

The Cleobury Clarion



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February 2018

WE'RE REALLY SORRY TO TELL YOU THIS

It's a decision that's been postponed several times over the last three years, but it had to come. The cost of advertising in The Cleobury Clarion will rise from April 1st.

No, this is not early notice of an April Fool's joke. The price of paper has been rising in recent times and Linda at Glint Print has absorbed some of that by putting her monthly bill up at a rate that has not reflected the true cost. The same has been done here at Clarion Towers and we have proudly boasted that our prices have not increased since this newsletter was launched back in 2005. But look at the price you paid for a gallon of petrol, a pint of milk or a loaf of bread 13 years ago and you'll see how things have changed.

So our prices will rise by about five percent, rounded to the nearest pound to keep life simple, effective from April 1st. We promise this will not happen very often and that the Clarion will still bring you local news on the first of every month. Not an easy job, but enjoyable.

THE HOPTON CROWN SAVED

Pubs have been closing at a worrying rate for years. Country pubs in particular, where they relied upon people travelling to enjoy the place. The introduction of the Drink-Drive law struck those businesses and the survivors turned to food to save their income.

Gastro pubs do well if they get it right with both quality and price of the food, and The Crown at Hopton has been through highs and lows over the years as food, and latterly service, has varied. The place closed last year and was in the hands of receivers, looking very down and dowdy. Is there a more depressing sight than a pub that doesn't open to invite people in?

But both The Crown and Hopton Wafers have been saved. What will be known as the Hopton Crown is now in the hands of people with a proven track record and a clear plan to bring the place back to popularity and prosperity.

Turn to Page 55 for more information.

FAREWELL, CARROT TOPS

Carrot Tops was the shop that started out as a greengrocer with Sarah Barnsley and drew people into town because it looked so bright and welcoming.

When Sarah sold the business to the zany and colourful Rachel Siddall it got another lift, with its big van announcing to any potential thief "No Carrots Left in this Van Overnight" that made people smile. When others couldn't get supplies because of snowfall, she was in her Shogun and into the Birmingham produce market. In the end Rachel sold it on so that she could spend more time with her daughters and Julie Grimes brought charm and a fresh new country look to the place.

But times change and the arrival of the Co-op supermarket with its long opening hours clearly had an effect. The saddest aspect of the shop closing was just the place locked and no sign to thank customers for their support. Out with a whimper, not a bang. It's a loss to the High Street.



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The Cleobury Clarion, February 2018

Volume Fifteen - Edition Eleven



*Early warning! The Richards Castle Soapbox Cart Derby is coming our way in July.
See Page 17*



*Meet The Write Angle at the Farmers' Market.
See Page 39.*



*Neville Weaver at No 19. Dental technician and band leader, enjoying his work.
See Page 53.*

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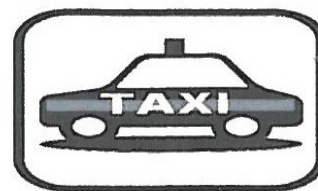
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HOUSE TO LET IN BARRATTS ORCHARD



This is not the actual house in Barratts Orchard, but is typical of the style there.

There is a three bedroom house available to rent in the Barratts Orchard development on Childe Road in Cleobury. It is available to tenants with a local connection, as the specification from Bromford Housing explains:

The property briefly comprises lounge, kitchen, downstairs cloakroom, two double bedrooms, one single bedroom, family bathroom with shower over the bath. All electric. Cleobury Mortimer Primary and Lacon Childe Secondary Schools are within close proximity. There are some bus services but use of a car is desirable.

There is a Section 106 so applicants need to meet at least two of the following circumstances: Their parents were permanently resident in the local area of the applicants birth; the applicant was a permanent resident of the local area for 5 years as a child and attended a local school; they currently live in the local area; they have lived in the local

area for 15 continuous years as an adult; they are currently employed close to the settlement; they have a confirmed offer of permanent full time work in or close to the settlement (within 3km); their parents live in the local area; if over 55, they have a son, daughter, stepson/daughter or son/daughter in law living in the local area or have another form of strong local connection. Photo is of a similar property.

If you're interested in living in this attractive development, with proper parking facilities, talk to Jess Ritchings of Bromford Lettings at 01902 378 630.

CLOWS TOP GARDENING CLUB

February is an unfortunate month, being cold and miserable but luckily only 28 days. However, there are signs of life erupting from the ground with crocus, iris reticulata, snowdrops and cyclamen coum giving splashes of colour all through the garden.

Gardening is one of the few hobbies that are relaxing, enjoyable and very rewarding. Our Club has a very friendly atmosphere and it's a great way of exchanging knowledge, learning new ways of doing things and sharing tips. Non-members are welcome to any monthly meeting. The annual subscriptions are now due for the coming year; membership is £10.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 28th February, "Shelsley Herbs & Flowers"

THOUGHTFUL BITS

Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect.

Mark Twain

Good Friends are like stars. You don't always see them, but you know they're there.

Anon.

I'm suspicious of people who don't like dogs, but I trust a dog who doesn't like a person.

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THE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Members gathered to hear one of our own give a humorous talk entitled "Growing Innovations, we haven't starved yet."

Kit Smith gave a brief history of his career growing crops and produce. Most of his life was spent in Kent where he went to the Wyre College and studied agriculture management. He spent ten years managing an arable farm producing wheat, barley, peas, sprouts and potatoes, always developing ways of obtaining the best crops. He then moved on to supplying Sainsburys' with packet vegetables for a further twenty years; quite challenging keeping up with demands of the firm and the purchasers.

Next came setting up a garden centre. Hard work, but he and his wife found contact with customers more rewarding. He also found time to become involved with local politics.

In food production you are always looking to improve your crops. Searching for the best varieties, reducing pests and the best fertilizer. This is where innovation comes in, seed producers look to cross differing strains to provide us with greater harvests. You consider when to plant, single or double rows, you aim for the plants to be at their best when we have the best sunlight for photosynthesis, hence a bigger crop. This is just one example; very thought provoking. If we are to continue being able to feed our growing population, seed and food producers have to continually develop better ways of producing greater amounts of food.

Our next meeting at the Methodist Hall is on February 12th, when we will find out how to create a year round garden. All visitors welcome.

Liz Smurthwaite

CHARITIES BOOSTED BY REBOOTED

The Booton family's Rebooted group would like to thank everyone who joined them for the Bootbash at the Parish Hall on New Year's Eve.

A grand total of £1500 was raised for Stand Up To Cancer and the First Responders. Many thanks also to everyone who donated such generous raffle prizes.

Di Edwards

NOT SO SMART

When I was buying my electricity from E.D.F. they put in a smart meter. This was fine and worked well. Last July I changed to E-ON and after a while noticed erratic billing. When eventually I was able to contact them I discovered my smart meter was no good, as all the electricity suppliers read smart meters on a different wave band, a thing I wasn't told when I changed. So now the house device is no good to me. What a waste. I now have to read the meter at the input meter just as I did before the smart meter installation. So it is all a big waste of time and a waste of money. How crazy is this world?

Reg Chapman

JOHN MORGAN

Jain and family would like to thank all for their messages of sympathy and for their attendance at the church service.

On leaving school, John worked at Onions' Bakehouse until his call-up to the RAF, where he served for eight years.

On leaving the RAF, John went to work at Whittles's Coaches, where he stayed for 25 years until forced to retire through ill health.

He was also a past chairman of the Rock and District Royal British Legion. Grateful thanks go to Sovereign Care and Cleobury Medical Centre.

Jain Morgan

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ANIMAL FARM AT LACON CHILDE SCHOOL

Lacon Childe does have a very good reputation for the standard of its dramatic productions. This year they tackle a demanding play that has been adapted as a musical and it will be interesting to see how well the students cope with a new challenge. Head of Drama Arthur Short writes:

Our production for 2018 is 'Animal Farm' by George Orwell, adapted for the stage as a musical play by Peter Hall during his time as artistic director of The National Theatre, with lyrics by Adrian Mitchell and music by Richard Peaslee.

George Orwell's allegorical tale recasts the characters of the Russian Revolution of October 1917 as animals on an English farm. The downtrodden beasts of Manor Farm drive off the farmer and run things for themselves with the golden rule "All animals are equal". Too soon, however, the pigs, who consider themselves superior in intelligence, succumb to the temptations of privilege and power.

Animal Farm has something to say to all generations about what may happen if we fail to hold our leaders to account.

Performances will be at Lacon Childe School on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, March 21st to 23rd, starting at 7.30pm.

Tickets are available from the school - telephone CM 270312 -and cost £6.00 for adults, £5.00 for concessions and £20.00 for a family of four. That's great value for a well produced classic.

NEW ARCHERY COURSE

Cleobury Country Archers will be running a beginners' course at the Sports Hall, starting on Saturday the 24th of this month and continuing over the first two weekends in March. The move

to a Saturday morning, from 10.30 to 12.30, is to make the chance to try this skilled sport available to as many people as possible.

