less mobile. Kate Smith gets her community choir together once a fortnight via Zoom to lift their voices in harmony. The Parish Church also uses that very handy service, free if you're not a heavy user.

And there are signs of people looking ahead. Read Kit Smith's thoughtful 'When It's All Over' on Page 63 to realise that what has caused a temporary blip in the town's progress has not stopped planning and simply thinking. It's not a question of 'We'll be back.' We never went away. JR

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The Cleobury Clarion, May 2020

Volume Sixteen - Edition Two



*Pothole of the Month
Lying there in wait to catch you
out and add to the tyre bill.
See Page 17.*



*West Midlands Best B&B and
Guest House of the Year -
Broome Park Farm.
See Page 43.*



*A lady with a lot of expertise
and the ability to listen.
Julie at Severn Architects
In Business, Page 61.*

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THE CHILDE ENDOWMENT FUND

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

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

Rosemary Hinwood

THANK YOU

On behalf of the Colquitt family we would like thank all our friends and the people of Cleobury for their support, wishes, messages, cards and sympathies. Jeanette would be so touched, they are truly appreciated and mean so much.

An extra special thanks goes out to Deggie and all the team at Lower Street Garage, for going above and beyond the call of

duty and helping us in our hour of need.

The Colquitt Family

AND ANOTHER THANK YOU



Janet Manley (left) with friends at her farewell party.

Cleobury Mortimer Carers Group said a fond "Farewell and thank you " to Jan Manley who has tirelessly coordinated the Independent group for seven and a half years. Jan understands the many issues and challenges that can arise for carers as she was one herself, for her parents.

Her enthusiastic and bubbly personality championed the cause and she supported unpaid Carers in the area. Although Jan will be greatly missed we will still see her dropping in at the Community Hub or on our daily travels.

Jan's hard work, enthusiasm, care and empathy has benefitted many Carers and she has provided the link between them

and the support services which are available. Her fundraising and campaigning to raise awareness is one of her greatest assets. Many Carers and non carers have attended the annual garden party and the Christmas extravaganza which Jan arranged.

Cleobury Mortimer Carers will continue to meet at a monthly drop in meeting. This is held at the Community Hub between 1.00 and 3.00 on the third Tuesday each month. The kettle is always on so that Carers can meet and support each other in an informal environment. A carer advisor is always available if you would like any advice or information.

Please contact Shaz Malins at Crossroads Together on 01743 341995 if you would like to help in coordinating this group or want further information.

SPELLING BIT

Walking past the bakery in Bewdley I saw a sign saying "Due to currant situation we are limiting customers to two loaves and other items".

It will be sultanas and raisins next. Very worrying.

Best Wishes

John R Rhymmer

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B T BOTHERS (AGAIN)

Regular readers may recall the problems I had with reporting a fault to BT some time back. As they have installed a new boss with potential earnings of £8 million a year, have things improved?. Read on and find out...

A (different) friend was having problems with her phone and asked if I could report it as a fault. So I rang the advertised number and a recorded message immediately told me that 'All calls are now answered in the UK or Ireland'. That sounded promising and my call was answered pretty quickly which was even better. However, when the voice on the other end immediately told me that he was based in Stockport this started to worry me a little as his accent didn't sound like anyone I have ever met from Stockport (and I lived near there for some years) so it dawned on me that this could be the start of another BT based adventure.

Still, nothing ventured, so I attempted to explain the situation which was an experience similar to walking through mud up to the knees. I was asked who I was and for my telephone number which was fair enough and then it then got more surreal: BT man: 'What is your date of birth?'. Me: 'Why do you want that?'. Him: 'It's not compulsory'. Me: 'Then you can't have it'. Him: 'What is your E Mail address?'. Me: 'Is that compulsory?'. Him: 'No'. Me: 'then you can't have that either'. At this point, he changed tack and asked for the number of the faulty line which I gave him. Then he wanted to know the full name, address and postcode of the account holder which I had to hand following the previous saga. He came back to say that the name I had given was not that of the account holder so, as she shares the house with her daughters family, I told him it might be in the daughter's name. It was and you could hear a light come on in his head. 'If you hold, I'll have the line

checked'. There was then a delay of about two minutes during which I could hear a number of his colleagues in the background taking calls (which I suspect he should have blanked). This was very interesting as none of them sounded remotely as if they came from Stockport.

He then came back to say that there was a fault on the line and that it had already been reported. This looked like we were getting somewhere untilI asked when an engineer would be attending. He replied that this wouldn't happen until the account holder contacted them in person and (as far as I could make out) undertook to pay any costs if the fault turned out to be something that was not a BT liability. I asked why this could not come from me and he replied that EU data protection rules prevented this. I then asked if my friend could give the undertaking but he declined, insisting that EU.....etc. In fact he latched on to this line (perhaps it was writ large on his crib sheet) and must have repeated this mantra about 20 times in an increasingly desperate tone. By this point, he wasn't the only one becoming increasingly desperate... Eventually, I got fed up, rang off and advised my friend what was needed. About 10 days later I rang to find that the call had been made and an engineer had been and fixed it.

Mulling this experience over, I think there could be several possible explanations:

BT have secretly infiltrated a team of non local call handlers into suburban Stockport or....

This team is based in the other Stockport of which we were previously unaware but which is situated somewhere a long way away from the Stockport near Manchester or...

BT are just taking the mickey. You choose.

Steve Todd

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MORE SCAMS

Heads up! Almost every account is being cloned. Your picture and your name are used to create a new Facebook account; they don't need your password to do this.

They want your friends to add them to their Facebook account; your friends will think it's you and accept your request. From that point on they can write what they want under your name.

I have no plans to open a new account. Please do not accept any second friend request from "me".

Please forward to all your contacts.

Matt Sheehan

WASHING YOUR HANDS

According to the government we've all been very sensible and cooperative, like good citizens. We've listened to their advice and the threat from coronavirus is being taken seriously

I loved that bit about washing your hands regularly and thoroughly, using a soap that foams for twenty seconds, singing 'Happy Birthday' twice to be sure it's long enough.

In a patriotic attempt to do the job even better, well longer, I decided to sing "Land of Hope and Glory", and my hands have never been so clean since I left the womb. Even better, as an ex choir boy I wanted to make the experience truly musical, so leave the hot tap running as I warble away. And by the time the singing gets to the final "Make thee Mightier Yet" the water is scalding hot and I can hit Top C with ease.

Jim Reynolds

ONE HALF DEAD POET IS AWAKE

As a member of the Half Dead Poets' Society I do appreciate such works, even though I would not try to match the words of those who know and can clearly express their stuff. So I was drawn to a BBC4 feature on April 6th about Du Fu, presented as "China's greatest poet." It was a fascinating hour, showing some aspects of China today that we seldom see, interviewing modern poets and language enthusiasts who love the man's work and presented with extracts read by Sir Ian McKellen.

There is so much good stuff on Beeb4 and when I pick up the

weekly TV guide I turn first to Friday night, to see what music they are offering. I'm still waiting to see their wonderful 'Transatlantic Sessions' folk blends repeated, but no luck so far. If you want to see Top of the Pops from down through the ages, they'll show that, but a unique blend of folk music from America and Anglo-Irish sources seems to be lost. A damned shame. *JR*

DODDINGTON FRIENDSHIP CLUB

Just an update for our members and anyone thinking of coming to see us: the club will remain closed until further notice.

We will update everyone as and when this terrible epidemic allows us to meet up again. In the meantime, please keep safe and look after yourselves.

Ann Belcher

SILLY BIT

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

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A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

As we face some of the most challenging times since the end of the Second World War, now more than ever it is important to come together and unite. We need you and as many people as possible to take part in this national moment of thanksgiving and celebration, in honour of our Second World War generation. Join us at 9pm on Friday 8 May for a UK-wide rendition of Dame Vera Lynn's 'We'll Meet Again' to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day. BBC One will be featuring the singalong as part of their VE Day broadcast so get practicing now! Visit our website for more info: [#vedaysingalong](http://rbl.org.uk/vedaysingalong) [#vedaysingalong](https://twitter.com/vedaysingalong) [#veday75](https://twitter.com/veday75)

What a great idea. Let's all get together and support this lovely gesture.

JR

CLOWS TOP

GARDENING CLUB

As I write this, the country is in the middle of a lock-down

because of the coronavirus. Like many organisations the Garden Club has had to cancel meetings until further notice.

I hope that you, your family and loved ones are keeping safe and well during these unprecedented and uncertain times. None of us have gone through an experience like coronavirus before.

Most of us are luckily enough to have some outdoor space. Make the most of the time in the garden. We'll all have weed free gardens by the time the lockdown is over. Take care everyone and look after yourselves. Stay at Home and Keep Safe.

Garden Notes - Jobs to Do This Month

Prune citrus trees, removing excess inward growing branches

Plant out seedlings when they have at least three sets of leaves and a good root system

Harden off annuals ready to plant outside

Start a new spring batch of compost

Sow basil in the greenhouse for months of pesto ingredients

Lift and divide spring flowers, such as primulas

Prune early flowering shrubs, 'Chelsea Chop'

Water more frequently now temperatures are rising

Include liquid fertiliser in your watering can every week

Check houseplants to see whether they need repotting

Pauline Bowen

FREE MENU

PLANNING

Harriet Wakeford of Colliers Cookery School in Bayton has a rather special offer for key workers in these very trying times:

Colliers Cookery are offering a free service of menu planning, accompanying simple recipes and writing up a shopping list for all key workers. We hope that this will help our heroes who find themselves short of time and their mind on other things, yet still need to put a meal on the table for their family.

