

SERVING CLEOBURY COUNTRY DECEMBER 2021/JANUARY 2202

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

The Clarion would like to wish all its readers, writers, advertisers and printers a very Happy Christmas and a healthy and secure New Year. Covid 19 may still be out there, but at this time of goodwill, let's smile through our masks and wish one another well.

ADRIAN SATTERLY

Mr Satterly appeared at Shrewsbury Crown Court on November 11th for sentencing. He had earlier pleaded guilty to 15 counts of theft of the 20 with which he was originally charged. The value of the admitted thefts, between March 2016 and May 2019, was estimated at £4,600 taken from charity collection money donated at 11 funerals.

When police investigated the matter in December 2019, Mr Satterly was found to have debts amounting to almost

£17,000. The Shropshire Star reported that he was told by Judge Anthony Lowe that he had "reopened wounds" of families and friends of loved ones after an "acutely emotional time".

He sentenced Mr Satterly to a 15-month prison term, suspended for two years, plus 240 hours of unpaid work and he would pay £800 towards prosecution costs.

REMEMBRANCE DAY



As ever on Remembrance Sunday, the town turned out to support the service that

saw the parade from Talbot Yard to the memorial garden and the moving ceremony conducted by Rector Ashley Buck with Mike Hermolle of the Royal British Legion in support.

The two minutes silence saw even the traffic passing slowly and quietly on their way. The laying of wreaths was carried out by representatives of all ages, from primary school children to elderly mourners who needed a little gentle assistance to guide them to and from the cenotaph.

It is a measure of the respect the town has for those lost in the course of duty that no less than 20 wreaths were laid.

PAULA CLAYTON

On Page 17 you will find a tribute to Paula Clayton, written by her daughter Britt. Readers may remember the Clayton Therapies sports clinic run by Paula and husband Rick, that drew people from a long way to get their very effective attention.

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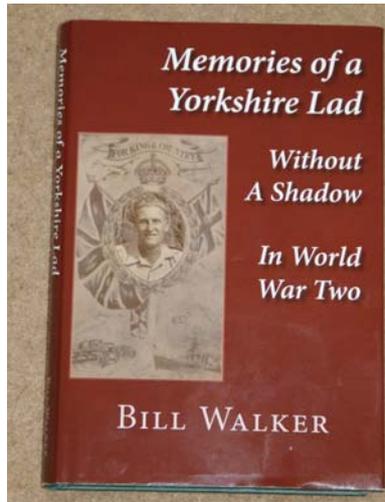
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*New faces at The Fighting
Cocks in Stottesdon.
See Page 7.*



*A soldier's story of life and
the Second World War.
See Page 19.*



*Bulb Planting in Bayton.
A great idea.
See Page 57.*

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THANK YOU

Fay, who works at the Severn Hospice shop on the High Street, slipped and fell in the Talbot car park early in November. She was shaken, but nothing was broken and a very kind young lady helped her get up and carefully walk to her car. Even better, when she got home Jane at Severn Hospice called to ask if she was really well, because the young lady had called the shop to ask if Fay was OK.

It was a case of 'All's well that ends well', but Fay would like to publicly thank the young lady, who didn't give her name, for her help and concern.

A FEW MOTORING MATTERS

I was very impressed to receive a letter from BMW recently. Even more impressed to read that it was a recall for a check of my car, 16 years old and showing 165,000 miles on the speedo. It's still nice to drive and very comfortable, but how could they be interested in the condition of such an old banger as mine? It seems that the positive battery

cable passes through the floor of the luggage compartment to a connector that may corrode at a junction point. After so many miles, that's quite possible.

They asked me to contact my favourite BMW dealer and arrange an inspection, with any corrective work to be carried out at no charge. I do like BMW quality, which I now realise extends to their customer service.

In an entirely different area of motoring, the growing popularity of electric cars is a vital part of the move to limit damage to our planet. I have written enthusiastically about the Tesla car on these pages and this company does seem to be leading the way, though newer battery technology in America suggests there's competition coming their way.

But the announcement that the mighty Hertz vehicle hire company is considering an order for no less than 100,000 Tesla electric cars should leave nobody in doubt where future motoring is headed. Dare the editor mention that he'll miss the noise of a big V8?

THE WRITING GROUP

The make-up of the Group has changed since lockdown trimmed our numbers. One time regulars have gone missing, but the stalwart trio of Marian, Vivian and Sylvia have come down from Donington to fill their places.

In November it was to hear their recollections on 'Family' with Vivian leading the way with tales of her father and the recent anniversary of his passing. Marian has no close family to give inspiration, but chose the contrast between families struggling for survival in Africa and the rich in our country. Sylvia read two short works, that on her family detailing a trend to produce offspring of one gender. The chair wrote about his widespread family and the joy they bring, enough for Marian to suggest he pass the story over to be read by them.

For December we will have 'Time' to consider and maybe inspire. With a little wine and festive tarts we'll find out at 6.30 on December 13th.



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NEW OWNERS AT THE FIGHTING COCKS



Darren and Hannah Bailey at work on preparation in the kitchen.

The new owners at the popular Fighting Cocks pub in Stottesdon have moved 260 miles up from Pembrokeshire, where they ran the Yet-Y-Gors Fishery until deciding to opt for a slightly easier life. And as both have Midlands connections, a visit to the Cocks convinced them this was the place they wanted.

The plan is to open from 5.00 Wednesday to Saturday and from lunchtime on Sundays. Bre will still be one

of the team, most of the familiar faces will still be there and they have plans to gradually develop the place without rushing into anything. Sounds like they'll be concentrating on building a friendly atmosphere and not trying to change the warm atmosphere for which the pub is renowned.

Welcome to Stottesdon, you two. We wish you every success.

CLOWS TOP GARDENING CLUB

December can be a wonderful month in the garden. The days may be short but on the whole the weather is usually not too bad, with wonderfully clear, frosty, sunny days when it can be a pleasure to be out if you're wrapped up well. We may be in the colder, darker months of winter but what better time to start planning your summer garden.

Our first meeting in the New Year will be on Wednesday January 26th, when the speaker will be John Robinson with a talk on 'Wildlife on the Severn'.

Clows Top and District Gardening Club meet on the 4th Wednesday in the month at Clows Top Victory Hall; Doors open 7.30pm, for the speaker at 8.00

Pauline Bowen

Pauline advises us that this is her last report for Clows Top, after 12 years of hints and tips on weather, planting, coming events and just a great enthusiasm for the garden. Thank you Pauline. JR

THANKS FROM THE FIREFIGHTERS

The clothing bank at the Fire Station is working well and earning money for a good cause. It was placed there in 2013, since when it has seen 16 tonnes clothing donated. That's a lot of clothes and the result was £3195 raised for the Firefighters Charity.

The letter acknowledging the value of the collection also thanks donors for "supporting the health and wellbeing of UK fire and rescue service personnel in their time of need, helping them get back to work. Thank you for your support."

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OBITUARIES

Peter Osborne died in early November, aged 91. He and Alison lived near Hopton Bank from the 1960s, when they bought a cottage and had to fetch water from the nearby stream. He lectured at Birmingham University as a paleo entomologist and played violin as an enthusiastic amateur at venues like the Regal Theatre in Tenbury.

Dinner parties at the family home, long developed enough to have full domestic facilities, were a lesson in cooking a wide range of dishes on a domestic oven, thanks to Alison's skill, and cocktails of fearsome strength and flavour mixed by Peter. They were happily married for 65 years, in which time Alison explained they never had a cross word. Our sympathies go to Alison and the family.

Janet Dickerson was a local lady who loved poetry and for many months travelled from her new home in Chaddesley Corbett to join in the Poets Society meetings and sometimes read extracts from a book of her own work. When she found travel too demanding, we posted her a copy of the Clarion. A lovely, warm hearted lady. her son Mark advised us on November 5th that Janet had died, aged 84. Our sympathies go to her family.

Alec Osbaldiston

Alec was a much respected figure in Cleobury Mortimer for most of his adult life. He

died peacefully at home on 19th October aged eighty-one. Maybe it was no coincidence that the church clock, maintained assiduously by Alec for many years, stopped on exactly the same day!

Born in Cheshire in 1940 he never lost his northern accent. He met his wife of over fifty years, Margaret, when they were members of the local youth club, where they both learned to bell ring. At the age of sixteen, he got a job in a bank but after a couple of years decided in was not for him and he applied for a place at Chester Teacher Training College where he studied for two years, then for a further year to qualify as a Mathematics teacher. To supplement his grant, he worked as a conductor on the local busses where he used his numeracy skills to work out the most lucrative routes and shift patterns!

In 1962, he started teaching Maths at Lacon Childe School; at the age of twenty-two, he wasn't much older than his pupils! He went on to teach many of *their* children. He was heard to remark that when bell ringing for weddings he would often get a kiss from the bride whom he had taught; in later years, more likely from her mother! He spent his teaching career at Lacon Childe and tributes have been paid from former pupils from as far afield at Hong Kong, Ireland and Australia, all saying how he had been instrumental in their own successful careers.

Even after retirement he continued working for examination boards, always contriving to get the names of family members and even pets into the questions.

Alec was a committed Christian and attended St Mary's Church where he also served on the Parochial Church Council and as Treasurer. A keen walker, he was a founder member of Cleobury Mortimer Footpath Association and did sterling work maintaining and keeping open the local footpaths. He was also a founder trustee of The Friends of St Mary's Church, and was for many years its Chair, helping to raise thousands of pounds for the maintenance and repair of the church fabric. A keen and extremely accomplished bell ringer, he rang at St Mary's for fifty-six years and was known to other bell ringers throughout the world. For many years, when Santa was pushed for time, he would stand in for him by visiting the primary school in December suitably dressed.