The charge is £30, which works out at just £5.00 an hour. That's great value with a coach like Steve Lancaster, who will be running the course; Steve is ranked Number Three in the UK Shooting Barebow and 2017 Masters Champion.

Contact the club on cleoburycountryarchers@gmail.com, dial 0788 2029 560 or via Facebook@cleoburyarchers

THE ALPHA COURSE

Barbara Martin writes:

This is a chance to explore the meaning of life in this complex world in which we live. To help us find answers about the Christian faith, ourselves, why we are here in a safe and friendly environment with others.

The Alpha Course begins on February 21st with an evening get together in Market Hall, at 6.45pm. This includes a meal, followed by an explanatory DVD about it, meeting each other. The course is free, informal and it's not academic, thank goodness.

There is no pressure or obligation attached to the get together evening and there will be a warm welcome for all.

The course itself begins on Wednesday February 28th at 7.00 pm. and will run weekly until April. The Cleobury venue starting week one will be announced at the introductory meal.

If you have any enquiries, please contact Rector Ashley Buck on 01299 272916 or me on 01299 489705.

Barbara Martin



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NEEN SAVAGE W.I.

Unfortunately our December meeting was cancelled due to the icy conditions so it was lovely to meet up again in January. Sandra welcomed everyone back and outlined a busy and varied programme planned for 2018. Highlights will be hosting the SFWI Spring Ramble on 12th May and our visit to Madresfield Court in June.

It was agreed that our charity of the year would be Pricklebums Hedgehog Rescue following the inspirational talk given by Ailie Hill in October. We will also be holding a fundraising event in August to support Rupert's Revenge. We were very pleased to welcome Neen Savage resident and midwife Sara Pain as our speaker and she gave a fascinating talk about her life as a midwife at Worcester Hospital. It was interesting to hear how little some things have changed and that many things come full circle, falling in and out of fashion.

Our next meeting is on February 14th, when Mr Peter Roper will talk on the enigmatic topic of What Planet are you from? Anyone interested in joining is welcome to come along to a meeting, held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at Neen Savage Parish Hall at 7.30pm or contact our President, Sandra Dodd on 271563.

Catherine Evans

THE CREATIVE WRITING GROUP

Just three of us met on January 8th and had a lovely time swapping literary efforts. A conversation sparked by Doris's story about a local Parish Hall and the many groups that used it led us on to thinking about Maeve Binchy's use of places or characters to link separate stories. Like a series of short stories that all feature the same oak tree. Or minor characters in one novel who then

become the subject of a subsequent book. In film terms, the linked characters in 'Love Actually'.

Finding this an interesting notion, we decided to see if the group could produce a series of stories linked by a place as our homework for next time. After a bit of debate, we decided to make the place The Wells. Stories can be set in any time or era but should not use real, or at any rate, recognisable, people. The three optional trigger words for ideas are success, bang and cat. We have no idea if this will produce something interesting or be a complete disaster!

So, in a nutshell, 'The Wells, success, bang and cat'.

Gill Guest

AND A WRITING REQUEST

Does any Clarion reader have a typewriter gathering dust and looking for a home? A member of the Writing Group is struggling with a pen and does not have access to a computer nor the experience to use one effectively. So the answer seems to be a manual typewriter - not an electric one, please - that should fit the writer's needs. If you can help, please contact Jim Reynolds on CM 270642 and he will arrange a trial run.

BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ARE COMING SOON

The Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra will be performing in St. Mary's Church Cleobury Mortimer on Sunday evening 18th March.

The programme will be: Dvorak - Slavonic Dances (Selection); Prokofiev - Violin Concerto No 2 in G minor (Zoe Beyers - Violin); Tchaikovsky - Symphony No 5 in E minor

Tickets £17, include programme details and a drink during the interval. On sale from early February, from 01584 891351.



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THE READING GROUP

'Life Class' by Pat Barker:

A real mix of opinions from our group about this book, the first part of a trilogy. It was alternatively described as a comfortable or easy read, miserable, informative, excellent and 'glad to have finished it'. In two parts, the story first covered a group of artists studying at the Slade, their art, loves and lives. The morality of the time, early 1914, was queried as they were quite bohemian. Some students were utterly devoted to their work and this is recognised throughout the story. The main characters were Paul, Elinor and Kit. Several readers particularly disliked Elinor, others just found the characters had little impact.

The second half was set in France, where Paul was helping at a poorly equipped medical facility in the early days of WW1. The horror of this was vividly portrayed, in contrast to what was taking place in England where some, including Elinor, just wanted life to go on as usual. Most agreed the story had a weak ending and it didn't encourage them to seek out a second book. We probably wouldn't recommend 'Life Class' but if anyone has read it, what did you think?

We next read 'Jane Eyre', by Charlotte Brontë, a classic from 1847 and meet on February 19th for our discussion. Questions or comments to me on CM 271754.

Deana Kimber

CLEOBURY W.I.

All members were pleased with their unusual glitter thread cards and inspiration from Glenys McLaren, such talent locally! It was a busy evening as we also tasted the main course entries for the Shopshire Federation WI centenary recipe book and chose Liz Smurthwaite's chicken casserole. Votes were in for which resolution

should go through to the National AGM, plans made for the Winter Warmer lunch and invitations sent to previous members for our 95th birthday tea on February 16th. We are really looking forward to reminiscing with past and present WI members, so anyone who has not yet had an invitation, please get in touch.

Leigh Griffiths will tell us about 'history under the soil' discovered while metal detecting at the Market Hall, 7.30pm on Tuesday 13th February, find out more on Facebook or judysant10@gmail.com

Judy Sant

FROM THE BANDROOM

Although we don't have any engagements booked during the first three months of the year, the band are busy rehearsing for the Midlands Area Contest at Bedworth on March 10th

We have moved up to the third section and so the piece is technically more difficult. The designated piece for all bands to play is called Napoleon on the Alps, an unusual title but a very impressive piece of music and if of interest to anyone, we have put a soundtrack onto our website - www.cmcb.co.uk.

The wintry weather in December meant that unfortunately we missed out on some vital fundraising whilst carol playing. We will bring our Spring concert slightly forward to 14th April this year - more details to follow.

We then hope to fit in another concert during the summer in between bandstand engagements; our calendar is starting to fill up nicely for 2018.

If you would like to book the band for any occasion, please get in touch with me on 01299270262. We are very adaptable and can accommodate most requests.

Katie Griffiths



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Guest Services and Team Member/ Reception Cover	To contact user groups prior to arrival, discuss requirements and liaise with other departments. Meeting group leaders on arrival, coOrdinate welcome talks. Ensure smooth operation of guests programmes	Apply to: Karen Anderson—01299 271217 karenander- son@pioneercentre.org.uk for application form.



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SPEEDING FINES

Few subjects seem to get people's tempers up as much as the matter of speeding tickets and the fines that normally accompany them. The alternative of course is a Speeding Awareness Course, which will also cost you money. There's no arguing these days, it seems; the camera clocks you and unless you can afford a good lawyer you pay up and watch the signs more closely.

The Petrol Prices website issued some interesting details recently, showing the police force that issues the most tickets. In truth it's the one reporting the most, because not every force responded to a request for details. It was Yorkshire who topped the poll, with 142,610 tickets issued in 2017, more than double second placed Surrey with 62,623. The City of London force had the lowest figure with just 3107, but the chances to put your foot down are a bit limited in that small, congested patch. Yorkshire's M18 is much more inviting.

North Wales, which had a reputation a few years back for hitting drivers with a fine for the slightest misdemeanour, was in a modest fifth place with 57,224 tickets. So why was Yorkshire so ready to issue those little bits of paper that help to swell the constabulary's coffers? There might be a hint in a conversation I overheard some years ago, when a friend was negotiating with a well known Yorkshire motorcycle racer over how much he'd pay him to ride his machine in the Isle of Man TT. "Do you know what they say a Yorkshireman is?" he asked. "It's a Scotsman with the generosity taken out!" My apologies to all my Yorkshire and Scottish friends; I know that's not true and hope you'll renew my visa next time I drive north. What I will not do is not hurry through Yorkshire, it sounds too much like an expensive way of travelling.

RICHARDS CASTLE SOAP BOX DERBY IS BACK



The spectacle of Richards Castle Soap Box Derby will be back this summer, with soap box carts racing down Hanway Common on Sunday July 8th. Having raised over £100,000.00 for local charities, the event is back to raise even more!

If you are a budding racer and fancy having a go, entries forms are now online for senior and junior teams (£30 to enter) and this year if your team raises over £100.00 we will refund your entry! Take a look at the website for video footage and a copy of the rules and regs to guide you in building your soapbox (www.richardscastlesoapbox.co.uk). "Our event has always been about money going to local causes. Since we started back in 2004 funds have been distributed to over 50 different charities and local causes, taking the grand total of donations to £103,770.00" commented Arabella Salwey, Soap Box Treasurer.

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The most common skin conditions in pets are atopic dermatitis, flea allergic dermatitis and ear disease. The former two are often referred to as allergies, but over 70 percent of cases of ear disease are also secondary to an atopic dermatitis.