All they need to do is contact me by email, harriet@collierscookery.com so that I can find out if their family has any allergies, dislikes or dietary requirements. We will then produce a weekly menu plan with accompanying recipes and an easy to use shopping list.

Please feel free to forward this offer on to anyone that you know who would benefit from it.

With many thanks and best wishes in these uncertain times.

Harriet Wakeford

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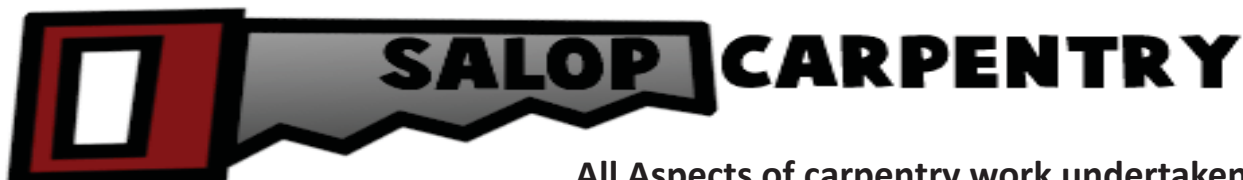
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LUDLOW ROTARY CLUB

Many people living in the area will have attended and enjoyed the Ludlow Rotary Club's Annual Fun Dog Day which has been held at Stokesay Court for the last six years. These events have raised over £100,000 for many charities.

In particular, over the last five years the Club has invested nearly £30,000 in a range of local community projects through the initiative 'Ludlow Rotary Cares'. Following another very successful Dog Day in 2019, the Club has awarded further grants approaching £5,000 to a wide range of community projects in and around Ludlow.

The 12 successful applicants this time included Cleobury Mortimer Men's Shed and Neen Savage Parish Hall. Other grants were made to Ludlow Primary School; Friends of Lindridge School; Clun Valley Caterpillars Running Group; Gallows Bank Millennium Green; Leominster Meeting Centre for People Affected by Dementia; Strengthening Families, Craven Arms; Ludlow Defib4You; Shropshire ME

Group, Ludlow and Orleton Evergreens.

This has only been possible through the generosity and huge contribution made by all those involved in Dog Day, including our sponsors: Hobson's Brewery, Hatfields Jaguar, Teme Valley Vets and Ludlow Homecare and many volunteers, suppliers and not least the 3000 visitors and their dogs.

In addition to supporting Ludlow Rotary Cares, Dog Day 2019 has already made significant donations to St Michael's Hospice, Hereford; Hope House Hospice for Children and Guide Dogs.

Preparations were well under way for 2020, but very sadly, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, it has been cancelled. Online donations can be made to these wonderful causes by www.ludlowdogday.org.uk and following the links to their donation pages. At present their traditional sources of income have been closed but the need to deliver their vital support still requires funding. Please give what you can.

Barry Treves

ROAD CLOSURE

Early notice from the Shropshire Council Street Works Team of road works to be carried out on the B4363 Bridgnorth road. It will be on the stretch between the turn at Lewis Motors to Bewdley and junction at the Eagle and Serpent at Kinlet. The diversion will send northbound traffic towards Bewdley to turn left at the Kinlet turn towards the Eagle and Serpent.

The work will mean closure from June 3rd to July 3rd, subject to weather conditions and other events, but with this notification commuters will know that it is coming.

THE BANK OPENS

A notice in the window of Lloyds Bank advises that it will be open on Mondays and Thursdays, from 10.00 until 2.00, until further notice. Which logic says will be when the Covid 19 scare is greatly reduced or declared over.

The opening for the single Thursday on April 16th seemed to be going well when we paid money in. Customers were queuing until invited to go into the bank and the lady controlling them took Deposit Point envelopes to save the time of others. A job well done.



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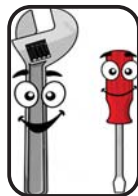
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As you would expect in the current situation of most businesses closed to comply with government instructions, there are no Situations Vacant for us to list.

But this is a good time to remind local businesses that when we are back to normal, job adverts on this page are free of charge for a single insertion. It is quite simply a service to the community. Whether you're looking for a part-time gardener or a highly qualified engineer, our wide distribution and strong readership could find just the person you're looking for. And it's a very simple process. Just give an outline of the position, email to uncle.jim@icloud.com and we'll happily put it on the page.



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

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To be a Firefighter requires special skills and qualities, not only do you need to be able to work under pressure as part of a team at operational incidents you need effective communication skills to deal with the public at fire safety events and in their homes. You will work within your local community to support our aim of preventing fire related incidents and road traffic collisions. The Service is looking for people aged 18 or more on their start date who can demonstrate a high level of physical fitness

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

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POTHOLE OF THE MONTH



Once again, a new month brings a rich harvest to choose from for the 'slight undulation in the road surface' most likely to damage your tyre beyond repair or leave you with an alloy rim in need of skilled repair.

This prize specimen came with all the ingredients to catch you out. We photographed it after overnight rain filled it to the brim, so you wouldn't know how deep it was, and as it's just around the corner as traffic coming south on B4363 turns left on B4201 towards the Golf Club and Bewdley, you wouldn't see it unless you were driving very slowly. But you'd know you'd found it by the frightening sound of your

nearside front wheel hitting the rim of its deep bowl and the way the steering wheel jerked in your hands.

The only blessing of its presence at that junction was the business any encounter may have brought to Mick Burke's Belle Vue Garage right on the junction. Or if you didn't stop in time and wobbled on down the lane past the Golf Club, it's about a mile before you reached Mawley Oak Garage. Both of these fine establishments would have been happy to help you.

But we're really happy to report that when we revisited the site on April 23rd the hole had been filled in a very basic fashion. It was still an ugly mess, with the surrounding damage to the road surface much in evidence, but it did show some willingness to sort out our county-wide problems. Thanks lads, all of you who got the tarmac out and laid it down. We'll send a copy of this page on to the County Highways Department with a certificate of congratulations on such an achievement. But we don't expect any reply, as we heard nothing after a show of Clarion Courtesy in sending a copy of the April prize specimen.

PRICE GOUGING

I lead a sheltered life here in Cleobury Mortimer, as I'd never heard of 'price gouging' until a press release from 'Which' magazine came up on the screen. They had been advised of opportunist sellers on Ebay and Amazon bumping up prices of household items during the Covid-19 crisis.

They quote some examples, like a 250mm bottle of Carex, handwash that you can normally pick up for £1 in most shops and supermarkets, being offered for £10 or more. Or Dettol bleach and cleaning sprays on offer for ten times the normal price and in one case 25 times! Or how about sterilising fluid for baby bottles more than ten times the original price?

Most shoppers won't fall for such extreme scams, but that doesn't mean that a few won't order in a hurry and not check if they're getting a fair deal. 'Which' are asking anyone seeing such outrageous prices to report it to their Which? Conversation; Google will help you find it.

Their advice is to shop around and compare prices, and don't be pressured by suggestions that stocks are low. It's your money, so spend wisely. JR



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Caynham	phone box	Kinlet	Eagle and Serpent pub
Chorley	Willowdene Care Home Homeland Caravan Park	Menith Wood/ Pensax	Phone Box at Pensax
Clee Hill	Shop	Milson	Phone Box
Cleobury Mortimer	Kings Arms Dentist Co-op Sports Hall	Neen Savage	Pioneer Centre Golf Club
Clows Top	Phone Box	Neen Sollars	Phone Box
Doddington	Doddington Heights (Caravan Park)	Oreton	Phone Box
Far Forest	Little Lakes Golf Club Wyre Forest Visitor centre Baptist Church Acre Farm	Rock	Village Hall
		Stottesdon	Doctors Surgery

Our grateful thanks to Sue Delmar of the Neen Savage newsletter 'The Vital Link' for this very valuable listing. The editor of the Clarion was asked to compile a list like this two years ago and requests to local Parish Clerks brought very little response. It seems that Sue is made of firmer and more determined stuff, which has produced a very detailed and useful document; it is printed with her permission. *JR*



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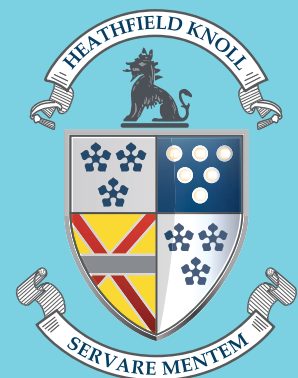
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**CLEE HILL
COMMUNITY
WILDLIFE GROUP**

**Bird Survey and Save our
Curlews Campaign.**



*If you see or hear a Curlew, please
tell us*

We cancelled our bird survey, and the Curlew nest finding and protection project, as a result of tightened coronavirus lockdown restrictions announced after the copy date for the April Clarion.

However, the Curlew situation is critical, with a 77% decline in Shropshire between 1990 and 2010, and a further decline since. There's probably only 120 pairs left in the whole of the County now, and we haven't got long to save them from local extinction. In Clee Hill, the population has declined from 13 breeding pairs in 2012 to 7 - 8 last year, a loss

of almost half in only seven years. We can't afford a total loss of data on their population and distribution in 2020, so we still want to know about Curlews.