His energy, kindness, intelligence, humour and enthusiasm for life will be sadly missed by us all. He leaves a loving wife, two children and three grandsons. Rest in Peace Alec. You served your community well.

Diane Waddington

People when thinking of having Home Care often ask who are your staff? What sort of company are they?

TLC are a family run care provider supporting people with Disabilities, Dementia, Aging Population and Acquired Brain Injury to remain living at home for as long as it is safe to do so. Clients when considering home care will often find it difficult to accept and wonder about who are the staff and what qualifications they have? I cannot speak for other companies, however in our company it is made up from many sectors of our society and when these are put together, we have an Outstanding Team. 

One of those sectors are the future NHS professional, we have Daisy who is in her last year of her training to be a midwife, Lucy who is working towards the end of her training to be a Physiotherapist. Christina and Aila about to start their journey into nursing. We have further staff who have just been accepted into the NHS. These lovely kind young adults not only study many hours both in university, on hospital wards, they also give to us and have helped us support our clients for many years! Most joined us while still at college.

TLC have ex-nurses that come to us after raising their family and some, in recent times have re-joined their colleagues in the NHS.

We have staff who have raised their kids and now want a career, TLC will train or retrain people to help people reach their full potential and become one of our Outstanding Team.

We encourage kind caring and honest people of all ages and backgrounds who want to make a difference to people's lives to join our team. TLC invest heavily in people with ongoing support and training to help our new colleagues achieve their goals and reach their full potential. Once initial training is complete and they have been assessed as competent, TLC Induction Manager and our Training Manager will support staff through to achieve their Level 2/3 in H&S Care

Our Training

TLC's Training Team offers full free training on site and support staff through their Care Certificate. We have strong connection with an outside Training Provision who help our staff to achieve their Level 2/3 in H&S Care. Currently we have 32 members of staff that have already achieved Level 2/3 in Health and Social Care. We have qualifications at level 4 and five of our Senior Managers have Level 5. All staff that are new to care are required to achieve Level 2 within the first two years of their employment.

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For further enquiries please regarding Care or employment please ring TLC Care at Home 01299 272897 for an informal chat. Visit www.tlccareathome.com or wecare@tlc-careathome.co.uk

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COVID-19 Update

All our staff are provided with full PPE's including Gloves, Full Aprons, Sleeves, Visors, Gloves Surgical Masks.

Video training on Donning and Doffing PPE's sent out regularly.

Staff sign health declarations daily, Staff have weekly Covid-19 test. Most of our staff have now been vaccinated against Covid-19. TLC work closely with government regulation and update our risks assessment accordingly.

CLEAR ADDRESSES

Clare Caldicott writes:

With the rapid approach of the festive season and, hopefully, increased postal delivery and parcel services, would this be a good time to mention that many delivery companies have difficulty finding the appropriate addresses to deliver to.

We live out in the sticks a bit, in Crumpsbrook, which is lovely but we have had several enquiries recently about the whereabouts of various properties in our area which is large and complex. Sadly there are some properties that we cannot find, even walking our dogs around the area! House numbers that are not in sequence and house names we have never heard of. And post codes do not always lead directly to an address. Our postcode sends drivers happily down the track on the far side of our house, not directly to it. (Large print sign being sorted)

It would be so much easier if houses were clearly identified with name plates or numbers in visible areas where the delivery drivers could leave their packages and go on to the next destination without wasting precious hours wandering around looking for addresses. It is sometimes difficult to know why these vehicles are

scouting around - are they up to no good or are they just lost delivery drivers? Difficult to know. At least if they found their destinations, they would not have to loiter in the area. And we, the general public, would receive the parcels. All good.

Do you think the people of Cleobury and surrounding areas would agree?

Clare Caldicott

Clare makes a very good point; as a long ago delivery driver I know what she means. And of course a clear sign on every address would mean an emergency vehicle getting through sooner. What do you think?

NEW NOTES SINGERS

The group has expanded with newcomers and is now starting to work on new arrangements for Christmas songs in two-part harmonies. All are welcome to come along and join in.

Ability to read music not necessary, just enthusiasm to take part and enjoy an afternoon singing together with others.

Thursdays 2.30 - 4pm at Clee Hill Recreation Room next to Premier Shop, (parking behind shop)

Phone Barbara 07801 924035 for any further information

Jane Barnes

WORTH NOTING

We've had a selection of notices about events that you may find helpful.

'Drop in at St Mary's' - every 2nd & 4th Thursday, 10.30-11.30am - for coffee and a chat, if you are bereaved, feeling lonely and confused, have lost the confidence to go out or have no-one to talk to. This opportunity is free and provides a peaceful environment to sit in the company of others and listen and talk if you wish to.

Carols by Candlelight at St Mary's, Saturday 18th December at 4pm. Bring all the family and join us to sing your favourite carols and hear the story of Christmas followed by mulled wine and sweets for the children. Doors open at 3.45 pm.

Christmas Wholeness Service in St Mary's Church, Thursday 16th December at 7.00 pm. All welcome.

The Friends of Cleobury Mortimer Primary School have a 'Breakfast With Santa' in the Parish Hall on December 19th, from 9.00 until 11.30. £10.00 per child and every adult gets a hot drink and mince pie. The children get a breakfast and a gift from Santa. All proceeds to the fund for the children.

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Lunch club	11:30am - 12:30pm	£4.00
Afternoon Session	12:30am - 3:00pm	£10.00
After School Club	3:00pm - 5:30pm	£10.00

CLEOBURY W.I.

A fascinating presentation from Dr Mark Baldwin on the Women of the S.O.E. (Special Operations Executive) made our November meeting the busiest one of the year so far. We welcomed twenty-two members and twelve visitors to hear Mark tell the stories of these heroic women whom history has all but ignored.

Young women prepared to sacrifice family, friends and, in some cases, their lives to assist in the organization of resistance activities in occupied Europe and the Middle East. They completed the same kind of training as their male counterparts and were generally wireless operator and couriers as it was felt they would not be accepted by the men if they were in leadership roles.

Brave feats under the noses of the Nazi Regime were characterized by ingenuity and fearlessness, all the while knowing that, if captured, they could face torture and execution. Sadly, some ended up in the concentration camps at Ravensbrück and Dachau and others were tortured in the infamous Gestapo Headquarters on Rue Foch in

Paris. Thirteen have their names carved with pride on the SOE Role of Honour. Three were awarded The George Cross, the M.B.E. and Croix de Guerre. Inspirational women to be sure.

We proudly took our place once again in the Remembrance Parade on Sunday 14th November to remember the service and sacrifice of so many in conflicts past and present. Particularly remembering the Women of the SOE.

Our December meeting is on Tuesday 14th December. Open only to members it is our Christmas Social. Please check your email or phone Judy or Clare for details.

Clare Hadwell (Secretary)

THE BREAKFAST CLUB

In November members heard Pete Blackburn explain what has been achieved at the Men's Shed, and something of its future.

Following an initiative by Katja Jones, a group was formed to explore the possibility of creating a Men's Shed in Cleobury. The Men's Shed movement is dedicated to addressing the isolation

experienced by some older men, due to redundancy, bereavement or retirement. The solution is a welcoming place open to any man, where he will find a supportive atmosphere. The Cleobury Shed will contain a range of woodworking machinery, which shedders interested in carpentry will be able to use.

David and Margaret Robinson supported the scheme from the first, providing a suitable plot at a nominal cost, the first of many generous donations from a range of local businesses and individuals. A caravan was installed on the site for meeting and socialising, and connected to mains services. Obtaining planning permission for the shed was the next step, followed by the casting of a concrete floor slab. The shed itself is a well insulated single-storey structure, with doors and windows protected by steel grilles (made by a shedder), and a second caravan has now been added, where members can store their partially finished projects.

It is hoped the Shed will open to the public early next year.

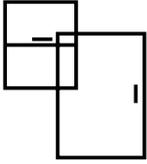


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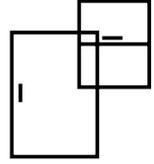


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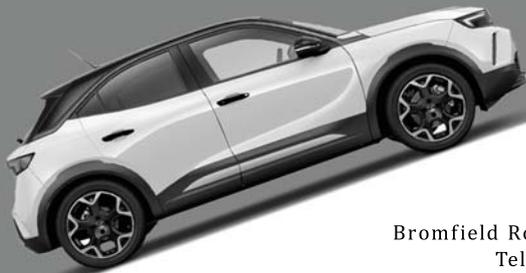
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PAULA CLAYTON

The Clayton/Stott family would like to thank everyone for their kind words, thoughts and consideration over the past four weeks, following the death of Paula Clayton; wife, daughter, mother, sister, grandmother, friend. We would also like to say a thank you to all of those who attended the funeral on the 18th of November, to show their love, support and respects.

We'd like to say another thank you to all those who donated to the fund to help Paula get the drugs she needed in order to give her a fighting chance. Unfortunately she did not get the chance to utilise this.

The money raised therefore will be put into a 'The Paula Clayton Trust Fund', alongside any donations made in lieu of flowers from the funeral. This fund will be run through the Butterfly Thyroid Cancer Trust and used to honour Paula's memory by using the money to help people who may find themselves in the scary situation Paula was in, we don't want anyone to be denied the chance at life.

Britt Clayton

ARMED FORCES OUTREACH IS COMING

The Armed Forces Outreach is designed to provide help and support to all military personnel, veterans, and their families. Working with the service charities and organisations the outreach assists and facilitates to ensure that current and former military personnel have access to the right support. We have also formed close links with several businesses, charities, and organisations across Shropshire, many of whom have signed the Armed Forces Covenant to demonstrate their support.

A veteran is anyone who has served for one day and has a service number. This will be required to access support from the service charities. If the service number cannot be confirmed it can be traced but it will take time.