Atopic dermatitis is an inherited disease, characterised by itchiness and a reddening of the skin. The most commonly affected parts of the body include the paws, the underside of the belly and the ears. Fortunately, there is now a medication available that is just as effective as steroids for the treatment of atopic dermatitis, but does not cause any side effects.

Flea allergic dermatitis is the most common skin disease in cats, causing itchiness as well as hair loss and scabs. This condition can be

controlled with effective ectoparasite treatments, provided reinfestation can be prevented. This may necessitate the treatment of others pets and the affected pet's home.

Ear disease is more often seen in dogs than cats, and results in persistent head shaking, reddening of the skin of the outer ear, an acidic odour and often severe pain. Primary factors causing ear disease are bacteria, yeasts, ectoparasites, foreign bodies and trauma. If treatment is started early, most cases of ear disease can be cured with ear drops, but management of an underlying atopic dermatitis and regular ear cleaning may also be required. Severe chronic cases of ear disease can be successfully cured by means of surgery.

If you suspect your pet might be suffering from a skin condition, then contact your local Severn Edge Veterinary branch.

Dr Frithjof Praetsch BSc MRCVS



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Cleobury Mortimer Town Council



OUR NEW TOWN CREST

This is the logo that will head all official town correspondence and notices in future, a clear statement that Cleobury Mortimer is a town and not a mere parish. It was selected from a number of styles submitted by designer John Renfrew and does say who we are without wasting words and space. Business like, in fact.

THE SECOND PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

This will be located near the new Co-operative supermarket, after consultation with a range of local interests and professional opinions. It is due to be given final approval at the Town Council's meeting this month or next and will then be put into the County Council's programme of work for the 2018-19 year.

It will do more than help shoppers cross the road, as there are a number of children needing to safely cross the road with their parents on the way to our two schools.

BE WARNED - CCTV WORKS

The installation of CCTV cameras seems to have got some people worried. One of them decided to vandalise the wiring and support structure at one point, but the camera did its job and showed who did it. Not a clever move.

The guilty party was not taken to court, but was given a second chance after a police interview. They are doing voluntary work and are lucky that the prank did not mean a criminal record.

COUNTY LEADER CALLS

Peter Nutting, Leader of Shropshire Council, visited the town in January and attended that evening's Council meeting. He didn't bring much good news, with a warning that more cuts from central government are coming, which means that our Council Tax will rise by 5.9 percent for the 2018-19 financial year.

The Town Council has decided to increase their income by a modest 2.0 percent, which keeps it under the current inflation level.

THE TALBOT YARD CAR PARK

This major parking area for the town is due to be refurbished once the vital work to cure water leaks in the Dental Practice has been completed. Once that is finished the park will be resurfaced, four street lights will be installed and the marking refreshed.

THE TOWN DEFIBRILLATOR

This is currently located in the Kings Arms, a site chosen because it had the longest opening hours of any town centre business at that time. But it meant the potential life saver was not available 24 hours a day.

So it will be moved into a brightly coloured container on the front wall of the pub, where we understand it can be opened with a phone call to a central control, whatever the time of the need to use the unit.

STREET LIGHTS UPGRADE

Some of the town's street lights are showing their age and their concrete uprights are not as safe as when they were new. So there is a programme to change 22 Town Council-owned lights to metal posts with LED lighting, which will make the operating cost lower. To spread the cost, the programme will take two or three years to complete.

This does not include the lights on the main street, which are the responsibility of the County Council.

NEW COUNCILLORS TO BE CO-OPTED

There are two vacancies for Town Councillors and three candidates have applied for the posts. Such a strong response is a sign that the work of the Council is seen as a positive force. The decision on who will be co-opted will be taken at either this month's Council meeting, subject to interviews being completed in time, or in March. Good luck to all candidates and watch this space for news of those selected.

THANK YOU

The Christmas Lights brought many good comments. Thanks to the volunteers who put them up, to Bill White Nurseries for the donation of the trees and Alan Guest Mowing Services. Our new infrastructure worked well, thanks to Prysmian Cables who installed it and helped with the putting up and taking down.

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THE SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB

The New Year has seen the installation of CCTV in the Club. The system was purchased with the proceeds of the Tapas Night held in September, and will contribute towards the safety and security of Club users and staff alike.

The Six Nations Rugby begins on Saturday, February 3rd, when Wales v Scotland gets proceedings underway at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff. The Club will be open for this and all other matches on 4th, 10th, 11th, 23rd and 24th February. Come and enjoy watching some great rugby in a convivial atmosphere, and perhaps partake of a sample of our guest beer!

Sunday, March 4th sees our annual Big Quiz take place, with all proceeds going to a local charity. This year's beneficiary will be Cleobury Stroke Support Group, still in its infancy, so monies raised will go towards helping with costs to establish them as a group. The cost of entering is £15 per team, with a maximum of 6 persons in a team, and you can register your team at 7pm for a 7.30pm start time. Justin Parker is our Quizmaster once again, who injects the evening with his usual good humour. Anyone who has entered this quiz in the past will tell you that the questions and categories are decidedly offbeat, but nonetheless very entertaining!

As usual, for any further information or to make a Club booking, please contact our Club Steward, Gemma Canty on 01299 271448, or via our Facebook Page.

Glenys Turpin

HAPPENING ON THE HILL

Doddington Church Event-a-Month begins:

Our programme of events each month begins on 17th February with "Drop in for Pancakes" at

Doddington Village Hall at 12.00 noon. Do make a special journey or drop in as you are passing by and choose your favourite filling.

Thank you to all who completed and returned our Community Survey; the PCC are now looking at the responses, and working on the next steps. Meanwhile, start gathering your jumble for our sale on 17th March at 2.30pm.

A MESSAGE FROM SIMPLY FRESH

I would like to apologise to all my customers for not being able to provide good offers over the Christmas and New Year period, due to Palmer and Harvey our supplier closing.

But I am pleased to share the news with our customers that we have signed up with new supplier NISA (Heritage). From now NISA is going to be our new supplier. and hopefully we will be running even better offers than before. I will look forward to seeing all my customers in the shop. Many thanks.

Cary, Simply Fresh, Talbot Yard

THE BUTTON OAK FETE

We are holding The Button Oak Fete on August 4th between 12.00 noon & 6.00pm. Currently we have a number of stalls which we need stall holders to fill. The cost is £7 per stall and the size will be 3 metres x 3 metres.

We also need volunteers to help make sure all runs smoothly on the day. If you wish to get involved please contact The Button Oak Inn on 01299 400248 or email enquiries@buttonoakinn.co.uk

Our next meeting is on February 19th at 8.00 pm
Hope to hear from you soon.

Deborah Dunning



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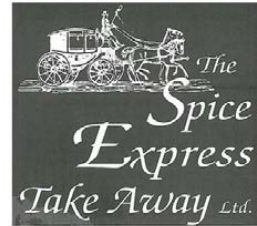


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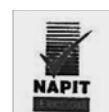
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Return to the backbenches

As many readers will have seen, last month I left my position as Minister of State for Health, as part of the Prime Minister's reshuffle.

It was a tremendous honour to serve in Government since 2010 – first as a Government Whip until 2012, followed by Minister for Defence Procurement until 2016, and then as Minister of State for Health for the past 18 months.

I have been heartened to receive so many kind words from constituents about my time in office. Serving as a Minister is a remarkable experience for any MP. It provides an opportunity to effect real change on a national scale, while sharing responsibility for the government's work and helping deliver reform to improve people's lives. It requires commitment and energy, and at times can be frustrating when the system proves slow to turn – but when you succeed in making changes you know it can make a real difference.

For me, personal highlights include being able to undertake work to enable the launch of our new aircraft carrier, HMS Queen Elizabeth – whose commissioning ceremony I attended just before Christmas – and putting in place more routes into nursing, so more people can achieve their dream of becoming an NHS nurse.

I am proud of the role I was able to play in working for both David Cameron and Theresa May as Prime Ministers, and their Secretaries of State, in seeking to make Britain a fairer country with opportunity for all. I had the good fortune to work with some talented Ministers, outstanding civil servants and dedicated NHS staff and Armed Forces personnel, whom I

would like to thank for their stalwart support in both the Department of Health and Ministry of Defence.

I have now returned to the backbenches, somewhat surprised by the sense of liberation I feel personally, but also with optimism for the future. My main purpose since first elected in 2005 has been to serve the people of South Shropshire, and my determination to do so is unchanged.

I now have greater control of my own diary, and therefore more time, as well as the ability to speak on any topic on the floor of the House of Commons – which Government Whips cannot do at all, and Ministers only on their area of responsibility. This should allow me to be more visible in fighting our corner more directly. Indeed, at my first opportunity from the backbenches on the day after I left the Government, I was able to use my new found freedom in the House to raise the importance of our community hospitals in South Shropshire.