With the help of local residents we should still be able to work out if all the Curlew territories that were occupied last year are occupied again in 2020. Therefore if you see or hear a Curlew, please tell Chris Bargman, 01299 270514, email: chcwg@shropscwgs.org.uk

Leo Smith

**THE READING
GROUP**

As the group are not meeting at this time, Deana Kimber passed on one member's view of our April read:

'The Corporal's Wife' by Gerald Seymour. Perhaps if I tell you what happened while reading the book it will show my journey

Five times - fell asleep. Two times - felt the need to eat a biscuit. One time - saw dust that needed removing. Three times - remembered I should phone someone. And once became so involved I could not put it down

Yes, a read of fits and starts, yes an interesting subject but I felt it overcomplicated with unnecessary characters. It seemed to be trying to reveal the reality of the spy business while going for a thriller genre presentation.

Perhaps at the moment I am craving escapism and the sadness of military conflict, drug smuggling and loss

Did not cheer me up. I hope others enjoyed it more .

CARERS' SURVEY

Sharon Malins, Carer Advisor at Crossroads Together in Shrewsbury, writes:

Can I please bring your attention to the carers survey? We would like you to encourage the carers that you come into contact with to complete so that we can understand and respond to their needs at this time.

We are still responding to new referrals and supporting carers over the telephone, including grants and Attendance Allowance applications, as well as the emotional support that they require.

<https://bit.ly/3aLY9YH>

Please get in touch Our support line is still manned daily on 01743 341995



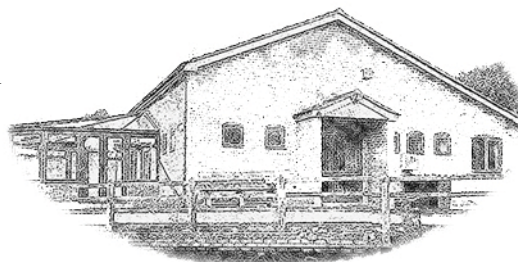
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Cleobury Mortimer Benefice
Services, Events and Activities throughout the Benefice.
May 2020

Christian Aid Week May 10th to 16th 2020

Well done Cleobury for all the wonderful “Good Neighbour” kind work that has been done. Now we can think of our far away neighbours, the poor people around the world.

People suffering with hunger, illness, lack of medical help and even in danger from military aggression.

As a loving and caring community please can we give help where it is so desperately needed. To donate go to caweek.org or phone 0207 5232269. Thank you.

Online services during the lockdown:

Our normal services are now being offered on Zoom for anyone who would like to join us.

The Services are:	Evensong	every evening at 6.00 pm
	Eucharist	every Wednesday at 10.00 am
	Eucharist	every Thursday at 12.00 noon
	Eucharist	every Sunday at 10.00 am

If you would like to be part of any or all of these services please email the Reverend Martin Quayle on martinsquayle@icloud.com and he will put you on the email list to receive the invitation from him (about 5 minutes before each service) which will give you the meeting ID number and password that you will need to access the service. He will also let you have details of the format for the services so that you know what to expect.

We look forward to seeing you.

For more information contact Liz Smith on 01299 489135 or Reverend Martin Quayle on 07976 664872.

The Church Office open Tuesday & Thursday from 9.00am-2.00pm
Contact details: Sam Dolphin, cleoburychurch@hotmail.com, Tel: 01299 272916
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THE COCKS - FIGHTING ON

Stottesdon's 'Fighting Cocks' pub has had to close its doors, like so many others in the fight against coronavirus. Isn't it ironic that the Shop had already been shut down before that nasty little virus made itself known.

You won't find the pub advert on these pages until the lockdown is ended and they can get back to trading normally. But they've not gone to sleep in the kitchen, as Bre is offering a takeaway service on meals and to help their community she's offering veg boxes made up and delivered to your door. The phone number is still 01746 718270.

BIG PROJECT AT LACON CHILDE

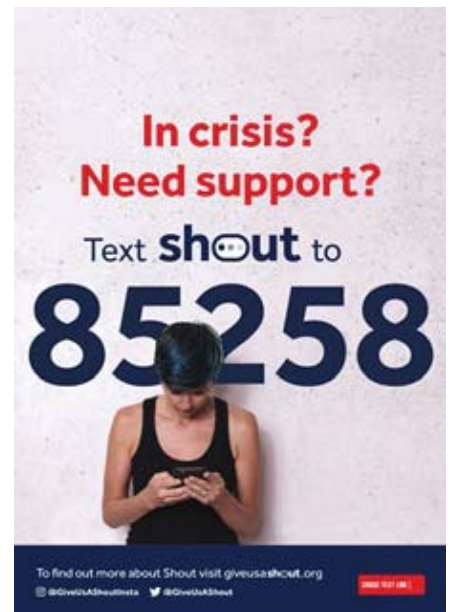
The school has ambitious plans for its main hall, a very busy place that serves both schools and lots of other events. But it's showing its age and the plan is to bring it into the 21st century with retractable staged seating, quality stage lighting and sound system and air conditioning. And it will be redecorated, of course. It's what a successful school should offer its pupils.

This sort of quality project doesn't come cheaply and the budget is £90,000. Not the sort of sum the normal school funds can find, so there's an appeal for help from us all. The Parent Teacher Association have given a cheque for £6,000 and with other donations that's grown to £8,000.



Off to a great start, head teacher Darren Reynolds with pupils and the School PTA cheque for £6,000

We can all help with a donation to the crowd-funding page that you'll find at www.donatemy school.com/laconchildschool. That's not just for the current pupils, it's investment in the long term future of the wider Cleobury Mortimer community.



SHOUT is a charity that helps people of all ages who are in crisis. As you can imagine, this is a very busy time, with people under a great deal of stress, and we are helping to get the message out that there's a Crisis Text Line available 24/7.

If you are in a crisis and are unable to cope and need help, the simple answer is to text Shout to 85258. If you want to know more about them, then www.giveusashout.org is the place to look.

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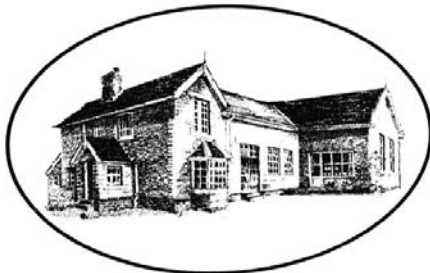
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Clarion Newcomer - Caroline Hands

Caroline Hands is a new face on these pages, but she has local roots; great grandmother was from Ludlow. The family hadn't moved far when Caroline and her siblings were brought up in Kinver where her father was the village dentist.

She did her law degree at Birmingham University and sat her solicitor's exams at Guildford Law College before joining a practice in Halesowen to complete her training. After running her own solicitors practice in Birmingham for 20 years, she decided to change tack and broaden her career horizons

by working as a professional locum solicitor.

In demand, she has covered the country working for many different firms and discovered the United Kingdom, both its beauties and lesser places in her travels, sometimes having to stay away from home and her family in Worcester.

You only have to read the list of developed skills to realise why she is in demand. Now she's settled in Hopton Wafers and is taking on work within reasonable distance; no more long hauls if she can avoid it. Her two daughters

are working, one in Oxford and the other in London.

Her son is an opera singer, in lockdown at the moment and due to move from Glasgow to London as a promising talent when normal life resumes.

Caroline likes her life as it has developed, moving from Worcester when she and her partner bought their house in this lovely part of Shropshire. Self employment gives her flexibility and her willingness to take instructions via a range of media confirms that she can advise all ages. A capable lady, with her feet firmly on the ground.

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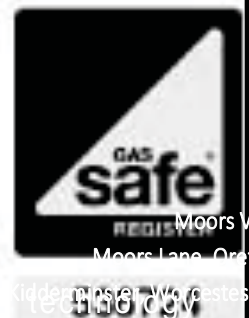
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This wretched global Coronavirus pandemic is affecting every single one of us, given the unprecedented measures governments around the world have had to take, including ours. The virus itself has been slower to reach Shropshire, but is now in our midst and local residents have been responding brilliantly to the advice to stay at home, to prevent the NHS from being overwhelmed and save lives.

I have been deeply heartened by the amazing response of communities across South Shropshire to pull together and help those in need.

With around 30% of South Shropshire's population over retirement age, we clearly have a substantial proportion of those at greater risk, and needing to shield themselves. The number of people aged 90 or above in South Shropshire has more than doubled in my time as your MP, many in residential or receiving domiciliary care locally.

So helping those self-isolating or shielding to receive food and medicines safely, has been a key role for the wonderful coronavirus support groups that have sprung up across the county. The number of those volunteering to help neighbours in need, has been truly inspirational to see. Having been in self-isolation myself since mid-March with a chronic lung condition, I am very much aware of the difficulties from not being able to go out as usual to get supplies or work as normal.

I have been working to support those community groups of which I am aware, listed on www.philipdunne.com. Local residents can get in touch with Shropshire Council's Covid-19 support line on 0345 678 9028 for emergency help.