The Outreach is coming to Cleobury Mortimer We will be holding our first outreach on the 7th Dec from 13.30hrs -15.30hrs in the Cleobury Community Hub, 1 Lower Street.

We hope you can join us, pop in for a chat and meet the team. For further information please contact sarah.kerr@shrophshire.gov.uk or telephone 01743 255 931

THE MELVILLE CHAPEL

That outstanding building on the road from Catherton to Farlow and on to Stottesdon is back in action. They held a successful Soup Lunch in November and have another booked for December 8th, starting at 12.30 and running until 2.00. The editor missed trying this popular venue before Covid-19 took over our lives, but he will try harder this time.

Christmas services this year will be a Carol Service on December 19th, starting at 6.30 and on Christmas Day there will be a family worship service at 10.30.

NOTICE

Valerie Carter wishes all family, friends and neighbours a Happy Christmas and better New Year. I will not be sending cards, but donating to the Royal British Legion.

May God bless everyone
Valerie

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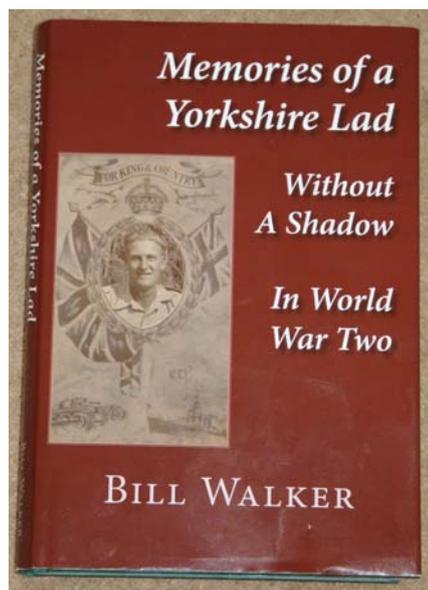
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This interesting book combines two elements: the boyhood and later adult life of Leeds born Bill Walker, with a detailed history of his service in the 1939-45 Second World War. Bill had quietly written his memories and at his Golden Wedding Anniversary party he handed the notes over to his son. That's Ralph Walker, long term resident of this parish.

Ralph did nothing with the notes for 25 years, then decided to commemorate his father's 100th birth date by putting the work

together as a hardback book. It does make a fascinating read.

Bill came from a modest background and did not shine at school except on the sports field, where he represented his school at both cricket and football, while holding down a job in the tailoring industry.

When war broke out in 1939 Bill was already in the Territorial Army as a volunteer and it's true to say that six years of service really brought him out: learning to drive, excelling at sport and taking on and beating the squad bully. He moved on to other areas, always with a streak of stubbornness showing through and eventually he was placed in the Long Range Desert Group, where he drove a squad from attack and back to base until a serious wound from a German tank landed him in hospital in critical condition. He almost lost a leg through infection, but came through to fight and drive again.

His description of events and some of the senior men

he met are down to earth, the blunt view of a man who wasn't trying to boast and just told it like it was. All these years on, he's safe from any libel action.

He did get back to Leeds, but was then transferred to Sweden, where he met Gerd, the love of his life, and they were married before he was finally demobbed back into civvy street. If you think getting back to normal in 2022 might be tough, read this story and be grateful that you live today.

Ralph is happy to sell copies of the book at £15.00 a time, simply to recover the cost of publishing this 248 page family history. He's on CM 271335 or email him on rwalwodin@tiscali.co.uk

My copy of this fine book is being passed on to the library, where it will be processed and recorded before you can find it in the Local Authors section. It's worth waiting for.

Jim Reynolds



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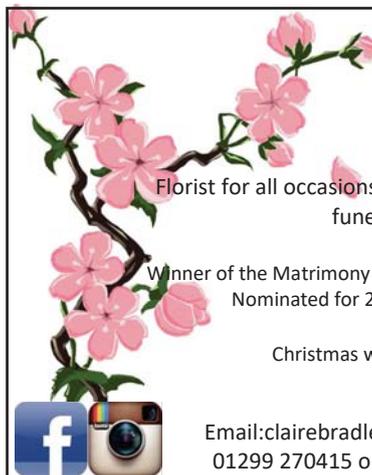
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Stepping Out! Who's Walking, When and Where.

THE FOOTPATH ASSOCIATION

The countryside is beginning to look rather festive, morning frosts, holly berries and mistletoe. Christmas will soon be here with decorations, cards, presents and time spent with loved ones. Walks in countryside can quickly bring relief from any stress brought on by the preparations.

The route of the Parish Walk in November took us to Reaside Manor onto Reaside pools returning past Barnslands Farm. Six people enjoyed the chilly autumn weather, the wonderful views and a welcome social cuppa in the KA. The Parish Walks are open to all and it is an enjoyable way to explore the local countryside. The next walk is on December 5th at 10.00am outside the Market Hall.

The CMFA will lead a New Year's Day walk which is open to all, starting at 2.00 from the Market Hall. The route is unlikely to be dog friendly. Food will be provided at the Kings Arms after the walk. Mazella will be available to collect 2022 CMFA subscriptions. If you have

enjoyed the walk and the company and wish to become a member have a word with Mazella who will provide the necessary information. The New Year's Day walk is traditionally the Parish Walk for January so there will be no walk on January 2nd. The February Parish Walk will be as normal on Sunday 6th at 10.00am.

Kissing gates were again on the agenda for the work party in November. One replaced a stile into the allotment field and another nearby where a wooden gate was rotten. In addition the CMFA was asked to assist with the installation of a footbridge near Marl Brook at Broombank, south of Neen Sollars. Due to the location on the county border this was a joint project with Worcestershire.

Walking for Health will continue as normal during the winter months on the second and fourth Wednesday. The dates for December are 8th and 22nd and January 12th and 26th. The walks are open to all, starting at your own pace and gently building up. The route can be adapted if you wish to have a slower and shorter

walk. Walking for Health was devised to improve physical and mental health through walking. We start outside the Market Hall at 10.00am and finish in time to enjoy a drink and cake at the Coco coffee morning.

Veronica Hargreaves

ROCK PATHFINDERS

December walks:

Thursday 2nd, 10.00 start from Hawkbath Forestry car park, off the B4194, DY12 3AF.

Thursday 16th, 10.30 start from the Lay-by at Snead Green, Pensax.WR6 6AE

And in January:

Thursday 6th, 10.00 start from Rock Village Hall, Porchbrook Road, Rock. DY14 9SD

Thursday 20th, 10.30 start from Hartlebury Common, Wilden Top car park, Hartlebury Road. Stourport-on-Severn, DY13 9JB.

Please note varying start times.

For more details on the walks or the Pathfinders events, ring Alan on 01299 400304 or visit mdsskev@rockpathfinders.uk.

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By the time we get to December we have to admit that it is winter. The old Celtic calendar launched into winter and the new year at the feast of Samhain on November 1st but I'd rather regard that month as part of autumn. So here we are again, with the year having turned full circle, the trees and so many creatures having gone into shut-down.

If you spend a lot of time around trees they become recognisable even at this time of the year by their shape, twigs, bark and other characteristics. Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) trees stand out against the rest of the woodland with their white bark and black diamond-shaped fissures, but most of the forest birch are hybrids between Silver Birch and the duller Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*), which have brownish bark that turns grey with age but lacks the diamond patterns. Showers of their seeds have been finding their way into windows, cars etc. for several weeks as the female catkins break up, but if you look for them you'll see the new male catkins still green on the twigs and getting ready to shed their pollen next spring. Excellent pioneers of bare ground and open spaces, the birch soon give up when other trees shade them out. The dead and dying trees provide nest sites for hole-nesting birds such as woodpeckers and Redstarts, and are hosts for the Birch Polypore fungus whose brackets have been used for sharpening razors and can be pulped to make a surprisingly strong paper. I'm sure someone could tell me whether the natural plasters made by cutting strips of the Polypore's top surface get their antiseptic properties from the compound called betulin which occurs in the tree's bark. Wikipedia is silent on this subject but mentions other interesting properties

including beneficial effects for arteriosclerosis and obesity and shrinkage of cancerous tumours.

Birch is moderately good as firewood but it is close-grained and clean-looking, making it a good choice for whittling spoons or turning bowls. Its fine twigs were used to make not only the utilitarian besom brooms but, when peeled, kitchen whisks and 'wiskets' for removing fluff from carpets in the local factories.

If you'd like to become familiar with some winter twigs, see if you can find the following:

Ash, with black buds opposite each other on either side of the stem

Alder, often growing beside water and carrying its tiny cones and purplish catkins during the winter

Beech, with pointed, shiny-brown buds set alternately on slender stems

There are oak, ash and hawthorn in the photo. No prizes for getting the Holly!



Happy Christmas!

Linda Iles



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Philip Dunne's Letter from Westminster

Reflecting back to this time last year, it is striking how far we have come.

Last year, just before people began to move around the country for the Christmas break, it was with the bitterest regret that the government had to impose restrictions on gatherings over the festive period. This change, which we all wished to avoid, meant last minute disappointment for so many after a tough year, and I know it was particularly difficult for those with children, as well as for grandparents.

But of course, the first doses of the covid vaccine had only just been administered in the lead up to Christmas 2020, meaning very few people were protected against the worst of the virus. In contrast, the rollout this year means almost 90% of the adult population have received at least one dose of the covid vaccine, with many now having received a booster jab or third dose.

We also now have effective drugs to combat the worst cases of covid, such as the recently approved Molnupiravir, which was found to reduce the risk of hospitalisation or death for COVID-19 patients most at risk by 50 per cent.