I shall continue to support the Government's work to deliver Brexit alongside sound economic policies and important reforms that benefit us here in South Shropshire. The wider reshuffle has injected fresh talent into the Government and Conservative Party. I look forward to seeing how they continue the vital work of improving the quality of life for all of us.

As ever, I am always be happy to take up cases on behalf of constituents. So please do feel free to email me at philip.dunne.mp@parliament.uk to raise any issues or concerns.

Philip Dunne

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Words on Well Being

April Boardman of The Well Being offers advice in a new monthly column.

At this time of year we see lambs in the fields springing into life, so I thought I would write about pregnancy. Hopefully if you are pregnant you are looking after your health, have listened to your midwife and your friends' experiences of childbirth and read books or internet searched the subject. You may have chosen home or hospital for the birth and who you want there to support you at the birth.

You may have some anxieties about childbirth, most women want a 'natural childbirth', but what does that mean? The probability is that most women want as pain free a birth as possible.

Well, childbirth does have an element of pain, it is referred to as 'labour' after all but if we can reduce anxiety we also reduce the level of pain experienced. Maybe this is your first pregnancy and you want to overcome your anxieties or maybe you have given birth before and it has left you feeling fearful this time around?

Relaxation and hypnotherapy can help you to manage your anxiety and allow you to take control of your experience. Hypnosis teaches you how to take yourself into a calm and relaxed state of mind, so lessening your pain and aiding the delivery of your baby. Many women have benefited from hypnosis for child birth, finding that they managed to have a much easier delivery. Women were made to bear children and child birth is a natural process but sometimes we do need a little help and there is no shame in that. Even if you can't afford hypnotherapy there is much you can do to help yourself. It's good to learn to relax in the early months, there are some good apps and don't forget Pregnancy Massage and Reiki Healing are also excellent for easing

stress and aches and helping to get your body ready for the big event.

Lower back pain can be an issue and some women find walking very uncomfortable in the latter stages of pregnancy as the child gets lower in the pelvic cavity, you can ask your health professional about a special support to wear if this is the case. It may be hard to get comfortable in bed, so side lying with a pillow between your knees can be a more comfortable position, as it helps to take the strain out of your back. After the first trimester of pregnancy it is usually safe to have massage; a good therapist will always do a full health history prior to treating you to make sure. A pregnancy massage is usually performed with you side lying and lying on your back. At The Well Being I use something called a Comfy Client Cushion which helps support an expectant mother in comfort during treatment. It's bliss.

Make sure you eat healthily, drink 6-8 glasses of water a day and get gentle exercise and rest. Put your feet up when you can to aid lymph flow and reduce swollen ankles. You can also gently massage your tummy and nipples with unscented oil or balm, to help reduce stretch marks and to prepare your breasts for breastfeeding. Any creams or balms you use must be safe for baby when feeding and coconut oil is a good choice or a camomile balm, which is also safe for babies to ingest and is also very healing for chaffed skin. Always read the labels and check with your midwife if you are unsure.

During labour Clary sage oil and lavender in a base oil rubbed on your back can be helpful to ease muscles and relax you; get your aromatherapist to make some up for you.

Enjoy your pregnancy, it's a very special time.

April Boardman



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THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN MEETING

There was an impressively strong response to this chance for everyone to have a say in what they wanted for the town in the future, with 61 people coming to the Parish Hall after an effective publicity campaign. Councillor John Bodenham, who has done a lot of work to prepare the way for this discussion, opened the evening by explaining that the town council wanted to listen and consider, then introduced Mark Greaves of the Saint Mary's Youth Project. Mark spoke briefly about his vision of building support for the whole community, with a recognised hub where people could share ideas and help one another.

Mark then handed the meeting over to Andrea Pellingham, an American trained consultant who is currently working for Shropshire Council. She explained her brief, saying how hard it had been to reach young people and get their views, so she was pleased to see youth represented and later heard. She emphasised that the town's plan should add to or complement the county plan if it was to be listened to. Asked how long it would take for ideas expressed here to become reality, she guessed it would be 12 to 18 months before there was a referendum for us to vote for or reject.

She asked for the strengths of the community and compiling the list was the longest part of the evening. Andrea's wrist was probably aching by the time it was finished and she was visibly impressed by the number of good things the town has to offer.

Perceived weaknesses inevitably meant the buses and a long list of problems. A road system that does not encourage industrial development was mentioned, as was congestion in the High Street and

thoughtless parking.

Next question: What opportunities are there for the town to develop? A popular response was the need for a new restaurant, but not an Indian or similar. The need for employment was an obvious choice, as it's been seen as both a problem and a missed opportunity for a long time.

And what about threats? Not much response, though crossing the High Street was mentioned. With a second pedestrian crossing in development, that did not make it onto the list.

Andrea impressed with her willingness to listen and to explain why some ideas would clash with established County policy and so would not be put forward.

And a final comment from Jorge:



HOW SAD CAN YOU GET?

I've only met Emma Greenway once, several years ago when she and her husband moved into the High Street and she was enthusing about the town and the wonderful Mawley Milk she could buy. So it was sad to hear from her because some low life has superglued the electric gate on the Eagle Lane access to their back garden. How very clever!

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The February Clarion Social Calendar

Part One

Date	Time	Details	Contact	Telephone
Thu 1st		GREEN GARDEN WASTE BINS EMPTIED TODAY		
	10.30	Rock Pathfinders meet at Six Ashes car park, Bridgnorth road PAGE 43		
	11.00	Sing, Laugh, Breather with Kate Jones in the Market Hall. All welcome		
Sat 3rd	08.00	Sale of Household Goods at Knowle Sports Ground, Clee Hill. Great place for bargains.	Audrey	01584 890644
		First of the Six Nations Rugby series on screen at the Sports & Social Club PG 23		
Sun 4th	10.00	The Parish Walk starts at the Parish Church and follows the Snowdrop Walk to Lower Forge. All welcome, stout footwear recommended		
Mon 7th	1900	Cleobury Mortimer Town Council meet at Cleobury Country Centre, Love Lane		
Thu 8th		BLACK WHEELIE BINS & RECYCLE BOXES EMPTIED TODAY		
	11.00	Sing, Laugh, Breather with Kate Jones in the Market Hall. All welcome		
	20.00	The Borders Classic Bike Club meet at the Blount Arms		
Sun 11th	19.30	The Carrivick Sisters entertain at Clows Top Victory Hall, PAGE 43		
Mon 12th	18.30	The Creative Writing Group meet in the Library, Love lane, PAGE 11		
	19.30	The Horticultural Society meet in the Methodist Hall		
Tues 13th	19.30	Cleobury Mortimer WI meet at the Market Hall, PAGE 13		
	19.30	The Border Counties historic Commercial Vehicle Club meets at the Ludlow Brewing Company, see and hear about pre-war Leyland lorries		
Weds 14th	10.00	Cleobury CoCo Coffee morning in the Market Hall, Church Street.		
	19.30	Neen Savage WI meet at Neen Savage Village Hall, PAGE 11	Sandra Dodd	01299 271563

You could call the Border Counties Historic Commercial Vehicle Club the Heavy Metal Brigade of the transport world. They gather at the Ludlow Brewing Company, conveniently near the railway station, and serve sandwiches to go with the fine ales served there. All very friendly and polite, they are mainly men still involved with transport who grew up driving what are now regarded as collectors' vehicles. This month's meeting is all about Pre 1939 Leyland lorries and you can expect some good historic photos to go along with the stories of those days before motorways and the hard work of hauling a big load up country.



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Date	Time	Details	Contact	Telephone
Thurs 15 th	11.00	Sing, laugh, breathe at the Market Hall		
	19.00	The Soroptimists meet at La Brasserie, Kidderminster, PAGE 43		
Fri 16 th		Happy 95 th Birthday to Cleobury WI members past and present welcome.	Judy Sant	01299 270983
Sat 17 th	09.30	Cleobury Country Farmers Market in the Parish Church.	Clare Todd	01299 272300
	12.00	Drop in for Pancakes at Doddington Village Hall, PAGE 23		
	19.30	Flicks in the Sticks presents "The Girl on the Train" parish Hall, PAGE 48		
Mon 19 th	19.30	The Reading Group meet at the Library, Love Lane, PAGE 13		
	20.00	Button oak Fete Meeting at the Button Oak Inn, PAGE 23		
Weds. 21 st	19.00	Alpha Course Introductory evening, Market Hall, PAGE 9		
Thurs. 22 nd		BLACK WHEELIE BINS & RECYCLE BOXES EMPTIED TODAY		
	11.00	Sing, laugh, breathe at the Market Hall		
Fri 23 rd	19.00	Fun & Games for the Family, Baxter Church Rooms, Kidderminster, PAGE 43		
Sat 24 th	10.30	Cleobury Country Archers have a beginner's course, Sports centre, PAGE 9		
Mon. 26 th	19.30	The Half Dead Poets Society meet in the Library, Love Lane	Jim	01299 270642
Weds. 28 th	10.00	Cleobury CoCo Coffee Morning, Market Hall		
	19.00	Alpha Course begins, venue to be advised, PAGE 9		
		And looking ahead to March.....		
Thurs. 1 st		GREEN GARDEN WASTE BIN EMPTIED TODAY		

Cleobury Mortimer W.I. is quite a veteran of that national movement, with its 95th birthday celebrated on the 16th as they invite members old and new to gather and celebrate. Judy Sant on 01299 270983 can tell you more.