While in isolation, I have been doing all I can to support the thousands of local residents who have been in touch by email, many with urgent health issues or concerns about their livelihoods. An initial priority for me and my team was helping local South Shropshire folk who, due to global travel restrictions imposed with little or no notice, became stranded overseas. Some have been in desperate conditions or medically critical situations - for

example, a constituent who had been stuck in a hospital in Florida, after suffering a stroke – who I am pleased to say we helped to get a medical evacuation by air to Princess Royal Hospital. With collaboration between government and the airlines, many people have managed to get home, and we continue to work to repatriate any who remain stranded.

I have regular updates with NHS leaders locally, as well as weekly calls with Shropshire Council to discuss responses across the county. I have been in touch with each care home and domiciliary care provider operating in South Shropshire to understand the particular issues they face in keeping their residents and staff safe.

The House of Commons returned from the Easter recess in a partially digital format, though I have been continuously raising issues throughout this crisis with Ministers, who are working flat out. I have chaired the Environmental Audit Committee meeting in virtual sessions to maintain scrutiny of the government.

As I write, it is not yet clear when this lockdown will end. But knowing fit and able people who have only just survived its effects, including of course the Prime Minister, I am well aware of the seriousness of coronavirus. But I am also convinced we will get through this crisis as a country, and I am sure the community spirit and respect for carers shown during this pandemic will last for years to come.

I felt, as usual, Her Majesty, in only her fifth address to the nation as Queen, captured the mood of the nation so well when she said: "I hope in the years to come everyone will be able to take pride in how they responded to this challenge. And those who come after us, will say that the Britons of this generation, were as strong as any."

Keep safe and well.

Rt Hon Philip Dunne MP

MEMORIES OF DAYS AS A SHEPHERDESS

Editor JR has invited me to share a few memories of when I was a shepherdess. I loved lambing time and when I was a lot younger and fitter I went around farms in the UK, helping to bring lambs into the world.

I recall the special times when something happened with a happy ending. Like on the Isle of Mull, where I went three years running. I found a new born lamb in the river. Its mother had decided to lamb on top of a steep bank and the lamb had slipped straight down. Luckily, I was able to scoop it out just in time, cold and wet. It was a beautiful hot spring day and the heat of the sun and the mother's attention revived it. A successful rescue!

In Perthshire I helped to lamb a ewe and was amazed when number four was delivered and then number five. She was just an ordinary Scottish Blackface ewe, but had a lot of fuss afterwards. Two of the lambs were fostered on to other ewes and she reared three. The following year she had five again, but sadly some were stillborn. But if I remember correctly, she still reared three.

At this same farm I heard a clattering in a watering can one day and found a swift inside. It had obviously missed its landing place in the eaves of the farmhouse and fallen into the can. I believe even if it had fallen onto the ground it wouldn't have survived unaided as they cannot fly up from ground level. I threw it out of a high window and away it flew.

Another little incidence that made me smile was when a lamb stamped its foot at me when I approached it - and it was only one day old! I wonder if it would have frightened away a fox.

I looked after a farm for friends in Perthshire once or twice, when they went on holiday. Their beloved labrador Broc was off colour when they were departing and he soon became much worse. I ended up as the vet's assistant, as it was Bank Holiday and no other

staff were around. Broc had a habit of carrying stones in his mouth. He had swallowed one and it was blocking his gut. The vet had to pull out what seemed to me yards of intestine until he found the stone, but all was well and Broc lived for many more years. My reward for that incident was an outing to Pitlochry Theatre. The couple and I still keep in touch.

One of the jobs I was given on their farm was to milk Daisy the Jersey cow by machine and make butter from the cream - an enjoyable job. When Daisy was going to be sold for slaughter I did a deal with the folks and bought her. (I was staying at the farm where the quins were born at the time, so had her there) There was a very, very small chance that she was in calf and I was thrilled when she proved to be definitely in calf and had a lovely baby in due course. So I prolonged her life and it was a happy one.

When I was helping with my uncle's lambing in Wales, a distraught ewe was looking for her lamb. The stockman and I searched for it but had no luck, so we caught the ewe and penned her up indoors. My uncle came on the scene and insisted on releasing the ewe. She made a beeline for a rabbit hole in the field, where the lamb was stuck down it, completely out of sight and alive. I learned a lesson that day - Mum knows best, and so did my uncle!

One day one of his Welsh ewes had twins, one white and one completely black. She took an instant dislike to the black one, so it ended up as my pet lamb on the farm in Warwickshire where I was brought up. She lived for many years and had lambs of her own, but never a black one if my memory is correct. I do remember that she hated being dipped and always had a panic attack, almost drowning herself, so we had to be prepared to pull her out quickly.

I have enjoyed this reminiscing.

Marian Rees

The May Social Calendar

Thu 7th GREEN GARDEN WASTE WHEELIE BINS EMPTIED TODAY

Fri 8th 9.00pm Special nationwide rendition of "We'll meet again" for all to join in. PAGE 11

Thu 14th BLACK WHEELIE BINS AND RECYCLE BOXES EMPTIED TODAY

Thu 21st GREEN GARDEN WASTE WHEELIE BINS EMPTIED TODAY

Thu 28th BLACK WHEELIE BINS AND RECYCLE BOXES EMPTIED TODAY

AND LOOKING FORWARD TO JUNE...

Thu 4th GREEN GARDEN WASTE WHEELIE BINS EMPTIED TODAY

Clarion Clippings - The Local News

MASONIC SUPPORT

The Cleobury Masonic Lodge and Venables Chapter Ludlow, a side order in Masonry, have made donations to the Town Council's Food Bank and Covid-19 Fund, totalling £1,700. There are a number of Lodge members who are also Venables members, hence the joint donations. Boosting the total contribution was match funding from SMCA, one of the National Charity funds.

Cleobury Lodge is a regular donor to local charities and it is good to see that generosity used to extend the help that the community can be given in the current situation.

LACON CHILDE

MAKE VISORS

A remarkable story from Lacon Childe School, using the design and fabricating talent there to support our local NHS and care providers!

Our wonderful Design Technology Department, Cella Riley, Lauren Kettle and Rhiannon Bird have been making full face visors for a variety of health care professionals. They have

already made and distributed over 200 to The Health and Medical Centres in Cleobury Mortimer and Bewdley, GP practices, Doddington Lodge Care Home and the local First Responders. We are looking to send a further 150 to Capulet Care Homes and eventually make over a 1000 visors to protect our NHS and care providers.

Rachel Croxton-Broome

AND LET'S NOT

FORGET THE SHEEP

The National Sheep Association have issued posters that give us a courteous reminder to show care when out walking.

Keep away from farmyards or buildings.

Avoid fields of livestock or arable crops.

Please keep your dog on a lead and take litter and dog faeces away with you.

Stay two metres away from all farm workers.

Leave gates as you find them. Avoid touching our gates but if you have to, please cover your hands when doing so, or use hand sanitiser.

Please stay on the designated footpath.

Thank you for your cooperation - it is appreciated.

ONLINE PHOTO COMPETITION

The Photo Space Charity, Quality Square, Ludlow SY8 1AR, organise a photo competition every year. This time it will be entirely on line, with entries closing at 12.00 noon on May 9th.

Rules and Entry Form available from Peter Jones at info@tpsc.org.uk with the suggested theme 'A bit of fun and light relief in these troubled times.' Entry is free and the competition is open to all.

The selectors' decision will be made on May 11th at 5.00 and the winning selection will form an online exhibition at Quality Square from May 12th until June 6th. Then on June 8th the whole event will round off with the announcement of the winner of The People's Choice.

Any snapper, amateur or professional, would surely love to have their work on display as a winner. Over to you.

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MEMORIES OF OLD CLEOBURY

Janet Dickinson writes about the town she knew:



This is Old Cleobury some time before Janet got to know it. The Royal Fountain has come along quite a bit since then.

I remember the old Cleobury, do you?

You did not have to go far for all your needs. Lots of work in the factories, Mullers, Murray's and the jam factory in New Road. Coal from Ted Purslow at Pinkham. Car repairs at Tom Pain's workshop next door to the Manor House.

Get your horse some new shoes at Ted Lane's blacksmiths shop, where the road to Mortimer Gardens is now. Your own shoes could be repaired by Denis Bowden or Sonny Edwards. Sonny's shop was on the corner where the road goes to Tenbury Wells, it was a regular meeting place for men to have a chat.

Sandy Millichip in the High Street had electrical goods, and would top up your accumulator for the old fashion radios, he also ran the local brass band.

Reg Charles had buses, opposite the church, served all the local schools, and took shoppers to Tenbury Wells and Kidderminster from all the villages around.

Christine Korner (Cartwright) was the local dressmaker. There were two banks, Midland and Lloyds. Newspapers could be brought at Webb's and Wakemans. Two shops where you could buy new shoes. Get your hair done at

Mrs Wenlocks, where Shirley Pugh started her career.

A.C.Corden had the shop with three windows opposite the church, where they sold clothing, bedlinen and drapery. Also owned what became Ashley's Bakery, where all types of furniture was sold.

There were five grocery stores, Downes, Lloyds, Barrett's, Knowles and Jones.

Three Butchers, Tongues, Humphries and Worralls.

Three bakers, Jones, Potters and Onions. I remember the tasty cream buns from Onions a special treat.

Two ironmongers. I had been to Corbetts ironmongers to look at a catalogue for new bicycles. When I had chosen one, Tom Boddey said he would get it in ready. I had not saved enough money and would not take it till I had. So Tom hung it in the window over the shop, so I saw it each time I passed by. He was a lovely gentle man.