I write well before Christmas, and I have no wish to tempt fate, since we all know how resilient covid has proved. But local clinicians are working flat out to get more jabs into arms, to do all we can to avoid any reimposition of

restrictions. So I am hopeful that this year, unlike last, it will be easy for friends and family to come together and celebrate Christmas as we all normally would.

This year will also see the resumption of Christmas services in the many churches in South Shropshire, which I know will bring great comfort to those with faith. The very nature of collective worship meant that congregations and choirs were particularly restricted when covid restrictions were in place, so I am grateful these services have resumed.

While enjoying the Christmas and New Year bank holidays, please spare a thought for those who cannot be with their families – including all those who work in our NHS and emergency services, and those serving in our Armed Forces, who have continued their vital work while still adapting to the challenges of covid this year.

Once again this year, as the long lasting impact of covid remains, the work of volunteers has been critical to the health and wellbeing of our communities. So I would like to thank all those who have given up time, in whatever capacity, to help others in need this year.

I wish everyone in South Shropshire a very Happy Christmas, with best wishes for the year ahead.

Rt Hon Philip Dunne

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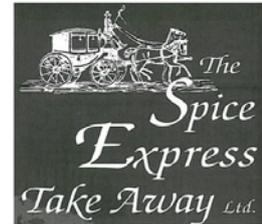
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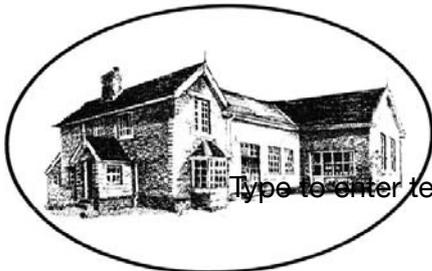
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The Good Grief Cafe - A very special place

Losing someone special from our life, particularly through bereavement, can be an overwhelmingly traumatic experience that affects us in so many different and often unpredictable ways.

We can experience a rollercoaster of feelings; shock, disbelief, anger, a deep hurt and for many, a sense of isolation and separation from all that was familiar.

Grief is a natural reaction to loss, a universal and intensely personal experience often influenced by the nature of the loss

Everyone experiences grief differently and we will all grieve in our own way and at our own pace.

It may be that sometimes we prefer to be alone with our thoughts and feelings and other times feel the need to talk and be in the company of others. We all need different things at different times and this is normal; understanding that there is no right or wrong way to feel, to think or 'to be' can be validating. We are all different.

The 'Good Grief Cafe' is now running in our community. It has been set up by Cleobury Compassionate Communities (CoCo) and the Cleobury Community Hub where it is held and it is supported by volunteers. A small number of people meet in this informal setting and spend a couple of hours together with others who also face the challenges of personal loss. There is the option of both an afternoon and an evening session.

Being with others to share our stories, our experiences, can enable us to feel understood and in turn understand others in mutual and compassionate connections.

Often, we may avoid talking openly to close family for fear that we may upset them. It may be that someone may be struggling with a sense of guilt that they could have done or said something differently.

Talking to someone else outside our immediate close circle can enable us to express ourselves more freely and so can help reassure us that our feelings and reactions are a normal part of the grief process; feelings of guilt and maybe anger for example are experienced by many and such powerful emotions can be particularly hard to accept.

In a safe and confidential space people can come along on a 'drop in' basis to talk to others, to listen, to be heard or to just be there and feel supported.

Building connections and friendships with others can be an important and valuable first step towards what may feel like a fragile and uncertain future. Many also gain knowledge and resources to navigate a route through the essential practical issues needing to be addressed.

Come along and receive the warmest of welcomes on the first Thursday of every month at 2.00, next one December 2nd. We are also trialling an additional evening session with the next one being December 9th at 7.00.

For more information, please contact Katja on 07966080111 cleoburycoco@hotmail.com, or speak to Mark or Andy at the Hub.

Jackie, Good Grief Cafe Volunteer

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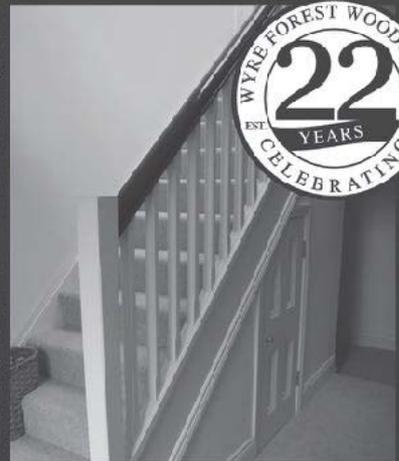
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Cleobury Mortimer Benefice Church services throughout the Benefice in December

St Mary's Cleobury Mortimer

Sunday 5th December – 10am Eucharist
Sunday 12th December – 8.30am and 10am Eucharist
Saturday 18th December – Community Carols 4pm
Sunday 19th December – 10am Eucharist
Friday 24th December – Christmas Eve Christingle 5pm and Midnight Mass 11.30pm
Saturday 25th December – Christmas Day Eucharist
Sunday 26th December – 10am Eucharist

'Drop in at St Mary's - every 2nd & 4th Thursday, 10.30-11.30am-

for coffee and a chat, if you are bereaved, feeling lonely and confused, have lost the confidence to go out or have no-one to talk to. This opportunity is free and provides a peaceful environment to sit in the company of others and listen and talk if you wish to.

St Michael and All Angels', Hopton Wafers

Sunday 5th December – 9.30am Eucharist
Tuesday 7th December – 7pm Carol service
Sunday 19th December - 9.30am Eucharist
Saturday 25th December – 9.30am Christmas Day Eucharist

St John the Baptist, Doddington

Sunday 5th December – 11.15am Eucharist
Sunday 19th December – 3pm Carol Service
Saturday 25th December – 11am Christmas Day Eucharist

All Saints', Neen Sollars

Sunday 5th December – 11am Village Worship
Sunday 12th December – 11am Eucharist
Sunday 19th December – 6.30pm Carol Service
Saturday 25th December – 11am Christmas Day Service

St George's, Milson

Sunday 19th December – 6.30pm Carol Service
Saturday 25th December – 10am Christmas Day Eucharist

St Mary's, Neen Savage

Sunday 5th December – 6pm Evening Prayer (BCP)
Sunday 19th December – 6pm Carol Service
Friday 24th December – 4pm Christmas Eve Crib Service
Saturday 25th December – 9.30am Christmas Day Eucharist

St John the Baptist, Kinlet

Sunday 12th December – 11.15am Eucharist (BCP)
Sunday 19th December – 6pm Carol Service
Saturday 25th December – 11am Christmas Day Eucharist (BCP)

The Church Office is open Tuesday and Thursday from 9.00am-3.00pm
Contact details: Grace Johnson cleoburychurch@hotmail.com
Tel: 01299 272916



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Doddington Lodge Post



SPOOKTACULAR HALLOWEEN

What a SPOOKTACULAR Halloween it's been. Rachel created amazing Halloween party food with delicious treats, Halloween cupcakes and a pumpkin cake that was a real show stopper.

Our residents loved reading all the fabulously spooky and creative poems. So much effort had been taken to write such wonderful poems. Thank you to everyone that entered our Halloween Poem Competition. All the residents & team members found it so difficult to choose the winners as they were all been so good.

Our joint winners were, Henry Chance, 8 years old and Ruby Britton aged 10 years old. Both poems, Halloween and Halloween Disco were firm favourites everyone. Beautiful handwriting, illustrations and a wonderful use of words that really captured the Doddington Lodge Halloween spirit.

We hope you all had a wonderful Halloween too. Thank you for all your lovely messages on our Face Book page & to all the Doddington Lodge team that made it so special for our Residents.



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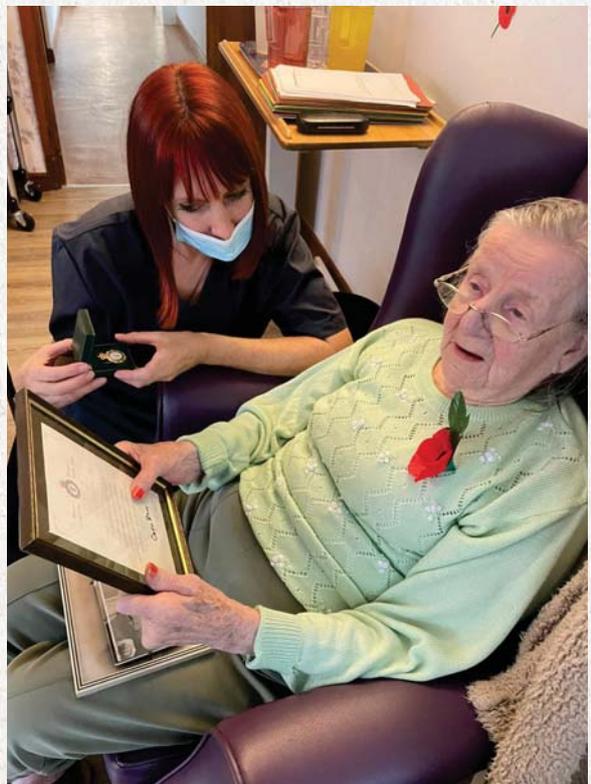
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REMEMBRANCE DAY

Remembrance Day is very close to our heart. In preparation we created our own remembrance memory wall and handmade painted poppies. Elsie's son Roger, very kindly brought along a few treasured items of Elsie's, including a letter from The Queen, to reminisce of her special time spent as a Land Girl, which she is so very proud of. What an incredible lady.



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THE READING GROUP

'The Past' by Tessa Hadley. For a novel only really enjoyed by one member, it provided a lively and very vocal discussion. The author has a good reputation but the general consensus was the story was a slow read, without much purpose. One person liked her style of writing while another was irritated by it. Some found it difficult to stay motivated to finish and several members gave up. Other comments were, an over use of metaphors and no empathy with characters despite very detailed descriptions of them. Summed up by, when you don't take to a book, you find fault with everything. Would not recommend unless you're a fan of Tessa Hadley.