Doddington Church have an 'Event a Month' programme planned for 2018, the first one being a Drop In For Pancakes on the 17th. Which means you have somewhere to go after you've been to the Farmers' Market in Cleobury. It does sound like a good idea - choose your favourite filling and enjoy the pancake before you head for home.

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WANTED - LOCAL KNOWLEDGE FOR A TREASURE HUNT

Caroline Lane explains:

The Friends of Cleobury Primary School would like to organise a fundraising event in the form of a treasure hunt by way of an Easter egg hunt. It is to be a series of questions that families will have to scour the town for answers to earn their Easter eggs.

We are looking to do one set of questions aimed at children, but also wondered if a set of cryptic questions might make it enjoyable for parents/ grandparents/ friends to join in. That's where we need help: are there any crossword enthusiasts/ town historians, that might be happy to work with us and indeed enjoy the challenge of putting the questions sets together?

Dates and details are to be confirmed, but if there are any willing volunteers please can they c o n t a c t m e a t t h e friends@cleoburymortimer.shropshire.sch.uk email address.

If any volunteers do not have email available, the school number is 01299 270313.

WHAT A KIND IDEA

Jenny Vanderhook is well known as the driving force behind the Christmas Shoe Boxes that are decorated, filled with gifts and sent to needy children in various countries. It's a measure of the success of the idea that the area now sends over 1,000 boxes every year.

To acknowledge the help she has received from so many volunteers, Jenny is organising a 'Thank You Party' on March 3rd. The volunteers bring their contributions to the supper and the bar and can expect a friendly atmosphere. Admission by invitation only, of course.

KINLET PRIMARY GET A 'GOOD' RATING AGAIN.

Most schools get an Ofsted inspection at intervals, to check that they are measuring up to the standards set by the Ministry of Education. But if your school is a Church of England institution, it's the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Report that rates you. And they look very closely at the standards observed in the teaching of religious belief and the way this is practised in day to day life.

Kinlet had their latest inspection on December 8th and once again were rated 'Good'. There was praise for the communication between head teacher Anita Raymond and her team with the parents and the governing body.

It's a detailed document, available for parents current and prospective to examine. The school's stated mission is that the children should 'love to learn and learn to love'. Something the rest of the world could learn from.

WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM YOUR PHARMACY?

Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group are asking people to say what they want from their local pharmacy, with a download available from <http://www.shropshireccg.nhs.uk/newsevents/help-shape-the-future-of-pharmaceutical-services-in-shropshire/>

You'll gather they don't do brevity, but it is a useful way of establishing local needs.

As not every Clarion reader uses a computer, we have asked if there will be printed versions you can collect from our pharmacy. There were none there when we went to press. Hope we can tell you more in the next issue.

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A column of black smoke hanging over Bloxwich, a bus stop destroyed, the local Primary School evacuated... A terrorist attack?. No, just another Diamond bus contributing to Global Warming. Apparently caused by 'An electrical fault' which is probably true as the electrics would be faulty having melted in the blaze... Luckily everyone on board got off safely including one passenger with limited mobility. True, this was a different make and model to the other three which have suffered the same fate but they all had one thing in common – the name 'Diamond' in big letters on the sides.

Perhaps Diamond drivers should give an airline style safety briefing to boarding passengers. I can picture it now : 'Welcome aboard this Diamond trip. There will be no on board catering service which is probably a blessing given the cleanliness of the vehicle. In case of fire please use the nearest emergency exit... Don't ask me where they are as this is my first day but no doubt you will find them when - sorry - if, the need arises. I hope you will enjoy your trip with us today (although you probably won't)'. Readers should note that I have translated from the original broken English/Serbo Croat/Ukrainian (insert any other Eastern European language here) for the sake of clarity.

The curse of the 'Hopton Triangle' has struck again with yet another breakdown causing tailbacks towards Doddington and at least one near miss with cars braking hard as they came upon the unexpected queue. Apparently at one point there were no fewer than FIVE police vehicles in attendance and my correspondent expressed surprise that West Mercia Police owned that many as we rarely see even one. When the stricken vehicle was eventually towed away, the road surface had been well lubricated as Diamond passengers will need to be if this goes on...

Thick snow understandably bought a halt to services for a couple of days before Christmas but thin snow after Boxing Day had the same effect

for no apparent reason. Passengers waiting for the Ludlow bus were told that the service would not be operating due to the road conditions before the door was slammed shut and the bus returned to Kiddy having picked up on the opposite side of the road. I drove to Ludlow at about the same time with hardly a sign of snow or slush so there wasn't a problem. When those same passengers came to return from Kiddy later, they were told there was no bus due to the conditions and that they should get a taxi(!) This was despite the day having been sunny with no sign of further snow. After a 'Full and Frank' discussion, the service was eventually operated and the passengers got home. Only Diamond... On one trip to Worcester, a passenger noted not one but two breakdowns. Given the number of these still occurring, I wonder if they are all coming out in sympathy.

One dark evening, a resident came across two Diamond mechanics attempting to resuscitate a broken bus by the Medical Centre whilst turning the air (very) blue with descriptions of their colleagues at Kidderminster. They had attached a canister to a socket on the vehicle and appeared to be waiting for something to happen. They were still waiting 20 minutes later – were they trying to pump it up?

The Leader of Shropshire Council, Peter Nutting, attended the Cleobury Town Council meeting on the 8th of January and expressed surprise that the 2L service was so infrequent (!). He said that whenever he attended meetings along the 2L route, there were complaints about the service so we didn't disappoint him on this occasion... He said he would take our comments back with him so we shall see if this makes any difference.

As far as Diamond are concerned, I can only repeat the immortal words of the late Terry-Thomas 'You are a shower, an absolute shower!'

Steve Todd

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ON THE MARKET



Edward Humphries of The Write Angle, with a mighty impressive array of pens.

"It's not a business, just a hobby," insists Edward Humphries as he stands beside a display of his stylish 'Write Angle' pens. You'll not find any others like these, made in his garage as a way of relaxing and using offcuts of rare woods or colourful blends of acrylics.

He has a gentle sense of humour that comes through when he's describing the types of wood used, holding one pen up: "There's no other wood like this. It's from an offcuts left over by the chap who was building my new staircase." And very warm looking and nicely finished that staircase must be, if this remnant is any reflection of what he's had made.

There's a lot of work in every piece he makes, up to an hour's time in some cases. He starts with a small piece of whatever material he's using, drills through the centre and inserts a brass tube before he mounts it in his lathe to turn it down to size, then finally polish with a series of finer and finer glass papers.

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The result is eye-catching and unique, something you won't see anywhere else. And he's very picky about the finish, showing a couple of rejects that don't measure up to his standards because the polishing isn't good enough and there are slight scratches in the surface. Does he have a high rate of rejection? we asked. "About one in ten, but in the early days it was a lot higher than that!"

These are not cheap little bits, so if you think in terms of a tubful of Bics from a Pound Shop, look elsewhere. But if you want quality and exclusivity, Edward sells at the monthly Cleobury Country Farmers' Markets and will happily take time to tell you all about his offering.

So where did the inspiration for this hobby come from? "A gang of us decided to make something different to give as Christmas presents. One made nesting boxes, others baked cakes and stuff, and I decided to make pens. It's never going to be a business and I'm happy if someone buys one at the market, because that's the only place I regularly put them on show."

"There's no pressure. If I come home from work and feel like it, I go into the garage and do some work on them, because I enjoy it." Meet him at the market or talk to him on 07970 767633.



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This is a good month for those winter jobs in garden, farm and forest. Last month I wrote about hedgelaying at Unclys Farm, and we have also put in many hours pruning the apple and pear trees. The stone fruit (cherry, plum, damson, greengage and apricot) are pruned in the growing season when the sap is rising so that they are less vulnerable to diseases such as silver leaf. I feel myself very fortunate in being able to get rid of the prunings by having a jolly good bonfire, often of such good proportions that I can cook my dinner in the embers! This is, sadly, not an option for most town-dwellers.

The snowdrops seem to have been up for a while, and the hazel catkins for even longer, spilling clouds of pollen on breezy days. This month look out for the leaves and green flowers of Dog's Mercury in the woods: it's one of the earliest plants to flower and probably the least exciting! However, my research (for which I thank the 'Flora Britannica' by Richard Mabey) has turned up some interesting facts on this common woodland ground cover. For one thing, it's highly poisonous and there are records of foragers mistaking it for something palatable and being very ill with vomiting and other unpleasant symptoms. It belongs to the spurge family, of which I can't imagine eating any member knowingly. The 'mercury' part of the name is shared with the old pot-herb *Chenopodium bonus-henricus*, more commonly known by the name Good King Henry. Hungry folk who had survived the winter on dried beans and salted meat would have welcomed the spring shoots of both this and the common stinging nettle, cooking the fresh

greens and doing themselves some good with a dose of iron and vitamins.