Our favourite shop was the sweet shop, where the carpet shop is now. It was owned by Mr Walster and Mrs Hunt. There were rows and rows of tall glass jars filled with sweets, and you got quite a lot in a diamond shaped bag for a few pennies. We were a long time deciding what sort to have, but the ladies were very patient.

How could I forget the glorious smells from two fish and chips shops? Mrs Lane had one in the High Street and Mrs Charles in Lower Street.

Mr T.H Pain provided the Cinema. Tickets were 6 pence, 1/6 and 2/6 luxury seats at the back. Jock Gibbons keeping law and order over the courting couples.

Sorry I've rambled on. Things change, but memories stay with us.

Janet Dickinson (Boden)

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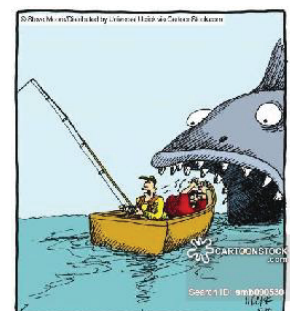
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"Blood-curdling screams. Hayes, will do nothing to help us catch a fish."

WELL DONE, CLEOBURY

If there were any doubts about the strength and intelligence in this community, the way the coronavirus emergency is being handled should put the matter beyond question. It's not perfect and there may be valid criticisms, but for a small town to take on such a massive problem at short notice is quite remarkable.

With the World Health Authority admitting that it was a pandemic there were people talking already. Town Council chair Debbie Brown, Clerk Matt Sheehan, CoCo coordinator Katja Jones and Councillor Paul French met and drew up a plan using Cleobury Country Centre as a base until the government announced such places should close; Darren Reynolds then offered a room at Lacon Childe School, until that too had to close. So the team all work from home, with a live spreadsheet designed by Debbie Brown for everyone who's working on the project to report and receive news and needs in the town.

People came forward to volunteer help. 80 to Matt Sheehan and Katja at CoCo and the Church pastoral team had a total of 50, making 130, which has now grown to 156. They haven't all been called upon, because their time has been used thoughtfully to avoid lots of people overlapping. Less human traffic means less risk of the virus being spread.

The food shops have been tremendously generous and helpful. PD at Select and Save offered to pay for 50 loaves with milk, eggs and butter to be handed out, Phil and Rose at The Talbot Hotel organised an Easter raffle with proceeds going to the Food Bank and at the Co-op the home deliveries are shared between their staff and the volunteers, Cleobury Seafood and Freezer Centre is offering home deliveries of their big range of foodstuffs.

The amount of work running this and dealing with the phone enquiries was too big a burden for Matt Sheehan to handle for long and Paul French took over the phone work until he too opted to self isolate and then the work was divided up amongst the town councillors. They work to a rota, all using the established mobile number:

07483 112 290

They then pass on messages to the appropriate coordinators. There's team of five, each doing

that job one day a week: Catherine Evans, Mandy Smith, Liz Smith, Pete Blackburn and Giulia Johnson

I must tell you that I have personal experience of the help that is available, when my son made it clear that I should not be off around the county distributing the April Clarion - too much exposure to the virus, which is not sensible for one in the high risk category. So I asked Katja if it was possible to get help and four volunteers came forward. My thanks to David Walford, Sue and Josh Brown, Caroline Bills and Liz Walker; I hope to see them all again on May 1st. I did offer to pay their fuel costs, but none of them took up that idea. Good people and generous too

In addition to this publicised effort are the quiet people, working away. Sue Delmar at Neen Savage saw an appeal in the village Facebook page from Nadeena, an anaesthetist working in Birmingham. She wanted anyone with sewing experience to help in making gowns for the NHS staff and after one approach Sue had a man call at the door with a heap of fabric pieces to make the much needed garments. So far she has got Catherine Evans, Gayna Woodland and Angela Flowers at work and would welcome more. Sue is on 01299 270379. As she explained: "If I can get ten people making one gown a day, that's 70 a week." The effort may be here in the Cleobury area, but the effect spreads far beyond our boundaries.

We talked to Katja Jones. "We've supported 270 people in the first month. If we can, we point them towards shops that we know can deliver." There is good feedback through the Medical Centre team, one patient telling his GP that he didn't know how he would have coped without the support of the volunteers.

It's a system that works well. If you are confined to the house, you can call whichever local shop you normally deal with and pay for your order by card. If the shop can deliver, that's fine. If they are working on a reduced staff, it can be brought to your door by one of the volunteers. Easy peasy.

Stay home, take care and you can stay safe, thanks to the great people of this community.

Jim Reynolds



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May in the Wyre Forest

Linda Iles

The sun is shining, the apple blossom is out and I've seen three Slow Worms enjoying the heat under one of our pieces of corrugated iron down the track. I love May: it is spring and summer, with the freshness of one and the heat of the other. May takes the accelerating growth, warmth and day length of April and leaves it with a full complement of summer bird visitors joining the rest of our wildlife in the serious business of breeding. By the way, the 'mystery bird' which delighted me with its trilling song all around our garden turned out not to be a rare summer visitor but a common Wren, singing its heart out in the effort to retain its territory and mate/mates.



Oh for colour print to use Mick Farmer's lovely photograph to full advantage. Ed.

This month is spectacularly marked by the arrival of Bluebells. They are predominantly woodland flowers and look delightful under a canopy of newly unfurled, bright green leaves of oak, beech or other deciduous trees. They have to flower, seed and replenish the energy stores of their bulbs before the shade becomes too dense.

Consequently they won't be found under evergreens, whether conifer, holly or yew, which never allow enough sunlight to reach the ground. They may enjoy a sunnier spot for a while after an area of forest has been cleared, as long as the woodland soil with its store of native plants is still there and the micro-climate remains sufficiently damp. They reproduce both by seed and multiplication of their bulbs. One of our regular magazines often carries an advertisement aimed at landowners which promises 'excellent prices to thin out specified areas (of wild woodland plants) – very little disturbance caused'. I'm sure this can be done in a sustainable way, allowing the plants to replenish themselves, but I can't help feeling concerned. The Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981 made it illegal to uproot any wild plant without the landowner's permission, but there is a great demand for wild flowers in gardens and amenity planting which may tempt woodland owners to let the diggers in. I hope you'll enjoy the photo of Bluebells in the Wyre Forest (near Beaucastle in this case – thank you Mick Farmer) and be able to experience the sight and smell of the flowers in a bluebell wood near you without disturbing them.

The Wild Garlic or Ramsons also burst into flower in lush, damp areas of woodland this month. The plant's smell makes it easy to identify and it has become popular with foragers: picking the leaves in small quantities before the flowers open can give a delicious salad, wilted greens or pesto. But beware – the plant is poisonous to dogs and cats!

Linda Iles

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Little to report this month. The 292 is still running and seems to be keeping better time. This is presumably because of the lack of other traffic to get in their way which is something I never thought I would say. However, should you wish to go on to Worcester, I gather that the 303 Kiddy to Worcester route has been suspended due to lack of customers. Diamond drivers are also being issued with perspex face shields to use at their discretion and have asked that

passengers tender the right fare as they will not be giving change. The Government have also announced funding to keep the buses running as passenger numbers have dropped by up to 85% on some routes but there are no details as to how this would operate. The bus services operators grant of £251 million a year will continue to be paid at the current rate even though it is based on passenger numbers.

Steve Todd

And more Clarion Clippings - The Local News

BEST B&B AND GUEST HOUSE OF THE YEAR



Catherine and John Evans with their trophy for the Midlands Best B&B and Guest House of the Year. Anyone who's had a guest stay at the Evans family's Broome Park Farm will tell you what a very special place it is. And on February 26th,

when the West Midlands Tourism Awards for 2020 were announced at a gathering in the Great Hall at Birmingham University, the judges had the same view. Broome Park Farm was named Best B&B and Guest House of the Year in an entry of 130.

What is remarkable about this achievement is that Broome Park Farm is just that, a working farm. It's not a farmhouse converted into a guest house with everything tailored to accommodate guests, it's the family home and business office as well. Guests can get to know the animals if they choose, which must make it a favourite place for young children.

There was a national awards night planned, but like many other events it has been cancelled in the face of coronavirus and those who were looking forward to a big event have been told there will be a virtual presentation. No visit to the premises by the judges and how their final decision will be reached remains to be seen.

Our warmest congratulations to Catherine and John for such a special achievement in a tough competition. If he knew how to do it, the editor would have his virtual fingers crossed for them in the finals.



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Cleobury Community Hub

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

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

News and Events

Sadly, due to the Covid-19 outbreak, Cleobury Community Hub has been closed throughout April and will continue to remain so. With the situation evolving rapidly it's currently impossible to decide a date for re-opening. Please keep an eye on our website (www.smy.org.uk) and our social media accounts (@CleoburyCommunityHub) for further updates.

Although the Community Hub building itself is closed, we still believe we remain a community and have continued to engage with those who normally visit us. Have a look on our social media to see upcoming events. We've already enjoyed remote quiz nights, film nights and general remote social gatherings.

This time of social distancing presents a great challenge to all, but also an opportunity for the community to step up and create and discuss new ways to remain supportive and engaged with all those around us, even without physical contact. Stories of great community spirit in action, be it neighbours shopping for each other or the cooking of meals for those who are in a higher risk category, help us see the best in others.