This month we have a book by Jackie Kay, described as a literary memoir, sounds interesting. I'm sure we will find plenty to chat about at our last meeting of 2021 on 15th December. Wishing you all a Happy Christmas.

Deana Kimber 271754

AFTERNOON TEAS

Age UK, in conjunction with CoCo, are holding traditional afternoon teas on the first and

third Wednesday afternoons between 2.00 and 4.00. The venue is the Community Room at St Mary's Place, opposite the town library in Love Lane. This includes a selection of sandwiches, cakes and scones in pleasant surroundings

If you live alone, feel isolated or just want a pleasant afternoon please come and bring a friend if you like.

The cost is £5 and to find out more or book a place, please ring me on 01299 272628.

Sarah Wilde

LOOKING AHEAD

We are looking forward to welcoming a new contributor to the Clarion in 2022. Anni Calver writes for two church related groups: Caring for God's Acre and the Shropshire Churches Tourism Group. The first of these is a voluntary group who work to keep ancient churchyards in good order; they have plenty to do in this county. The second recognises the tourist attraction our historic churches are and helps spread the news with a brochure covering the member churches.

Delivering copies of the Clarion to member churches of the Cleobury Benefice has reminded me what gentle,

quiet places they are, havens of rest in more ways than one. I'm looking forward to reading Anni's features and learning a little more about this lovely area we live in.

FLICKS IN THE STICKS

They're back, and very good news that is. This month's film is "Last Christmas".starring Emma Thompson and Henry Golding in a romance between a girl working as an elf in a Christmas shop and a handsome young man with the inevitable Yuletide romance. Good idea - who wants horror or war stories at Christmas time?

In the Parish Hall on Saturday the 18th, starting at 7.30 and quite a bargain at £4.00 a head.

On the subject of Flicks, we must thank Val Breakwell for her years of work at this and all the other Parish Hall events. She's stepped down from running the Hall operation and the contact in her place is James Robinson on 01299 271129. Bookings for the Hall are still in the capable hands of Janet Short on 01299 270107. There's a good crew of devoted people running this facility for us.



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Cleobury Country Farmers Market

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The Social Calendar for December and January

Wed 1 st	2.00	Afternoon Tea ion the Community Room at St Mary's Place, Love Lane. PAGE 35		
Thurs 2 nd		GREEN GARDEN WASTE WHELLIE BINS EMPTIED TODAY		
	10.00	Rock Pathfinders meet at Hawkbatch Forestry car park. DY12 3AF. PAGE 21		
	2.00	The Good Grief Café is open at the Cleobury Hub in Lower Street. PAGE 27		
Sun 5 th		CMFA Parish Walk starts at the Market Hall. All welcome. PAGE 21		
Tues 7 th	1.00	Armed Forces Outreach invite you to Cleobury Hub in Lower Street. PAGE 17		
Wed 8 th	10.00	Walking for Health starts at the Market Hall. Good social occasion. PAGE 21		
	12..30	Soup Lunch at Melville Chapel, Farlow. PAGE 17		
Thurs 9 th		BLCACK WHEELIE BINS & RECYCLE BOXES EMPTIED TODAY		
	10.30	"Drop in at St Mary's" for coffee and chat. PAGE 11		
	7.00	Evening opening for the Good Grief Café at Cleobury Hub. PAGE 27		
Mon 13 th	6.30	The Creative Writing Group meet in the Library, Love Lane. PAGE 5		
Tues 14 th	7.30	Cleobury WI Christmas Social. Member & guests only. PAGE 13		
Wed 15 th	2.00	Afternoon Tea in the Community Room, St Mary's Place. PAGE 35		
Thurs 16 th		GREEN GARDEN WASTE WHELLIE BINS EMPTIED TODAY		
	10.30	Rock Pathfinders meet at Snead Green layby, Pensax WR6 6AE. PAGE 21		
	7.00	Christmas Wholeness Service at St Mary's Church. PAGE 11		
Sat 18 th	9.30-12.30	Cleobury Country Farmers Market, lots of traders, lots of carols!! In and around St Marys Church		
	4.00	"Carols by Candlelight" at St Marys Church. PAGE 11		
	7.30	"Flicks in the Sticks" in the Parish Hall features "Last Christmas" PAGE 35		
Sun 19 th	9.00	"Breakfast with Santa" at the Parish Hall. PAGE 11		
	3.00	Carol Service at St John's, Doddington with CM Concert Brass, PAGE 41		
	6.30	Carol Service at Melville Chapel, Farlow. PAGE 17		
Wed 22 nd		BLACK WHELLIE BINS AND RECYCLE BOXES EMPTIED TODAY		
	10.00	Walking for Health start at the Market Hall. PAGE 21		
Thurs 23 rd	10.30	"Drop in at St Mary's" for coffee and chat. PAGE 11		
Sat 25 th		CHRISTMAS DAY! WE WISH ALL CLARION READERS A HAPPY & SAFE DAY		
Thurs 30 th		GREEN GARDEN WASTE WHELLIE BINS EMPTIED TODAY AND IN JANUARY.....		
Sat 1 st	2.00	CMFA New Year's Day Walk. All welcome. PAGE 21		
Wed 5 th	2.00	Afternoon Tea in the Community Room, St Mary's Place, Love Lane. PAGE 35		
Thurs 6 th	10.00	Rock Pathfinders meet at Rock Village Hall. DY13 9SD. PAGE 21		
	2.00	Good Grief Café is open at the Community Hub in Lower Street. PAGE 27		
Fri 7 th		BLACK WHELLIE BINS AND RECYCLE BOXES EMPTIED TODAY		
Mon 10 th	6.30	Creative Writing Group meet in the Library, Love Lane. PAGE 5		
Wed 12 th		Walking for Health starts at the Market Hall. PAGE 21		
Thurs 13 th		GREEN GARDEN WASTE WHELLIE BINS EMPTIED TODAY		
Wed 19 th	2.00	Afternoon Tea, Community Room, St Mary's Place. PAGE 35		
Thurs 20 th		BLACK WHELLIE BINS AND RECYCLE BOXES EMPTIED TODAY		
	10.30	Rock Pathfinders meet at Wilden Top carpark, Hartlebury Rd, Stourport, DY13 9JB. PAGE 21		
Wed 26 th	10.00	Walking for Health step out from the Market Hall		
	7.30	Clows Top Garden Club meet at Victory Hall. PAGE 7		
Mon 31 st	7.30	The Nearly Dead Poets Society meets at the Library in Love Lane		
		LOOKING FORWARD TO FEBRUARY.....		
Wed 2 nd	2.00	Afternoon Tea, community room, St Mary's Place. PAGE 35		
Sun 6 th		Parish Walk starts at the Market Hall. All welcome. PAGE 21		
Wed 9 th	10.00	Walking for Health starts at the Market Hall. PAGE 21		

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Simon Morton in the Garden.

I confess I'm running a little low on inspiration for this month's article. I can't put my finger on it (I'm usually itching to start filling a page with my horticultural waffle), but this month is proving tricky.

The weather probably has something to do with it. The unseasonably warm but dank climate means the garden looks like it's been left in the washing machine for a bit too long. It now resembles a slightly mildewy t-shirt. Not particularly inspiring.

Or it may have something to do with the ever-present temptation to go down the Yuletide theme (yet again). In previous years, I've filled pages with gardener gift ideas (hint - vouchers and seeds work every time), but I'm determined to steer clear this year. This decision is nothing to do with being a Grinch; I just worry that since mince pies have been in the shops since September (possibly earlier - I may have missed the first batch), the novelty of a Christmas themed article may have waned by the time you get your hands on this edition of the Clarion.

Thankfully this morning, the seemingly lovely cook and writer Nigel Slater tweeted, 'I love the crackle of winter', and I sensed the faintest bubble of inspiration rise to the surface. I immediately dived into my fast-growing library of gardening books in the hope that similarly evocative prose might give me the horticultural heave I was looking for. Sadly not.

Monty Don, who can be a bit dour at the best of times, could offer little more than a beautifully worded passage decrying the wet and cold. Next up was one of my favourite garden designers, fancy Dan Pearson. Like Monty, he writes passionately about his gardening journey through the year but seems to stutter to a bit of a halt in December. It was a tad more upbeat than Monty, but only just (in truth, he lost me at the part debating the whys and wherefores of planting a nuttery in his new garden).

My last option was cheeky chappy (and recently cancelled on Twitter for reasons too mind-boggling to explain) Adam Frost. I'm a big fan of Adam - he's the sort of gardener who chooses not to show off with Latin plant names even though you know he could. He doesn't seem to take himself too seriously yet has a global reputation for garden design. And I reckon he'd get the first round in at the pub. Surely Adam would come up with the goods? Not so much - there was some noncommittal stuff about using this time to plan your garden or some such, but that was it.

Hmmm.

In the absence of any suitable seasonal prose to inspire, I've resorted to pulling on my business experience to evoke visions of the garden in December. Yes, you guessed it. A SWOT analysis:

Strength: Weeds can be quickly hacked away with a trowel or sharp hoe. Failing that, you can pretend they don't exist by covering them in mulch.

Weakness: The days are SOOO short. You've just got a decent sweat up, and then you realise you'd digging in the dark.

Opportunities: As cheeky chappy Adam says, you can see the bare bones of your garden at this time of year, so use this time to ponder what could be in 2022.

Threats: Super soggy weather rotting my recently planted and very tender tulip and daffodil bulbs.

I could knock up a PowerPoint presentation on the above if it helps (once I'm in 'business mode', it's very difficult to snap out of it), but I think you probably get the general message. The weather will be what the weather will be. There's not much we can do about it, so we might as well do our best to enjoy it.