Now for something much more colourful. The Hawfinches in Jubilee Gardens have attracted quite a bit of attention from birdwatchers. They and other flocks in Britain have arrived from mainland Europe, especially Germany and Romania, where seed crops have failed. They are particularly attracted to yew and hornbeam, feeding on the fruits and seeds. They used to be associated with the local cherry orchards and could crack open the cherry stones with their powerful beaks to get to the kernels inside. These would probably have been native birds (now quite scarce) living and breeding here, although their numbers would have been boosted by visitors each winter. Thanks to Mick Farmer for his photo.

Peacock and brimstone butterflies should emerge from hibernation this month if the weather is warm enough, and perhaps there will be some birdsong and nest-making. Frogs may even start to spawn if we have a good, sunny spell.

Linda Iles



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MUSICAL EVENING, CLOWS TOP VICTORY HALL

Just a reminder that the Carrivick Sisters are starring in a folk music evening at Clows Top Victory Hall on Sunday, the 11th of this month. These twin sisters from Devonshire have a new album "Ten Years Live" out now and play a wide range of instruments as they present their own and traditional compositions.

Tickets are £10, doors open at 7.00 and the show starts at 7.30. There's a licensed bar and you can expect the usual happy atmosphere at a Shindig event. See you there?

A KNIT AND KNATTER APPEAL

Does anyone have any spare wool? Any oddments or full balls in any colour, thickness or texture would be gratefully received by the ladies of the Severn Hospice Knit and Knatter Group.

The ladies meet between 2.00 and 4.00pm on Friday afternoons in the Community Room, St Mary's Place and anyone is welcome to join them; there is a small charge to cover tea and biscuits.

Items knitted are sold to raise funds for the Hospice. Donations can be dropped off at the Community Room, St Mary's Place or at the Severn Hospice Shop in Cleobury. Please label your donation clearly as intended for use by the Knit and Knatter Ladies. Many thanks.

Catherine Evans

KIDDERMINSTER SOROPTIMISTS

'Fun and Games for the Family' is our next open event on Friday the 23rd, 7.00 pm at the Baxter Church Rooms, Bullring, Kidderminster: a Games night for all playing some of the old and new favourite board games. £2.50 per person or £10 per Family admission including light refreshments.

Our February Speaker/Supper meeting will be on Thursday the 15th at La Brasserie, Kidderminster, 6.30 for 7.00 pm start. The topic of the evening, again under our current motto of 'Stewardship', will be relating to the local arts: the Rose Theatre and KODS.

Our monthly informal Coffee Morning at the George Hotel, Bewdley, will be as usual on the last Thursday of the month, at 10.00 am. Do come and meet some of us. Visitors are always welcome; for more details about the club and its activities contact us on 01299 266101 or email: kidderminstersorop@gmail.com

Elke Jury

ROCK PATHFINDERS

The February walks start today, the first of the month, with a 10.30 start from the Six Ashes car park on the Bridgnorth road at Cleobury. DY14 8HJ on your sat nav or SO reference 683774.

Then we start from the Colliers Arms on Tenbury Road outside Bewdley on the 15th. once more at 10.30, DY14 9HA or SO 725722.

As usual, we will be walking along bridleways and footpaths, taking between two and three hours. For more details of the Pathfinders full programme, visit www.rockpathfinders.16mb.com or contact Alan on 01299 400304

Susan Humphries

CLEOBURY GOLF CLUB IN THE AWARDS AGAIN

Cleobury Golf Club has been voted fourth best course in the country where green fees are below £30. In the same competition the top six West Midlands courses include three in Shropshire, with Cleobury number six. There's been a lot of investment in equipment and staff training, which has resulted in a lot of improvement work on the greens and recognition through customers' votes. Congratulations all round to the Pain family and their crew.

MACHINES DON'T ALWAYS KNOW BEST

I work on an Apple Mini Mac computer, a machine I've grown to tolerate with patient help from my printer's partner, Mike Spencer. Only his calm voice and patient explanation have stopped me throwing the thing down the stairs in the past. An Apple Mac is of course superior, as its refusal to talk to other computers confirms; it is an electronic snob.

One of its more irritating habits is deciding that it knows what's coming next and completing a word regardless of what I type. Proof reading of every page becomes essential.

Our report on the Bayton Church Carol Concert in January was a good example. I had typed in the correct title for the Much Wenlock Male Voice Choir and corrected the machine's Much Wedlock version, only to have Linda the Printer phone and ask if I was sure about that title - the machine had decided it knew better and altered it once more. It's just done it again as I type this. In case the people of Much Wenlock think I'm suggesting they have rude habits, I can assure them I'm not.

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FAMILY BUSINESS PRACTICE HELPS SAINT MARY'S YOUTH PROJECT



*Peter Roper (left) hands over a cheque for £400 to
Mark Greaves of Saint Mary's Youth Project.*

The Family Business Practice has been running for two years, the brainchild of the Family Business Man Peter Roper. He and his family run three separate businesses from the Cleobury Country Centre and the Practice specifically helps family businesses in the Midlands region.

"We have well over eighty business members now and have expansion plans for 2018 to hold monthly events at Kidderminster, Shrewsbury, Solihull, Newcastle under Lyme and Wolverhampton," Peter explained. "We have held charity events supporting both Mary Stevens Hospice at Stourbridge and the Black Country Museum, but we wanted to support a local organisation where we knew any money raised would make a significant and instant impact. Sam Adams suggested we contact Mark Greaves of Saint Mary's Youth Project, who provide some

wonderful support to local children and families." SMYP is an integral part of the Cleobury Mortimer Parochial Church Council. It embraces the five key aims of the 2003 green paper 'Every Child Matters': be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and achieve economic well-being.

The Project is inclusive of all young people whatever their faith (if any), ethnicity or social background and this is clearly demonstrated in the number who attend its meetings and participate in its activities.

SMYP does not proselytise but does offer an important opportunity for those young people who are interested in exploring or developing their spiritual life.

Mark Greaves enjoyed a new experience with the Practice: "The Family Business Practice invited Sam Adams and I to attend their event in November. We were given a stand to explain what SMYP does and given the opportunity to promote the charity to all the visitors. We have gained a number of useful contacts as a result and we are delighted to have received £400 from the Family Business Practice which we have already put to good use in our Christmas initiative."

Final word to Peter Roper: "We are delighted to have helped a wonderful local initiative and grateful to both Mark and Sam to enable us to help support those who need a helping hand."

SMILEY BITS

And God promised men that good and obedient wives would be found in all corners of the world. Then He made the earth round and laughed and laughed and laughed.

Show respect even to people who don't deserve it. Not as a reflection of their character, but as a reflection of yours.

(David Willis)

CLEOBURY MORTIMER PARISH CHURCH INFORMATION

Rector: Reverend Ashley Buck, 07477 165 602 Benefice Office: 01299 272916

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First Sunday in the month: 11.00 The Eleven O'Clock Family Service

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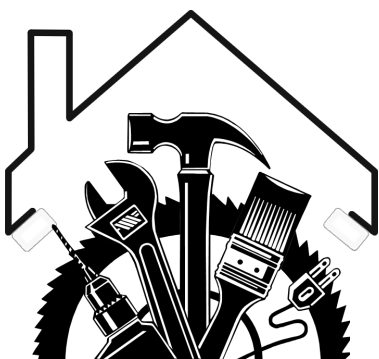
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	14:00 - 16:00	Friendship Club	01299 270353
	19:30 - 21:30	Cleobury Brass Band (Practice)	01299 270262
Wednesday	14:00 - 16:00	Indoor Bowls (Sept - March)	01299 270707
Thursday	13:45 - 16:00	Bridge for Fun	01299 270592
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Friday	10:00 - 12:30	Tiny Tots	07814 661187
	14:00 - 16:00	Indoor Bowls (Sept - March)	01299 270707

THE EDITOR TOOK A HOLIDAY

My older son lives in Hong Kong, working in the reinsurance industry and keeping in touch via Skype and email. He's very generous to his old chap and once a year flies me out to see the most distant branch of the tribe. The recent journey to cover the New Year.

Catching a cold that went to my asthmatic chest had me coughing and wheezing before I left and a call to the Medical Centre had me seen by a doctor and issued with a penicillin course within an hour. Great service. Then off to Heathrow and the welcoming arms of Cathay Pacific for an eleven hour flight. A reasonably roomy seat, films galore and very little sleep.

Iain and his older daughter Sophie, coming up for four years old, met me at the airport and soon we were in their apartment on Prince of Wales Road in Kowloon. Elena and two year old Holly were waiting; they share Christmas Day as their birthdays and there was some unloading of presents to do.