Thank you for your continued support to the Community Hub and the work of SMYP. We look forward to seeing you in person when it is safe to do so.



CLEOBURY COMMUNITY HUB - WEEKLY CALENDAR

Café open Tuesdays and Fridays 10am-6pm

Hub Closed until further notice

- Tuesdays - GKY Dance 5:30pm onwards
- Tuesdays - Climbing Club 5:45pm-9pm
- Tuesdays - Nippers (parent/toddler) 10-11:30am
- Tuesdays - Shared Space* 11:30-2:30pm
- Tuesdays - GKY Dance 3:45pm onwards
- Wednesdays - GKY Dance 5:30pm onwards
- Fridays - Soft Play 11:30am-6pm

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Looking at 'improvements' that aren't, I recently suffered an example of this involving my energy supplier. They request meter readings every three months by E mail which I provide by return. Until now, this has been straightforward as I just clicked on a link in their E mail and provided the reading. Not any more. I now have to go via my account on their app which I had previously set up. However, when I put in my password, it was rejected and I was told I had to set up a new account. I input all the requested information and was told that I would be sent an E mail with a validation code. This duly arrived with an instruction to click on 'the link below'. There wasn't one, so I sent them a E Mail advising this. Much to my amazement, I got a swift response saying...that they aimed to reply within five days. As they are only based about 70 miles away, they could have sent a runner with a message in a cleft stick quicker than that. Computers.... the Germans have a word for changes that are intended to make things better but, in fact, make them worse. It's 'Verschlimmbesserung' so every time this happens to you, you know what to shout. P.S. A reply duly arrived giving me another link. This didn't work either so they tried again, this time giving me a new one off password which I would have to reset. This seemed to work fine until I tried to reset it and... it wouldn't let me, so I still have no access to my account.

I read that a group of women running a farm in California are using chainsaws wearing only thongs. I imagine it's probably a blessing that none of them are likely to survive long enough to breed...

I see that the outgoing Chief Executive of the Financial Conduct Authority has been severely rebuked by the Commons Treasury Committee as MP's have expressed serious concerns at the 'poor performance' of the FCA under his command. His tenure had been blighted by a series of scandals resulting in

his leadership qualities being questioned and it was also felt that 'crimes have gone unpunished' because of FCA inaction. Having done a hatchet job on his abilities, or lack of them, the Committee then unanimously approved his appointment as the next Governor of the Bank of England! I did wonder whether it was an April Fool stunt but it was too early. No doubt a Knighthood is in the bag...

Sadly, the Covid 19 outbreak is already having an effect on the cultural activities of the nation as I read in the paper that the Chesham Area Dogging Club have cancelled all meetings until further notice. So in case you were thinking of signing up, better hold your fire before diving in (so to speak).

It looks like the recent spell of warm weather has brought out the latent pyromaniac in some of us. On several occasions, on sunny afternoons when families are making the most of their gardens, someone in the vicinity has lit a substantial bonfire shrouding the whole area in smoke and triggering a rush to get indoors, close windows or take in washing. I'm sure the stuff would burn just as well later in the evening or perhaps on a day when the weather doesn't encourage sitting in the garden so, bonfire enthusiasts, please have a thought for those living downwind in these troubled times.

Pet owners are being taken advantage of by more than their pets as a survey has shown that some supermarkets are taking advantage of the current situation by increasing prices (who would have thought that?). The greatest increase was on pet food and was close to 7%. Time for a diet, doggies and moggies?

If you think the lockdown is giving you problems, spare a thought for polygamists in the UAE. They have been told that if they have wives living in different places, they must choose one and stay with her for the duration. So best to choose wisely...



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ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Like every other organisation the Legion continues to be affected by COVID-19 and our activities for April have been cancelled or postponed. A decision on our meeting on May 13th will be made once the details of lockdown are known.

On a brighter note, a guest at our March meeting was Denise Bache from Highley. Her father Dennis was prominent in raising funds for the Poppy Appeal in Highley for a number of years and last October she organised a concert in his memory to raise funds for the Poppy Appeal. The concert by the Bluebird Belles and West Mercia Police Band was held in the Severn Centre and raised £1400 which was formally handed over at the meeting.



Jon Marshall (Branch member and co-organiser), David Taylor (Vice Chairman), Denise handing over the cheque to Mike Hermolle (Branch Chairman). You can find out more about the Royal British Legion at <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk>. You can contact me on 01299 271384 or our membership Secretary Matt Sheehan 272610. Mike Hermolle – Branch Chairman

CLEOBURY INFLUENCE BEYOND OUR BORDERS

Professor Greg Gibbons, born in Cleobury and educated here, has moved on to greater things at Warwick University, where he is a noted authority on the process of 3D printing.

That's a talent very useful in the current crisis and Greg is coordinating the 3D printing of face shields for Covid-19 medical staff in the university's 3D Printing laboratories. They are producing 500 shields a month, a vital

contribution to important work in the battle with this dreadful virus.

MEANWHILE, IN NORWAY...



Clare Carter sent us this picture taken in Arctic Norway in mid-March. She was leading a photographic party and they got quarantined because of flight problems. Social distancing doesn't look like a problem there.

CAPTAIN TOM MOORE



This picture of a true National Hero came in from a noted motorcycle source, the Brooklands Society. It's Captain Tom Moore, better known today for his remarkable aim to walk around his garden 100 times to raise money for the NHS before his 100th birthday. His aim was £1,000 and when we went to press it was approaching £28 million! There is a campaign to get him a well deserved knighthood. His motorcycle is a Scott, built in his native Yorkshire.

THE SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB

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

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

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

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

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

ROCK PATHFINDERS

Rock Pathfinders have been walking as a group for over 30 years. The group was started in 1986 by a few keen walkers who all lived in the village of Rock. At that time many of the ancient footpaths were not passable and so the group set about clearing and re discovering the paths and they formed Rock Parish Footpaths Association.

Clearing the overgrown paths was a major task and new members were recruited to help with the work. The local parish council was approached to help with funds to purchase finger posts and stiles. Once a few routes had been established walks were organised and held on the first Sunday of the month. Each walker was asked to pay a small subscription to add to the funds needed for materials.

The walks became more popular as word spread about the beautiful countryside the paths went through. The group eventually gained support from the County Council and received aid on the form of annual grant they could apply for. Rock is the second largest parish in the country and ancient maps showed there had been 149 footpaths.

The work was all done by volunteers and it took many years but now all the paths are opened, well way marked. Bridges, ditch crossings, finger post and stiles are still maintained by the volunteers and the footpath warden, although now the County Council provide the materials so the group no longer has to worry about fund raising. However, it is important to keep the paths open by making sure they are regularly walked and any faults reported.

The group changed their name in 2009 to Rock Pathfinders when they decided to increase the walks to twice a month and extended to routes to outside the parish boundary. The walks are now held on first and third Thursdays in the month and during the summer there are some evening walks.

All new walkers and anyone interested in helping with the maintenance are always welcomed. For more information ring Alan on 01299 400304 or Jan on 01299 832571 www.rockpathfinders.uk

Our programme of group walks is cancelled during the current health situation. Please see our web site for updates as soon as the situation improves. Meanwhile, keep well and keep walking in our glorious countryside.

Susan Humphries

MORTIMER RAMBLERS

I spotted the Mortimer Ramblers' report in the Leominster News and chatted to secretary Jen Atkins about the group. They have 20 to 30 active members, plus others of what we'll call mature years, who don't get out and walk as much as they did when younger.

Their programme in normal times offers two walks a month, on alternate Saturdays, led by an experienced member. Walkers from other areas will find a welcome, and there's a whole host of good paths and wonderful Herefordshire scenery to be enjoyed. Worth making a note for the coming months when normality returns and you fancy somewhere different for a change.

Jen is on 01568 620138 but she prefers an email contact on jenatkins@btinternet.com

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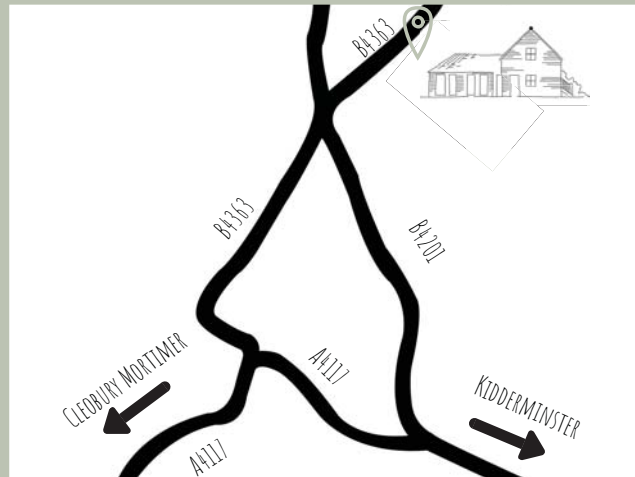
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Lavender Hill Larks

One dark evening in late 1965, my mate Stan and I were sitting in his car at a set of traffic lights in Lavender Hill, which was then a run down part of South London made famous by the Ealing comedy film. For the anoraks amongst you, Stan's car was a 1954 Sunbeam Mark III saloon based on the Sunbeam Alpine, in turn named after the rally it had won in 1951 and not to be confused with the 1960's hairdresser's car of the same name. It was two tone 'Claret and Grey', although I would have said maroon and beige, with a 2.25 litre 4 cylinder engine and looked very smart. In fact, an identical one sometimes appears at the Marches Transport Festival in Ludlow (16-17 May 2020 should you be interested). Although only about 10 years old, spares were difficult to get but, by chance, during our nocturnal wanderings (don't ask), we had discovered a similar car abandoned, as was common back then, in a rough part of Notting Hill.