Wishing everyone a fantastic Christmas and New Year - here's to an amazing 2022.

Simon Morton

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October 31st saw the Branch hold its Centennial Luncheon at the Sports and Social Club, with Colonel Chris Joynson as guest speaker. He had agreed to speak at our Annual Lunch in 2019, but heavy snow overnight forced cancellation of the whole event. Colonel Joynson spoke enthusiastically about the work of the 'Battle Back Centre' at Lilleshall, where he is the Recovery Operations Manager. The centre was founded in 2009, and has already helped over 7,000 wounded ex-service personnel to regain their self-confidence and motivation after their physical injuries had been treated. Costing over £20M to set up, and £2M a year to run, it is the RBL's biggest investment to date. Many of those who listened to the Colonel's talk felt that the excellent work of the centre deserves to be more widely known. Too many people only perceive of the RBL as a focal point during Remembrance events.

The Cleobury Branch of the

British Legion (not 'Royal' until 1971) was formed in 1921, less than two months after the new national body had been created on 15 May 1921 to represent the interests of ex-servicemen by merging together three existing bodies. Our branch is therefore one of the oldest in the country.

This year, the branch has been unable to run any of our normal outings, but it is hoped to resume these in 2022.

The Branch always welcomes new members - please contact Membership Secretary Matt Sheehan on 01299 271347 for details, or join up on-line.

Mark Baldwin

SAINT JOHN'S DODDINGTON

As Advent begins and we look forward to the joy of Christmas we have lit our star again - look out for it on the hill; we are inviting people to sponsor a day - donations will be shared between Cleobury First Responders and helping cover the cost of lighting the star. Contact us if you can't get to the church to sign up for a day. We have held our Christmas Fayre and were

delighted to welcome lots of visitors who enjoyed the opportunity to catch up with friends; we raised over £440 - a new record. Another way we plan to bring some joy this Christmas is carol singing - we'll be at Doddington Heights and Meadow View as well as Doddington Lodge, if you would like us to sing at your door, please let us know. If you enjoy singing we would love you to join us - contact us and we'll let you know dates. And no Christmas would feel complete without our Carol Service with Cleobury Mortimer Concert Brass band - Sunday 19th December at 3.00. We will have a Christmas morning communion service at 11am. Other services as on the Benefice page. January will be a month for planning events for the next year. We wish you a joyful Christmas and peaceful New Year. For up to date news, follow us on Facebook: @StJohnsDoddington, or check our website: www.achurchnearyou.com/church/10505/ Email: stjohnsdoddington@gmail.com Celia Gibb 01584 318036

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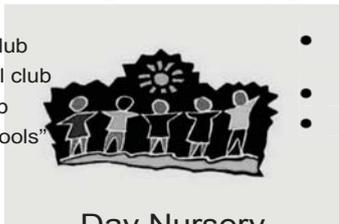
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Our Parliamentarians haven't been covering themselves in glory recently. There was No10's botched attempt to get North Shropshire MP Owen Paterson off the hook. 'Found guilty by the standards system? - then let's change the system! After all, he is one of us...'. This was followed by a screeching U turn and the resignation of said MP. Not that other county MP's are faring much better – Daniel Kawczynski (Shrewsbury and Atcham) is being looked at following allegations that he intimidated his staff and also questions about his second job working for a mining company. Even our own Philip Dunne is facing questions over his failure to declare that he is being paid about £425 an hour by an aerospace firm, when speaking in debates in which he repeatedly called for increased defence spending. He has, however, declared this in his register of interests. Still it must all be OK as a minister has said that these activities 'enrich Parliament'. Maybe so, but not nearly as much as they enrich the individuals concerned...

More No10 skulduggery over the shameful levels of raw sewage being discharged, legally and illegally, into our waterways (over 400,000 occasions in 2020). To his credit, Philip Dunne had proposed a private members bill to introduce a requirement for action. However, this went out of time and ministers promised to reflect his thoughts in the forthcoming legislation. They didn't, and gullible MP's (but not Philip) were persuaded to vote for the status quo by the simple expedient of issuing highly inflated figures on the possible cost of fixing things. These were claimed to be over £150 billion. When the correct figures were published, these ranged from £3-62 billion, which is very close to the £57 billion in dividends paid out by the industry since privatisation in 1991. Fortunately, the House of Lords sent the legislation back with an amendment based on Philip Dunne's original bill. In the end, a compromise was reached with a watered down requirement inserted and

adopted. A number of MP's have now proposed a change in their approach to voting. They have said that, in future, they will read the paperwork and actually understand what they are voting for. This is radical stuff- fancy understanding what you are legislating for - it'll never catch on...

Another organisation that hasn't impressed recently is West Mercia Police. A man who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness drew up a 'Bucket' list, the top entry being mooning at a speed camera. This he duly did but was somewhat taken aback when, within 30 minutes, six police officers turned up at his house, broke the front door handle trying to gain entry and then transferred their attention to the side gate which they smashed open (despite it not actually being locked...). They then wrestled him to the ground, handcuffed him and held him for several hours before releasing him. However, some good has come out of this. Should you ever need police to attend an incident urgently, on no account use words like 'murder', 'robbery' or 'assault'. Just say you have seen someone mooning at a camera...

The Post Office scandal rolls on... Ministers are blocking the Williams inquiry into this from examining the questionable conduct (found to be 'oppressive and misleading' by the High Court) of the expensive legal team hired by the Post Office. This was the last throw in their doomed attempt to prevent justice for the hundreds of subpostmasters wrongly accused and convicted of fraud when the problem lay with a faulty computer system. The ministerial view is that this would 'slow down' proceedings although a cynical person might wonder whether it had anything to do with the lack of curiosity by various ministers since the saga erupted over 20 years ago, not to mention that there may be very well paid positions in the legal sector should second jobs for those in Parliament remain possible. Not that anything like that would ever happen.... *A J Grumpy*

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FROM THE BANDROOM

December is always a busy month for the band and an important fundraising time too. We will be playing during the Christmas light switch on in Cleobury on 4th December, drawing the crowds in with lots of festive music (nothing like a brass band at Christmas)

The following Saturday, the 11th, we have our main Christmas Concert, this time in St Marys Church, tickets are available at The Wash House at £10 each, to include mulled wine and mince pies. We will be playing a mix of traditional as well as Christmas music – please join us, it would be lovely to see you there.

We also have other carol playing stints at De Beers garden centre and a couple of supermarkets. Our final engagement of the season will be the carol service in Doddington Church at 3.00 on Sunday the 19th.

Hopefully there will be plenty of home practice during the holiday, before we start rehearsals in earnest on our contest piece in January. Wishing you all a very Merry and Musical Christmas from all at CMCB.

Katie Griffiths

FAR FOREST AND ROCK BRITISH LEGION

The branch would like to express grateful thanks for the wonderful levels of public support for both the Poppy

Appeal and dedication of the Bayton Memorial Seat on November 5th, the Parade and Service at Rock and Service of Remembrance at the Pensax Memorial on November 14th.

Poppy Appeal Organiser Jim Woods has been busy; "Our running total is well over £7100 with more to come. The public response has been really heart-warming." Branch Chairman Martyn Carter was appointed as Appeal Organiser for Strensham Services on the M5. The result was an amazing total of £13815 in donations.

Standard Bearer May Carter has been busy. She has paraded the Standard at Bayton on 5th November, at both performances of the Festival of Remembrance in the Royal Albert Hall on November 13th before travelling back overnight to the Parade and Services in Rock and Pensax.

The Branch meet at 7.00pm at the Rock Cross Inn on the second Monday in the month. More details: chairman@farforestandrocklegion.org.uk or go to our Facebook page.

Nigel Caldicott

CLOWS TOP VICTORY HALL

The hard work and of the management committee of the Hall has been recognised by the grant of £555 by Rock Parish Council. Chairman Steve Woodison said "We are delighted, and very grateful to the Council." Social evenings at the Hall continue

on the first and third Friday evenings of each month and arrangements are in place for a special free entry pre-Christmas event on December 3rd, starting at 6.00, with live music, licensed bar, mince pies, mulled wine and Christmas fun for all ages to enjoy. January 2022 will see Social Evenings on 7th and 21st starting at 6.00. On 28th January a new Wildlife Group will hold its inaugural meeting at the Hall starting at 7.00.

Event dates for 2022 have been identified and details of planned events will be made available on the Hall's dedicated Facebook page.

The Hall now benefits from its own free WIFI and work to confirm that all electrical installations are up to date has now been completed. Plans for further environmentally friendly improvements to the Hall are making good progress.

To book the Hall or find out what is happening, including the Gardening Club, Craft group, Zumba and Yoga Groups, please ring the CTVH Mobile 07379 959895, visit Clows Top Victory Hall Facebook page or e mail contact@clowstopvictoryhall.co.uk

Nigel Caldicott

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Anon.

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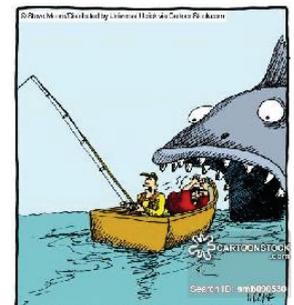
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"Blood-curdling screams. Hayes, will do nothing to help us catch a fish."

CATHERTON COMMON

Shropshire Wildlife Trust Reserves Officer Clive Dean tells us about gorse.

I thought that I might follow up last issue's mention of our winter work programme and the work with Butterfly Conservation to talk about gorse. Both the winter programme and the work for butterflies involve cutting and treating gorse to try and control its spread.

So what is the problem with gorse? Well gorse is a native plant and is not out of place but it does seem to be increasing in extent. As with a lot of plants on the common it just needs to be kept in balance. If it starts to dominate then it will start to shade out and reduce other valuable plants such as heather, grasses and wildflowers.