Moving around this group of islands is easy. I was handed a swipe card for the MTR system, so could travel on metro, bus or ferry without parting with cash. A lot of the time was spent in line with domestic life, as Iain was working and I don't know the city well enough to travel far on my own, though the metro station signs are in both Chinese and English, a throwback to the time when it was a British colony. One journey to visit a recommended tailor was fine, and I found myself the only westerner in the carriage more than once.

The tailor was very welcoming and I now own a made to measure green blazer for business wear, but the days of cheap clothes made in HK are long gone. The blazer cost several times what I paid for a cashmere overcoat, also made to measure, in Shanghai eight years ago.

Breakfast with two active young ladies can be a slow process among the diversions at home. So we got into a brunch habit at a traditional Chinese restaurant in the nearby Moko shopping mall, where there were the usual selection of big name brands to damage your wallet. The normal drink is tea or warm water - cold drinks are regarded as unhealthy - and the food is served on dishes with a spoon to transfer to your own small bowl, from which you delicately pick out with chopsticks. They are much easier to use

than the first experience suggests and practice shows it's not hard at all. In fact, when I make a stir fry at home, I eat it with chopsticks. Later in the holiday I tried century egg, a traditional dish of a quail's egg buried so that it doesn't rot, then unearthed and served with a sliced vegetable. I took a second helping.....

The weather was not warm, but one Sunday was spent on Lammas Island and we covered some miles around the tourist walk. Halfway round there was a very basic roadside stall offering pineapple slices, chopped smaller to suit the children. On a welcoming beach was a sign telling swimmers to stay away from the shark prevention net that kept them safe.



Holly, Iain, Sophie and Elena. Kowloon behind.

In such a busy, cosmopolitan place as this you can eat food from most countries and Mexican takeaways were an evening favourite, with local or Japanese beer. The cool weather was a surprise and one night I had trouble getting off to sleep because it was so cold. The final meal was Chinese, the next table occupied by eight men, with three bottles of red wine lined up and a bottle of Glenlivet produced early in the evening. I was at the airport at 8.00 next morning for a 9.40 flight home, sad to leave such good people.

We landed at Heathrow at 1.15, which meant a civilised arrival home until the signs on M25 announced the M40 was closed at Oxford. With a diversion up the crowded A40, it took six hours to reach Cleobury. The irony was turning off M40 in a long jam and after 20 minutes hearing on the radio that M40 was open again.

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We are used to seeing film of soldiers marching to the front and singing to keep spirits up, to create a rhythm and to ease the boredom and tiredness.

Music played a much bigger part in life in uniform in the trenches and behind the lines. On the Western Front marching bands were often sent to accompany the troops, concert parties would regularly be put on by soldiers themselves and almost every division had its own entertainment troop.

It is recognised today that singing together has many outcomes. What has become a therapy has always been used by those experiencing difficult situations. A significant use of music came from the adoption of new words to the tune of an existing song which everyone already knew. Army regulations meant it was impossible for soldiers to question or challenge their situation or to freely express discontent and anger. Only by writing their own words could they express an opinion or comment.

The writer has a personal favourite; "Hanging on the Old Barbed Wire". The verses vary but essentially the song ridiculed any rank not found in the combat zone.

For example, if you want the C.O.

We know where he is, we know where he is, we know where he is.

If you want the C.O. we know where he is

He is down in a deep dug out

We've seen him we've seen him down in a deep dug out.

We've seen him we've seen him down in a deep dug out.

Soldiers could make fun of as many non-combatant ranks as they wished by a simple change in the verse. Something not mentioned yet is black humour which has always been essential to get people through hard times and is found in the final verse. Imagine a new battalion marching up to replace an old one at the front. Just replace C.O. with *Old Battalion* and rework the last two lines and you get.

If you want the Old Battalion

We know where they are, we know where they are, we know where they are

If you want the Old Battalion we know where they are

They are hanging on the old barbed wire

We've seen them we've seen them hanging on the old barbed wire

We've seen them we've seen them hanging on the old barbed wire.

There were musical instruments in the trenches as men took them when they went to the front. Harold Triggs was a musician who took his cello into the trenches. It was a modified instrument, much more compact than the normal cello but did the job. Harold played in the trenches at Ypres and so did many others on hand made instruments built from whatever they could scrounge. In such a bleak environment people needed music.

Back in England was someone who felt that serving soldiers had a right to culture like everyone else. Lena Ashwell was a musician, impresario and suffragette who used her contacts to help convince the War Office that culture could be and should be delivered to the Front.

In 1915 the first concert tours started and performed 39 concerts in two weeks. Performers roughed it because there was no option and their audiences respected the fact that well known performers made great efforts to entertain. Amongst these was Ivor Novello, composer of the very popular song "Keep the home fires burning" who performed in smoke filled canteens to the delight of his audience. Concerts were held wherever space could be found, horse hospitals canteens and mess tents it really did not matter to the performers.

Over four years 600 artists, well over half of them women, performed in France, Malta and Egypt, often giving three shows a day. In one week in Ismailia in Egypt 13,000 men attended concerts.

The material delivered ranged from poetry readings, string quartets, operatic arias through to Shakespeare and lectures on a wide range of subjects. The latter was considered very important and had the backing of Lloyd George the Prime Minister. He argued that those who returned at the end of the conflict would build the future and that they should not be deprived of education just because they were serving their country.

Should you wish to see a good example of how songs can throw a light on the stupidity, pathos and sadness of The Great War, watch the film 'Oh what a lovely War'.

Paul French

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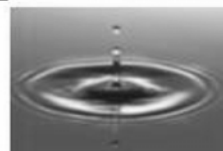
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Neville Weaver at work in the laboratory at No 19

"I didn't want to do A Levels at Ludlow, I wanted to do O Levels and learn a craft. Eventually I got an interview with a cabinet maker in Leominster and the day I was on the way the place burned down!" It was destiny working for young Neville Weaver; he got a job as a trainee dental technician with John Cobb's practice in Tenbury Wells and 35 years later works from his own laboratory behind No 19 Lower Street.

"I was on a five year day release course and by the third year I was doing jobs and the resident technician, who was in his 70s, worked part time." After five years he'd earned the B Tech National Diploma in Dental Technology that is still hung on the wall. He worked there happily until Mr

Cobb retired, with a little freelance work to fill in the hours, and by the mid 90s he was operating as a freelance, still in the laboratory above the old Cobb premises.

Life changed dramatically when he married Jane and daughter Tilly was born in 2007. He was working for several practices and seeing little of his family, so Jane suggested they build on the back of No 19. He's still operating from there today, in about 15 feet x 12 feet of busy-ness with stainless steel storage cabinets and a mixture of mature machinery ("The polishing lathe is the one from Tenbury Wells. Must be 70 years old and still does the job well") He's spent on a range of new equipment as technology has moved on, but does it wisely with no waste.

Today he's working for seven dentists spread across four practices plus private repair work. "I reckon I can repair about 95 percent of the breakages people bring in here," he says. If it's a clean break he'll make a mould to hold the two halves, trim the two faces and apply an adhesive before cleaning and polishing to produce exactly the same shape. And how long would that take if I walked in with a broken denture? "About an hour." I was amazed.

Dental technology is moving on as new materials come into use. Like the traditional ceramic used to make a crown bridge, more and more being made of Zirconia metal. And 3D printing is advancing, the dental surgeon now measuring the patient's mouth with a hand-held wand and sending the built up picture directly to the laboratory for a mould to be made.

"In about 15 years kids will leave school to do jobs that don't exist today," he tells me. So would he recommend that young people consider learning a craft? "If they enjoy it." He does.

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CLEOBURY MORTIMER MEN'S SHED

That full title for this infant project is used because the idea has made remarkable progress since October last year. I'm not going to say too much at this stage, because the six months mark will be the stage to stand up and shout about how much has been achieved.

The progress meeting on January 24th heard that the matter of a lease on the land offered by David Robinson (bless the man) is progressing under the eye of Justin Parker. Provisional plans for the layout of the area will be drawn up and a report prepared for presentation at the Town Council Annual Meeting in April.

Neil has finally succeeded in opening an account with Lloyds. But the sound of talking to someone who says you can't open a charity account unless you are a registered charity and a charity registration official who cannot register you until you have a bank account sounds like an Extreme Patience Exam designed by Kafka. Neil succeeded and there may be a movement to get him onto the Honours List as a result.

Membership costs are under discussion, with £4.00 a month for those who can afford it looking like the favourite. But do not take that as a firm figure; there's a lot of ground to be covered before we can quote the actual amount.

Lots of ideas about sources of buildings, equipment and possible grants came out during a busy hour and the prospects look good. The next meeting is on Wednesday, February 7th at the Market Hall, starting at 7.00. If a place to meet, chat and indulge your hobby makes sense, come along and learn more.

THE HOPTON CROWN BOUGHT BY LOCAL PUB OWNERS

The Crown Inn at Hopton Wafers has been in the receiver's hands since last year and there were concerns that what used to be a popular eating and drinking place would join the long list of closures. It deserved a better fate than that and Andrew Cornthwaite and Kate Lane came to the rescue.