That area was far from the yuppie paradise it is today so, in case someone else took a fancy to it, we made regular visits to 'freecycle' much needed parts and were returning from one such foray when we stopped at the lights. On the left of us was a small jewellers shop and opposite on the right was Lavender Hill Police Station so, whilst waiting for the green light, I glanced into the jewellers window. As I watched, a hand appeared from the back of the counter, grabbed a piece of jewellery and vanished. Intrigued, I continued watching and a few seconds later, this was repeated. I pointed this out to Stan and when the lights changed, we parked round the corner and went in to the Police station.

We explained what we had seen to the desk sergeant, resulting in much commotion and the appearance of about a dozen coppers in various states of undress as it was about 10 pm and shift change time. You can tell this happened a long time ago as there was a local Police Station, it was open and it contained Policemen. As one, they thundered across the road and started hammering on the jeweller's door,

whereupon a figure leapt to his feet and vanished into the back of the shop. There was much shouting and yelling from the assembled throng along the lines of 'Oi, you, come back 'ere' etc until someone suggested that it might be a good idea to see whether there was a rear entrance. To a man, like a herd of buffaloes, everyone rushed round to the rear of the premises which was bounded by a high wall. At this point, a head appeared over the top of the wall, took one look at the massed Constabulary gathered below and vanished. There was further shouting along the same lines as before until I asked if anyone had been left to watch the front. It appeared not, and on returning to the shop front, the door was open and the premises empty. A helpful passer by then offered the information that a man had emerged from the shop and legged it into the darkness.

Somewhat deflated, the constables drifted back into the nick. Clearly the events of the evening had not been considered a success as when I asked the Sergeant if he wanted a witness statement so that the incident could be properly recorded, he invited me to go forth and multiply (or words to that effect). And that was the end of another interesting evening in Sarf Lunnun. As for Stan, he joined the Army shortly afterwards for reasons best known to himself. I was impressed at the effect that organisation had on my friend as, when he returned from initial training, he had been transformed from fat slob to slim, fit and very smart squaddie. This didn't last, as he told me that although he was a trained telex operator in civvy street, he had convinced his superiors that he was a Devil worshipper and spent his three years in the ranks as a dental assistant. After discharge he was last seen driving a minicab. And the car? Sadly, it was not long for this world. Shortly after joining up, Stan sold it to a fellow squaddie who painted it black and then wrote it off, so RIP MNR 571 (or possibly 471, it was a long time ago...)

Steve Todd



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As soon as we were informed that we were expecting a pandemic, the Town Council acted straight away identifying groups in the community that were gearing up to help the vulnerable. We contacted Katja and Ashley to see what they were doing, and we also had to consider the food bank.

As well as this we took steps following government guidelines to close certain amenities, but we are lucky here to have so much open spaces. Other things we had to do straight away was cancel the Town annual meeting and the Festival, put together posters and start working from home.

We were lucky that our Chair Cllr Debbie Brown is working in the NHS and was aware of what would be facing. We took the lead in a working collaboration of CM Town Council, the voluntary sector including Co Co & the Pastoral Care Group and agreed to put together a fund of £1,000 each in a pot to help over the coming weeks as needed. We worked straight away to design posters, spread information and use one phone, the council mobile, which is now shared by councillors to gather information to pass on to the Co Co volunteers to deliver the needs required.

We work alongside Katja and the Co Co volunteers to identify and list volunteers and marry them up to vulnerable people in need. We also contacted local shops and businesses to see how we could help each other and work together. Hence working alongside the Co Op, some shop owners, Landlords and food outlets, all working to get the information out there.

The Town council also contacted surrounding Towns and Parishes to get a list together of what they were doing in their area, so in some cases we could sign post and work together not stepping on each other's toes. We get regular government updates and make sure we put it out there either on our website or through social media.

The Town council continues to work in partnership, keep the Food Bank every Friday going and look for and accept funding to help us through this crisis.

Our future meetings will be on Zoom with access for Public to join us, which will be widely advertised, and were sorry to lose a couple of councillors recently and have already filled one vacancy and will be looking for the second one by end of May.

A big thank you to all volunteers and people and businesses going that extra mile to help others and we hope it continues long after this is over. Take Care and Stay safe.



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Get in contact Julie Widdowson for your free consultation



If you're starting a business where hard earned skills and an ability to get along with people is important, Julie Widdowson is a good example of how to do it well. The daughter of a miner, born in Chesterfield, North Derbyshire, where they have a noted twisted spire at their own Saint Mary's parish church, you could believe she was fated to settle here in Cleobury Mortimer. Deja vu with a strong note.

Julie showed signs of independent thinking early on, leaving school at 16 with just three O Levels to her name and working in a local drawing office in an atmosphere that convinced her she really should get some decent qualifications. The model late developer, she took up evening classes and worked towards her goal via O and A Levels. At 24, an age when many young women would regard themselves as settled, she left work, applied for a grant and enrolled at what is now Birmingham City University as an architecture student. That was in 1984 and she knew there was a long road ahead to qualification, seven years of it. She just got her head down and worked towards what she had realised was her goal in life.

You'll gather from the length of time it took that becoming a qualified architect is no easy matter, as the student learns the rudiments of a wide variety of skills and materials, and how to coordinate them on site when the building starts. Julie has a strong feeling for design, "It's a bit of an artistic element in me," she explains. She wants the project, which can range from a domestic extension to a multi million pound new building,

to look right, with the close attention to detail that gives the best finishing touch.

She's worked in private and public sectors, specialising in school design and large PFI projects in Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Shropshire. One of her biggest projects was the Hadley Learning Centre in Telford, where she liaised with Doctor Gill Eatough, who readers may remember from her days as head teacher at Lacon Childe. The two of them got along well, with Julie taking time to talk everything through with the client and listening carefully to what they wanted. That capacity to listen and understand what the client wants is a great strength in her customer relations.

Julie's last public sector appointment was heading the design unit at Worcestershire County Council, until the unit was sold into private hands. She says very little about that, but it's clear the new set-up did not fit in with her views. "I voted with my feet," as she puts it.

In 2014 she opted for self employment and went into partnership with another architect when a partner retired. There she developed a client base in bespoke residential projects which included some one-off individual houses with a strong emphasis on Eco design. Now, in an amicable split she's opted to work from home as an independent, that streak that was obvious in youth coming out again.

So she's widely experienced and knowledgeable, how does she get along with clients? We chatted to Robin Greenwell, who found her after parting with an architect lacking in manners and human understanding. He talked to Julie on the phone, sent pictures of the old barn he and his wife wanted to convert and Julie came to see the place.

"She was obviously on the same page as we were," he says. "She got her quote in on time and helped us develop our own ideas of what we wanted. I think the key to our relationship was her understanding of the emotional part of it." As Robin had recently retired, what he and his wife were looking for was a place that was developed around their needs and talking to him you realise they've found it. And when he was tackling the building of a stone wall in the garden, he got the expert advice he needed on the best mortar from Julie. Helping her clients doesn't stop when the job's finished.