The traditional way of managing it was to burn it every few years. For people with sheep on the common this was particularly popular as it created a flush of sweet grass. The burning often didn't kill the gorse and it usually helped gorse seeds to germinate so after a few years gorse would return and the cycle began again. Burning still has its place but can be damaging on wet heath and bogs. My personal observations suggest that burning may not be as effective as it used to be and that gorse returns more quickly and much more dense than it used to.

Gorse does not like to have its feet wet and therefore mainly grows in drier areas, this does help to control its spread. Gorse is also vulnerable to frost and sustained low temperatures. Many of you may have noticed evidence of this early this year. In March we suffered low night time temperatures for many days in a row, perhaps as long as three weeks. Temperatures usually dropped below zero. Many people commented on how gorse seemed to be dying in April. You may have noticed it going brown and dying back across the common. This was the result of those sustained low temperatures.

We have all heard about climate change and global warming and we don't get the cold winters and long, hard frosts that we used to. Also we don't get the heavy snow that used to flatten the gorse and break its stems. I believe that this is why gorse is doing so well at the moment and that burning is less effective. I feel sure that following a burn the burnt gorse and many of the new seedlings would be killed by the following cold winter meaning the gorse took much longer to recover.

At Shropshire Wildlife Trust we are now trying different ways of managing gorse to try and avoid some of the problems resulting from burning. Many of these methods are slower and more labour intensive. We are cutting gorse by hand and poisoning the stems, where the gorse is big enough. In other areas we are cutting it with brushcutters and then sometimes flailing the resulting stems. In the near future we also hope to trial spraying individual bushes with a herbicide. We also hope to create more wet areas of the common and prevent other areas from drying out in order to hold back the gorse.

ANGER IN THE AIR

The fact that Adrian Satterly had been found guilty of theft from funeral charity collections and been given a suspended sentence of 15 months, plus 240 hours of voluntary labour and the repayment of £800 of court costs came as a blow to the many people whose lives have been blighted by this whole sorry business. As I write these words there is an atmosphere of anger that so much hurt as not been eased.

I will not write in anger; that is not the way to be objective and balanced. But I will ask why a guilty plea on 15 of 20 counts of theft brought the total figure below £5,000 and thus removed the customary jail sentence for such theft. Will the grieving widows and widowers be told if their loved ones' collections were paid in full to the chosen charity? I hope to have answers in our February issue, but cannot offer a guarantee of that.

JR



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Tuesdays - 9:30am-12:45pm, 2:30pm-9pm

Fridays - 9:30am-12:45pm, 2:30pm-5:30pm

December promises to be yet another busy month with lots going on. We continue with our main activities throughout the month with the coffee shop and our activities finishing on Friday December 17th.

From Monday 20th - Friday 24th December we will be running a Shropshire Council funded HAF activity week. The **"5 days of fun before Christmas"** is for 5-11 year olds. Details will be passed on through the local schools. NB - for children in receipt of Free School Meals.

FOCUS ON: 21st December & 24th December 2021

21st December - In the evening we will be hosting a Christmas Panto' called "The last satellite before Christmas" performed by the 4Front Theatre Company. Tickets are free and are available via our website.

24th December - Christingle Service at St Mary's Church. 5pm - all ages welcome for an hour of Christmas joy shared with our community, focusing on the reason for the season!

"A huge thank you to all of the volunteers and supporters of St Mary's Youth Project and the Cleobury Community Hub over the past 12 months. Without your support we would not be able to offer such a wide range of activities in a safe space to all ages within our community.

Christmas is often a time where nostalgia plays a part in our thoughts and preparations for the 25th of December. However you feel about Christmas we want to encourage you that you are dearly loved and valued and are always welcome in the CCH. The name Climb61 is based on Psalm 61:2 "When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I" - The Rock is Jesus and we celebrate His birth on 25th December. If you're feeling overwhelmed this Christmas (or even if you're not), please get in touch. We would love to see you, spend time together and listen to your story."

Mark, Bev and the CCH Team

Climb61 Session Times - To book: www.smypp.org.uk

Tuesdays - 9:30am-11am, 11:15am-12:45pm, 2:15pm-3:45pm, 4pm-5:30pm, 5:45pm-7:15pm, **(Mondays too)** 7:30pm-9pm

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LADIES NIGHT - No Ladies Night in December



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I wish I could end the year on a positive note and tell you that most scammers are being prosecuted and your money is safe. Sadly I can't say that but I can give you as always some positive guidance to keep most of these criminals at bay. Many of you may have heard of Martin Lewis who is the 'money man' on ITV programs. He is continually campaigning to ensure that we, the public, get the best for our money and keep it safe as well. He appeared on Breakfast television on the 17th of November and he was extremely agitated at a proposal being put forward by the government to address the issue of fake endorsements on social media. He believed the government is not going nearly far enough to address this issue where significant sums of money are being conned out of innocent people who believe that an endorsement of a product or service by a celebrity must mean it's ok and safe.

Examples of this are: Richard Branson allegedly endorsing money investment schemes such as Bit Coin, or Suzanna Reid the presenter of Good Morning Britain endorsing a weight loss product that 'actually works'. cNO IT DOES NOT but if you sign up for it you will part with a significant amount of money to try it for yourself only to find the claims are false. Too late! You signed up and if you ever managed to get a hold of someone who conned you they will just say, it does not work for everyone.

Bitcoin, Crypto currency and other get rich schemes are equally misleading but you don't find out until you invest the minimum amount (usually £250) only to find a so-called expert who is there to help you at every step, will persuade you that the real money is to be made when you invest a larger sum. Promises of fast and big returns could convince you that this is a great idea. Suddenly the Money Manager stops

returning your calls, and even the number you were given is suddenly unavailable. Result, your hard earned savings have disappeared.

These and many similar scams invade Social Media every day and if you have a Facebook, Twitter, What's App or Instagram account you are a target. It does not stop there. In past articles, I have described how your email and personal data is frequently stolen (unknown to you) and sold on to the dark side and the scum who operate almost with impunity. You could suddenly receive an email possibly appearing to come from a trusted source with an advert for one or other of the scams mentioned above.

The obvious response is to ignore it and delete it, no matter how attractive it appears. The old saying is that if it looks too good to be true, it certainly is not true. So what action can you take against this emerging form of scam? Delete, Delete, Delete. You can ask Facebook to stop sending certain types of personalised adverts, but they just change it to non personalised and the flood continues.

Meanwhile our Government is obfuscating on what they can do to stop this but as Martin Lewis very elegantly put it, "It's not enough and probably too late to do anything about the big Social Media giants who work very hard to manipulate our lives." They get paid by the advertiser for every fake advert that is placed by scum, so there's not a lot of incentive there.

The only impact is that if we the public are aware of the issues, we can use the DELETE button to the best effect. It's your money they are after, keep it to yourself.

I wish all the Clarion Readers who have followed me over the last months, a very happy and safe Christmas and as there is no January Publication, I will see you next year.
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Cleobury Clarion December 21/January 22

MYSTERY VIDEO MAN

In the October Clarion we asked if anyone could identify a videographer working at a funeral in Bridgnorth on May 28th. A reader wants to contact him to see if she can buy the film of a relative's funeral.



She has managed to get a photo of the man . Do you know him? Please contact the editor if you do, on 01299 270642 or uncle.jim@icloud.com

BULB PLANTING IN BAYTON

Such a simple idea, but simple ideas can work very well indeed. Like this one did.

Residents of Bayton were invited to help plant daffodil bulbs around the Doorstep Green that's close to the Parish Church. It's an area that's been

tidied up by local people working on the project, with backing from the Countryside Agency and the National Lottery's New Opportunities Fund.

Keith Weller was there early, with bags of bulbs purchased by the Parish Council and handing them out to people arriving with trowels or dibbers ready for work. The spread of age was a sign of family involvement, grandparents and parents with youngsters. When the West Mercia constabulary arrived in the form of Vanessa and Tracey they were invited to move the patrol car down into the planting area for a group photo:



Big smiles all round for a communal job well done.

The product of this weekend effort won't be seen until the spring, when the Doorstep Green will have an extra dash of colour. Bayton as a community are very good at cooperation, an example to us all.

WELCOME, CLEOBURRS

The news that London House, one of the outstanding fascias on High Street, was to reopen and trade as a hardware and general store was the best news in a long time. The place had stood out as the Cleobury Cafe until the state of the upper floors enforced closure and it fell into further decline.

Now Robert and Claire Mitchell have moved in with a rescue package and a family reputation for making places pay - older readers will remember Claire's parents running a similar business just a few doors up the street.

There has been a lot of late working to get it open on time for their November 27th target .The fact that a big range of hardware will again be available makes life easier for a lot of home owners. The Clarion wishes them every success.

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CHRISTMAS SHOP WINDOWS

The competition for the best dressed Christmas shop window or display will be judged on December 23rd. It's to see who will hold the Clarion Cup for the coming year and the judges will be Councillor Paul French, Council Finance Officer Dorothy McBride and the editor of the Clarion.

You'll know who's won by a notice in the window and the trophy on display, but we'll follow that up with a report in February.

Good luck to every shop who takes up the challenge. It's all part of brightening up the town.

NEARING NORMAL

It's good sign when a musical evening sells out a week before the event, but that was the case with the Rock and Blues Night at Clows Top Victory Hall on November 26th. See February's Clarion for a report on that, but I have to confess that I nearly missed by trying to book in late. The ever helpful Dani called in response to my message and asked if I just wanted one ticket. The gig was sold out; she could fit in one person, but had groups waiting to hear if there were any cancellations they could take up.