They already own four inns in the Welsh Marches area, including The Baiting House at Upper Sapey and The Admiral Rodney at Berrow Green. Proof of their ability is the success story of

the Baiting House, bought derelict in 2016 and now the holder of an AA 2 Rosette for its food.

Their latest addition will be known as the Hopton Crown and renovation work is under way, which means ten staff jobs saved as they keep on trading through the work. The food focus will be on local produce and the bar will be serving Hobson and Ludlow Ales, as well as Robinson's Cider from Tenbury Wells.

Andrew says "The local area deserves a destination venue for decent food.....we have strong connections to Shropshire and my wife has fond memories of being brought to the Hopton Crown as a child by her aunt and uncle, who lived locally."

The pub will be open all day from Tuesday to Sunday and from 4.00 on Monday, with food available for lunch and evening from Tuesday to Sunday. We wish them every success.

ROAD CLOSURE

Early warning of a road closure at New Wood Farm in Milson. Severn Trent are renewing a service pipe there and the road will be closed on March 5th and 6th. If you need more detail, call Customer Services on 0345 6789006.

PAVEMENT PARKING

We promised you action on this and the response has been very strong. And we are advised that there should be a chance for the driver of the car to explain if there were particular circumstances that made the obstruction unavoidable. Of course.



Early January, Fiat 500 on Childe Road, next to the entrance to the free car park. Car parked next to telegraph pole, blocking pedestrian access. Seen there from approx 9.00am to mid afternoon.

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COMBATTING COMBAT STRESS

Philip Dunne MP, whose experience includes time as a Defence Minister, offers advice on a problem affecting more service personnel than we realise.

New research from Help for Heroes has revealed one in four (23%) of partners or family members of an Armed Services Veteran or Service Person state that their own wellbeing and mental health has been directly affected as a result of their family member's situation. Only five percent of those surveyed said they would seek help from a mental health professional.

Help for Heroes estimates that there are almost 200,000 partners and family members of Veterans in the UK whose well-being could be suffering as a result of their role supporting their loved one. Of these, it is estimated that approximately 30,000 family members are not speaking to anyone about it and are suffering in silence.

Mr Dunne said: "Part of the reason our Armed Forces are so effective is due to the stalwart support of their families and loved ones. But we need to recognise the strain service can place on family life.

There is help available from charities and medical professionals to help the families of veterans and service personnel, so there is no need to suffer in silence. I urge anyone who feels their loved one's service is negatively affecting their wellbeing or mental health to seek advice and help."

Help and advice is available from Help for Heroes' Hidden Wounds initiative, which launched in 2014. The service provides free and confidential support to ex-Service Personnel, their families and the families of those still serving, who are living with anxiety, depression, stress, anger or who wish to change their drinking habits. Help for Heroes also offers the Band of Sisters fellowship, a community for family members of wounded, injured or sick Veterans and Service Personnel.

Family members who are concerned about the mental health of a Veteran close to them can contact Hidden Wounds using the following details:

Email: hidden.wounds@helpforheroes.org.uk
Tel: 0808 2020 144 (free from UK landlines)

BILL ELLIOTT

The Reverend Bill Elliott died in December, a well known and respected figure in this community for many years, both in his work for the church and as a member of the History Society. He was 97.

Born in Rugby in 1920, the son of a manager of a mineral water factory and the Royal Oak public house, Bill attended Chapel Street Council School and moved on to the Lawrence Sheriff School, where he became Deputy Head Boy. Family financial troubles prevented him training for ordination and typhoid fever at 18 delayed further progress and later prevented him serving in the military when war broke out.

In 1941 he started a teaching career in Smethwick and at a School Camp in Ribbesford in 1949 he met Francis Mabel Kelly, or 'Kel' as she became known. They were married in 1950 at Peel Parish, in Kel's Isle of Man home and took up teaching posts in Kidderminster, where their sons Charles and Geoffrey were born. In 1960 Bill had a term of theological training at Oxford, later being ordained and acting as honorary curate at St. Mary's, Kidderminster, while still teaching.

In 1969 he was asked to take charge of Far Forest parish, a position that grew as it took in the neighbouring parishes of Rock with Heightington and Mable cum Bayton. He officially retired in 1985 and later described his 15 years at Far Forest as "the most fulfilling of my life."

Bill and Kell moved into Cleobury Mortimer, where he continued to work for the church and she as a 'reserve organist' for the Cleobury group of parishes. Bill had been a member of the Kidderminster Archaeological Society since its foundation, including a period as Chairman. When the Cleobury Mortimer History Society was formed, he was the obvious choice as its first chairman. A stickler for factual information, he would send a polite reminder that this is a town if ever the Clarion described Cleobury Mortimer as a village. The world is a poorer place for his passing. JR

ON THE SUBJECT OF HISTORY...

Bill Elliott would respect this apology from Paul French for getting the planned inscription on the new memorial on the Market Hall wall wrong. It will in fact read: 'To the memory of all those men and women from Cleobury Mortimer who served in the Great War, 1914-1918, some of whom gave their all.'



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Sunday 4th Italy vs England 3pm kick off

Saturday 10th Ireland vs Italy 2.15pm kick off

England vs Wales 4.45pm kick off

Sunday 11th Scotland vs France 3pm kick off

Friday 23rd France vs Italy 8pm kick off

Saturday 24th Ireland vs Wales 2.15pm kick off

Scotland vs England 4.45pm kick off

Throughout these games we will be doing a drink promotion.

If you come in before half time and purchase an alcoholic drink you will be entered in to a draw to win a jug of beer. We will announce the winner at half time. Why not bring the kids with you and they will be entered in to a separate draw when you purchase a soft drink. The winner will win a can of pop, a packet of walker's crisps and a Cadburys freddo.

Sunday 4th march we have our annual big quiz. The proceeds go to a local charity this year it's for Cleobury stroke support group. £15 per team, maximum 6 people in a team. Register at 7pm for a 7.30pm start.

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LACON CHILDE ART DISPLAY AT THE MARKET HALL



Lacon Childe's Head of Art Mr Barker with artists Evie and Oliver.

There's an unusual display of artwork in the front window of the Market Hall, mounted there by David Barker, Head of Art at Lacon Childe School, with able assistance by students Evie and Oliver. It's the result of a project reflecting the work of Sir Michael Craig-Martin, Dublin born, Yale educated and resident in England since the 1960s.

Sir Michael's recent work concentrates on the everyday, using items that we see and probably take for granted. The Lacon Childe project reflected that and resulted in a wide selection of items, all fashioned out of Monobloc card material and painted in acrylics. The card in the window invites you to identify the objects, which all have a local connection. The editor only managed to pick out the bowler hat that is the Hobsons Brewery logo, which tells you a lot about his lack of artistic knowledge.

The display will stay in the window for a few weeks so that relatives of the students involved can take a look and the general public puzzle over the local connection. Please do not go into the Hall and touch them - they are delicately mounted.



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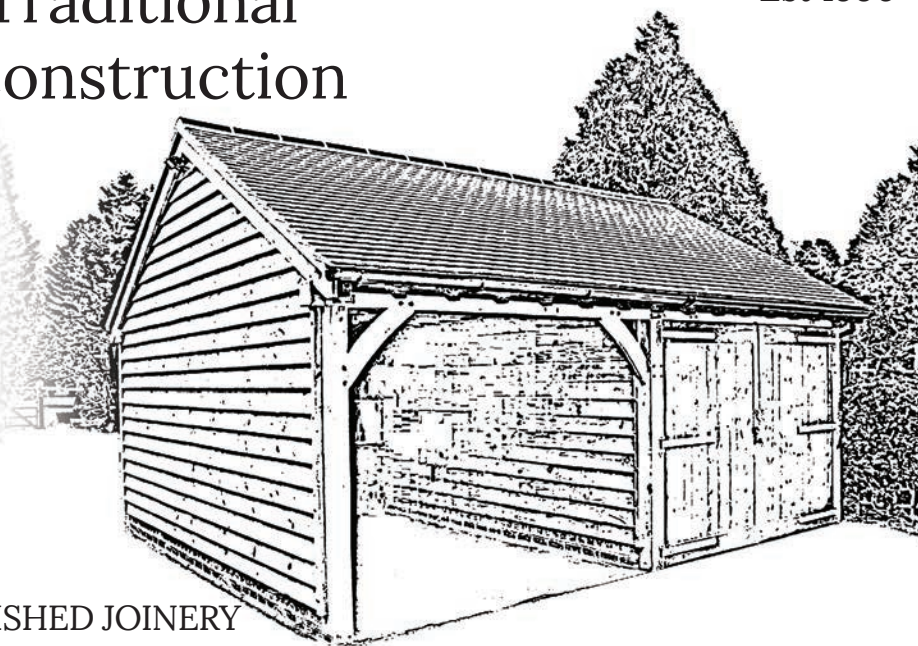
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THE DEADLINE FOR THE MARCH ISSUE IS FEBRUARY 22nd

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