Jim Reynolds

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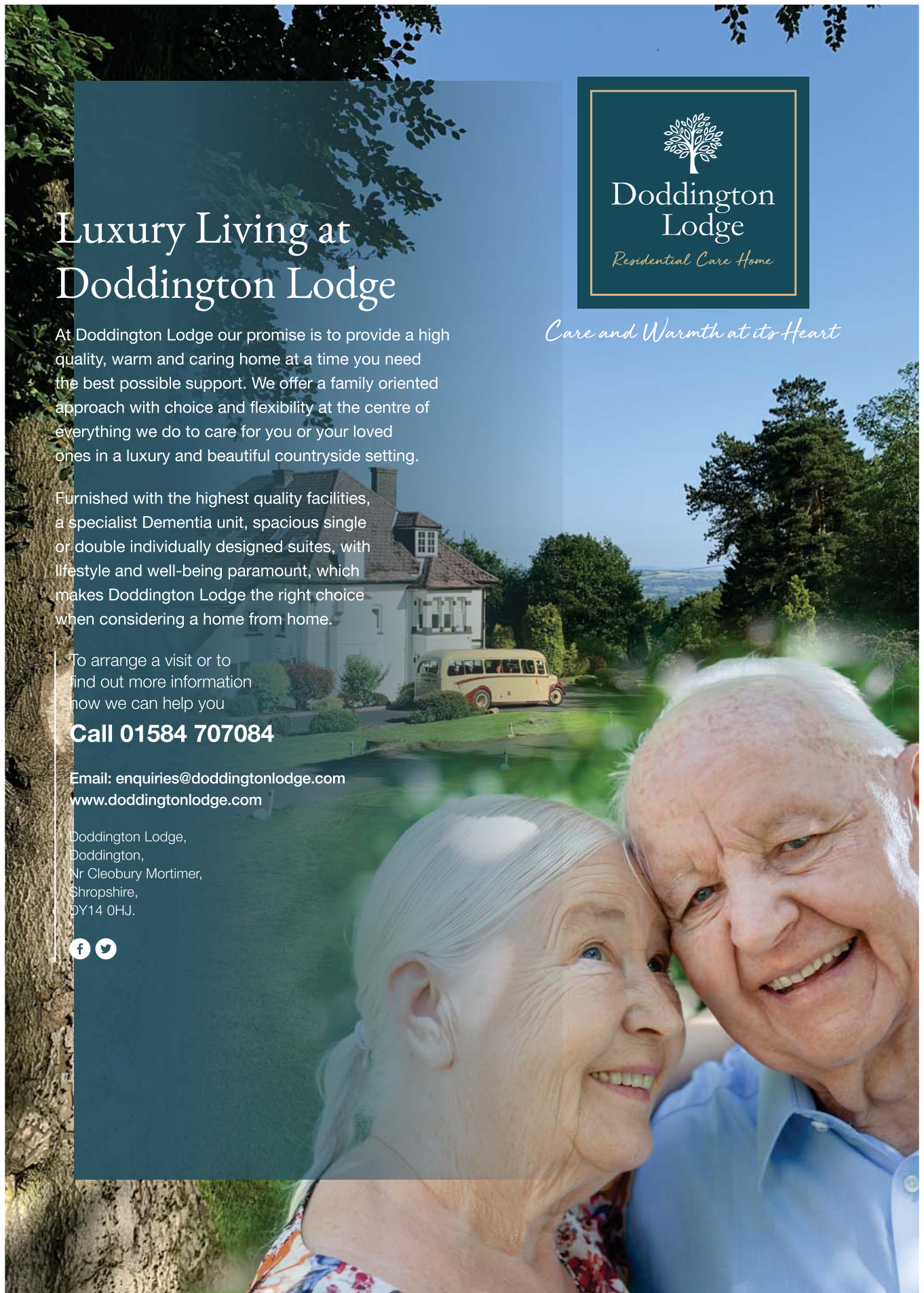
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WHEN IT'S ALL OVER

Kit Smith takes a look at life as we know it and ponders on the future we could build for the benefit of us all.

We live in quite extraordinary times. An almost invisible organism has changed all our lives. At the time of writing this article in mid April, we do not know how it will all play out and for how long it will last. It has brought great sadness and misery for too many in such a short time. Local businesses large and small are closed or on short time opening. Many families are in lock down in their homes while other essential services are maintained by a wonderful band of workers. Above all those in the NHS or allied services risk their lives and their health on an hourly basis for all of us. The sound of clapping, bashing of pans and live music on a Thursday evening is testament of our deep thanks to all of those people.

In many ways we are so lucky in this part of rural South Shropshire. The danger of infection is less than in a big city and we in Cleobury can all reach the open countryside within a five minute walk of our homes. Not so for city dwellers, many of whom are trapped in tower blocks with their children and unemployed husbands and with no access to parks and green spaces. As we walk our footpaths we can hear the chatter from the hedgerows with nature wondering where all the humans have gone - they are usually much noisier than this? What is reassuring to us is that the rest of the whole animal and plant kingdoms carry on as usual.

We have spoken face to face to very few people since lockdown but thank goodness for the phone and a huge IT resource. There has been a simple but clear common message: we are optimistic and are re-

evaluating our lives in a new and simpler way. We are determined to carry our optimism through the epidemic and make changes on the other side, for our future and that of those who follow us. Here in Cleobury there is a robust community structure to plan and implement change. The gold awarded Town Council had agreed a series of plans for the future before the virus struck. The Neighbourhood Plan sets out where imposed new housing will be whilst seeking the least damage to the total environment. The Council plan a Carbon Foot Print Assessment, leading to a Carbon Free Cleobury. There are plans to plant 1,000 trees and provide even better access to the countryside. We have over 75 amazing clubs and societies who have shown from the start of this epidemic that they can contact, care and look after their membership. A Dementia Friendly Group and plans for the Methodist Hall for St. Mary's Youth Group will help the young and the elderly. Over 130 volunteers are helping vulnerable people with all sorts of services, care and friendship. The Plastic Reduction Group have postponed going for a Plastic Free Cleobury until after the virus allows people to meet again. As ever there are many unsung people's effort and valuable work. All in all, real people working for the wider community.

Perhaps we can ask that at the suitable moment at the end of all the restrictions the Town Council will lead us with a meeting or assembly to capture our new found energy and resolve and to voice our hopes and fears to plan a new and invigorated Cleobury Country. Meanwhile let's stay indoors, fit, healthy and keep washing our hands.

Kit Smith

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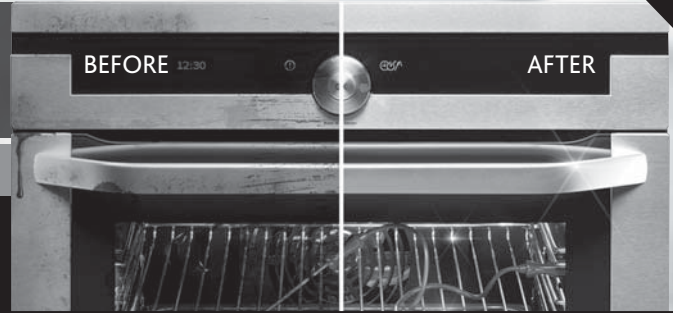
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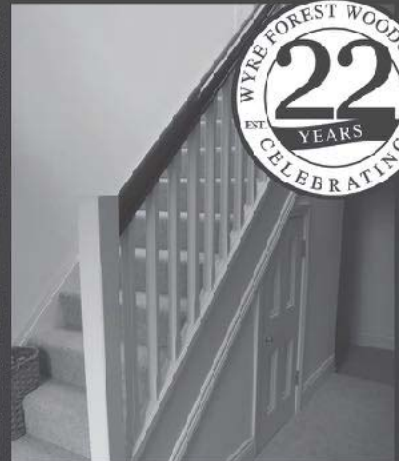
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CLEOBURY COUNTRY CENTRE		01299 272300	In Love Lane, 9 to 5 Mon to Fri.
CITIZENS ADVICE		08444 991100	Advisors on line 10.00 to 4.00
CLEOBURY CARERS	Janet Manley	01299 272841	
CLEOBURY COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES	Katja Ward	01299 270018	10.00 to 12.00 Weds
CLEOBURY MORTIMER LIBRARY		01299 272301	Open 9 to 7 Mon, 9 to 5 Tues/Fri and 10 to 1 Sat.
LOCAL POLICE	Constable Anne O'Leary		ann.oleary@westmercia.pnn.police.uk
CLEOBURY MORTIMER GUIDES	Dorothy McBride	07761 976610	
CLEOBURY MORTIMER SCOUTS	Lowri Hughes		cleoburybeavers@gmail.com
CRIMESTOPPERS		0800 555 111	Free Police contact. Talk in confidence, to report any crime.
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINE		0800 783 1359	Women's Aid, 24 Hour support:
HOME FROM HOSPITAL		01584 878046	Help over the first weeks back home from Age UK
MARKET HALL	Ali Sheffield	07752 542 853	markethall@cleobury.org.uk
MEDICAL CENTRE		01299 270209	Out of surgery hours, use the Shrop Doc Service.
SHROP DOC		111	Service available evenings and weekends
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NIGHTINGALE NURSING FUND	Rosemary Abbiss	01746 718451	
TOWN COUNCIL	Clerk Matthew Sheehan	01299 271154	Cleobury Country Centre 9 to 2 pm, Mon to Fri. www.cleobury.org.uk. Council meets in the Centre on the first Monday of the month
POST OFFICE		01299 270211	In the Select and Save Grocery Store, Church Street
SAINT MARY'S YOUTH PROJECT	Mark Greaves	07828 116810	mark.stmarys@live.co.uk
SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL		0345 678 9000	
SOUTH SHROPSHIRE YOUTH FORUM			richard@ssyf.net.
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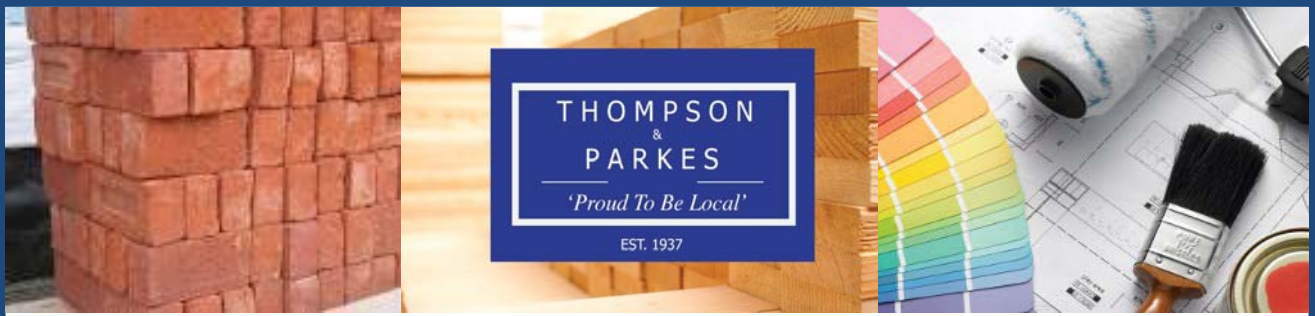
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