I've written before about musical events at Victory Hall and I know that if Remi Harris is headlining that it will be an entertaining gig, whatever style of music it features. Sold out early - that sounds like a healthy normal.

BARN STORED LOGS

I was intrigued by the Small Ad offering barn stored logs and knowing what a good source of services those little ads can be, decided to try some for myself. A phone call established that I could buy just a sackful, a modest amount to assess how the wood burned.

Out to Clod Hall on the Tenbury Road, where Mrs Morrison introduced me to Roger, who looks after the 17 acres of the Hall. When he trimmed out some of the trees, Mrs Morrison asked if they could sell them as logs. Indeed they could.

The barn stored emphasis in the advert is because after cutting and splitting down to 12-inch logs, the timber is stored in a dry barn for a year before being sold. Roger knows his timber and the day before we met had been called out to fell two trees at the Live and Let Live in Neen Sollars.

He explained that thorough storing means properly dried logs with a damp content of just ten percent. Kiln dried may be the popular alternative, but if that process is hurried you can find the damp content is as high as twenty percent. You don't have to be a forester to work out which of the two final products will burn more easily. One sack of barn stored oak in the back of the car, I headed for home to further the experiment.

The usual routine to light the stove, kindling with two

Co-op firefighters to get the blaze going and the vents ajar to keep a modest flow of air before the Oak logs were laid on top off the glowing mass.

The burning process was gentle, with no blaze and rapid consumption of the logs. I assumed that the density of the wood was the reason for a slow burn with a good generation of heat. This calculation is guesswork, but the logs seemed to last at least 50 percent longer before they were just embers; certainly longer lasting than any other logs I can recall in a little under 40 years of a wood burning stove. Barn stored good value and giving our a strong warmth? Definitely.

You'll find the Barn Stored Logs small ad on Page 34.

HAPPENING ON HIGH STREET

Tracey's Kreations was closed for a few days in November, causing some worried looks amongst her regular customers. She was there, paintbrush in hand as she installed new shelves and changed the layout of the place to accommodate even more good stuff.

This is now the local outlet for Swift's bread and cakes, they're stocking a good range of cheeses and that nice Welsh

Llaeth Y Llan yoghurt. On November's Farmers' Market day the stock of Swift's bread was sold out by early afternoon. Looks like another success for that friendly little gang of ladies.



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**MUCH HAPPENING
IN TENBURY**

A busy November Saturday evening in Tenbury Wells, with the Christmas lights being switched on and the performance of an adaption of Charles Dickens' 'Christmas Carol' to follow, in the Regal Theatre. It promised too much to ignore.

Parking was easy and not expensive before walking up Teme Street and realising that the place was filling up fast. Somebody with influence was involved in this, as the street was closed to traffic and a growing crowd spread across the full width of the road in front of the Regal Theatre, where the DJ was based.



Teme Street, Tenbury on a Saturday night. A very busy place when it's the Christmas Lights switching-on.

There was a slight disturbance when an artic unit tried to drive through, but he was persuaded to turn around. No easy task in a crowded street. The place was buzzing, with loads of food outlets open and doing well. At the appointed hour the lights came on, an impressive sight from the bridge over the

Teme and through the town. Nice one, Tenbury.

From there into the Regal Theatre, where manager Westley Bone made me welcome and explained that the cast of children from five through to 18 years were in a final rehearsal before the performance. Five year olds playing their parts in front of a live audience, this was quite a revolution.

Westley explained that this was the first public performance by the Regal School of Creative Arts, whose aim is to bring out and nurture the talent of youth. He's theatre manager, the only full employee, backed up by four part-timers and 80 plus volunteers

The students are taught a broad theatrical programme, covering drama, singing and dance, in a weekly three-hour session. For the youngest there is an exception and they face one hour tuition in their subject of choice. Charges are £10.00 for the three-hours and £5.00 for the junior members' one hour sessions. That's quite a considerable bargain in the expensive 21st century.

I was early for the the 7.00 o'clock start and watched as the cast were put through their routines one last time before curtain up. All in the theatre aisles, getting young people used to the atmosphere of the place. There were families coming in and quietly watching; either drawn by their children already in the cast, or maybe to see what this School of Creative Arts had to offer their offspring.

The performance was quite remarkable for such a young cast. You could expect the older students, like the lads playing grumpy old Scrooge and the mild mannered Bob Cratchett, to come over as experienced and competent players, but five year olds who could sing and dance along with the older members was a telling demonstration of the quality of tuition they'd experienced. I was well impressed.



Bob Cratchett and family looking less than happy before the arrival of the reformed Mr Scrooge.

A reflection of the care for the children was the simple statement that the cast's names were not for publication. Quite right too!

This was another side to the friendly theatre that hosted Robert Plant recently. They're working hard to bring people into town and if you book for a show online, they offer you details of how you can get a meal locally. You can see why they succeed.

Regal Theatre 01584 811442
E m a i l :
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Jim Reynolds



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Community Contacts for Clarion Readers

CEMETERY ADMINISTRATOR	Theresa Ray	07703 965 064	theresa.25016@hotmail.co.uk
CLEOBURY COUNTRY CENTRE		01299 272300	In Love Lane, 9 to 5 Mon to Fri.
CLEOBURY DENTAL PRACTICE		01299 271747	www.cleoburydental.co.uk
CLEOBURY CARERS	Michelle	01743 341995	carerssupport@shropshire.gov.uk
CLEOBURY COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES	Katja Jones	07966 080111	Tuesday and Thursday at the Medical Centre
CLEOBURY MORTIMER LIBRARY		01299 272301	Open 9 to 7 Mon, 9 to 5 Tues/Fri and 10 to 1 Sat.
LOCAL POLICE	PC Wayne Strangwood	07773 054 587	wayne.strangwood@westmercia.pnn.police.uk
CLEOBURY MORTIMER GUIDES	Fiona McCallum	07805 737 555	
CLEOBURY MORTIMER SCOUTS	Lowri Hughes		cleoburybeavers@gmail.com
CRIMESTOPPERS		0800 555 111	Free Police contact. Talk in confidence, to report any crime.
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINE		0800 783 1359	Women's Aid, 24 Hour support:
HOME FROM HOSPITAL		01584 878046	Help over the first weeks back home from Age UK
MARKET HALL	Kim	01299 272732	markethall@cleobury.org.uk
MEDICAL CENTRE		01299 270209	Out of surgery hours, use the Shrop Doc Service.
SHROP DOC		111	Service available evenings and weekends
THE MEN'S SHED	Pete Blackburn	07776 243 584	petblack@me.com
THE PHARMACY		01299 270219	Closes for half day on Saturday. Delivers prescriptions
ST ELIZABETH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH	Angela Flowers	01299 270318	Sunday Mass at 9.00am
NIGHTINGALE NURSING FUND	Rosemary Abbiss	01746 718451	
TOWN COUNCIL	Clerk 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		01584 874922	
VOLUNTARY CAR SCHEME		01299 666119	Mandy Smith
WASTE DISPOSAL		0345 678 9007	The contractor is Veolia
WATER SUPPLY EMERGENCIES	Severn Trent	0800 783 4444	
NEWLIFE CHURCH	Pastor E Stirrup	01562 630595	Sunday services at 10.30

Collect the Clarion in Cleobury from: Select and Save Grocery, Londis Store, Cleobury Cafe, The Severn Hospice Shop, Mid Counties Co-op, Purslows, The Library, Swift's Bakery Tea Room and Tracey's Kreation..

Out in Cleobury Country at: Heath Farm Meats, **Bagginswood;** **Clee Hill Stores;** **Clows Top Stores;** The Sun and Slipper, **Mamble;** **Hopton Bank Service Station;** Bennetts End Inn, **Knowbury;** **Ludlow Library;** **Mahorall Cider Farm;** The Colliers Cafe & Shop, **Rock;** The Fighting Cocks, **Stottesdon;** The Duck Inn, **Chorley;** The Live and Let Live, **Neen Sollars;** The Eagle and Serpent, **Kinlet;** Parker Motors, **Ditton Priors.** **Copies are also available from the Parish Churches in:** Cleobury Mortimer, Bayton, Doddington, Hopton Wafers, Milson, Neen Savage and Neen Sollars.

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DEADLINE FOR THE FEBRUARY ISSUE: JANUARY 22nd. WOULD CONTRIBUTORS PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS LAST POSSIBLE DATE TO RECEIVE REPORTS.

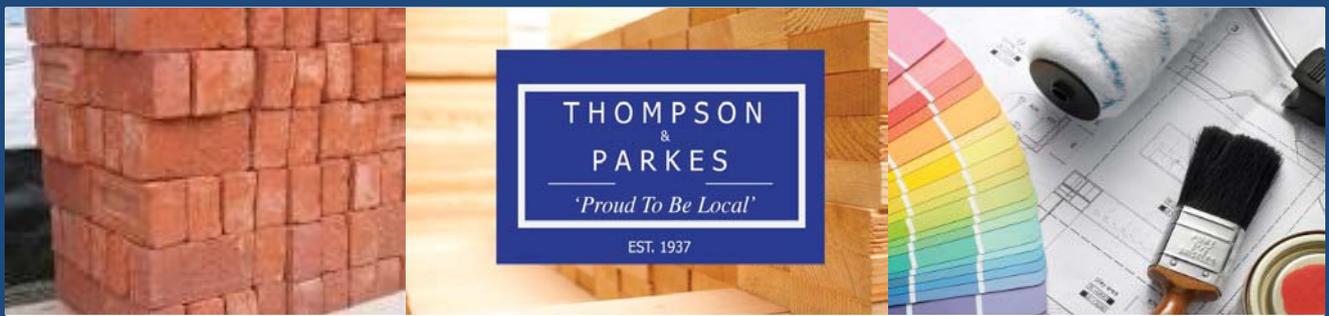
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