

ANOTHER NASTY SCAM

With the current strict lockdown keeping more of us at home, it's a golden opportunity for the thieves out there to frighten and rob the elderly and innocent. As ever, Nigel Reid gives advice on Page 53, but we had a call from a resident who felt vulnerable elderly people can be frightened by a message that says it's from the Police.

It's very abrupt. They tell you to press Button One to avoid having an arrest warrant issued. Don't do it! The British Police do not call and threaten innocent people. The resident who told us of this scam called the Police on 101 and was told it was a con trick. Just remember that you live in a civilised country and have no reason to be frightened of the Police. Take care, stay safe and don't let any cheap crook kid you that you're in trouble. You are not.

RED HARE WINS CLARION CUP



The great Christmas mood display that was a clear winner of the annual award.

There was a good response from the town's traders to the annual competition for the Clarion Cup, which the winner holds for one year.

It was certainly no easy job picking a winner, with both Mimi's Plaice and Ashley's Cake Shop and Cafe taking a lot of trouble to draw the eyes of the judges and the public. But in the end, it was Jo Apperley's moody show in one of her two windows

that took the title, with twice as many points as her nearest rivals. The Cup will be handed over as soon as the lockdown allows and we're sure Jo will have it on display for all to see.

Thanks also to the judges for their time and effort. That's Katja Jones, Ashley Buck, Steve Todd, Paul French and Jim Reynolds.

LAPTOP DRIVE

If you've seen the photos of children trying to get time on a laptop to do their homework in the corona crisis, you'll know that many are disadvantaged. Robbing children of their education is another of Covid's crimes.

Matt Yarranton came up with a scheme he is running in cooperation with Lacon Childe School. He will take laptops up to ten years old, clean them of old data and insert a cloud ready programme that runs on low level hardware to suit older units. Then on to the children that need them - free of charge. **SEE PAGE 13.**



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The Cleobury Clarion, February 2021

Volume Sixteen - Edition Ten



*Goodwill up on the Hill at
Doddington
See Page 11.*



*New face in town, with a
new business.
See Page 29.*



*In Business - Lauren at Amba
Legal Services.
See Page 57.*

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GAUTHAMA - THAI TREAT ON THE HIGH STREET

Phil Westwood was taking his lady wife Carol to Gauthama, the Thai restaurant that has taken over the old Balti Bar premises. We asked him for a report and he was well impressed:

We have only ever been to a Thai restaurant once before so we are not that familiar with the food.

No problem whatsoever; Mo, the proprietor guided us through the different dishes and explained the various tastes and levels of medium, hot and very hot choices. There is a large selection of starters and mains covering every taste.

We both chose the Gaeng Khiew Wan (Chicken green curry) which was absolutely delicious as were the starters (Mixed veg in batter for my wife and steamed scallops in a spicy sauce for yours truly).

When I told Mo that it was my birthday, he treated us to free drinks at the end of our meal (brandy and a Baileys).

I urge people to go to our new Thai restaurant, I guarantee that you will not be disappointed with the food, service and especially the very reasonable prices.

Phil Westwood

THE CREATIVE WRITING GROUP

For our December meeting we observed the regulation limit of six people, Gill Guest brought mince pies and the chairman a bottle of wine. The subject was 'Lockdown' and Viv offered a history of the habit back to Roman times that set us thinking, Gill went off at a slight tangent with a Christmas theme and Marian offered her imagination of a nurse's report of her job in the current crisis. Turn to Page 7 to read that in full - another example of her creative instinct.

For January we were planning to write something about 'Normal' but the chance to meet and discuss that was stymied by the renewed lockdown. Oh dear, does this mean that lockdown may be the normal in future? We had hoped to meet in February to

swap stories, but now? Let's not get too down about these delays; with vaccines now available and jobs being done at an impressive rate, there is light at the end of the covid tunnel.

JR

THANK YOU

For many of us the Christmas festivities were not quite how we hoped they would be, as we were unable to meet up with our families. However, it was still a special time and brought out the good will in many people. Kit and I were delighted to receive two Christmas cards from boys at Lacon Childe school. One was from Oscar with a happy face drawn on, and the other from Nicholas, beautifully written and expressed. I would just like to say thank you to those boys and the people who organised it. The cards gave us so much pleasure. Thank you.

Pat Smith

SILLY BIT

**The problem with political
jokes is that they get elected.
Henry Cate**



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This is not from a real nurse, but an imaginative piece of writing work by Marian which impressed everyone in the Creative Writing Group when they heard it. JR

I have been in the nursing profession for 35 years now, climbed the ladder gaining experience and responsibility. Like all my colleagues, I never planned for a year like this; it has been tough, oh so tough, exhausting and emotional. We have given our all to our patients, including saying comforting words and holding their hands as their lives slip away. As you know, lockdown has meant relations haven't been able to come into the hospital to tell their relatives how much they love them. That was left to us.

Lockdown has also meant that I couldn't go home to my family for fear of taking coronavirus to them. I have been tested regularly, but you still don't want to take risks. I have been able to stay in a room at a hotel, free of charge but had to do my own cooking and shopping.

You may have seen me on television a while ago. I had had a particularly bad day in the ward and had been to the supermarket to stock up on food. Due to the circumstances, everyone thought they must raid the shelves and buy, buy, buy. There was hardly an item of fresh vegetables left, nor milk or toilet rolls. A reporter caught me weeping in my car and I appeared on the television news, lashing out at all the selfish people, just looking after themselves. "It may be me nursing you one day," I said.

Thankfully things have improved now - plenty of food but I am now feeling even more exhausted. On a brighter note, my colleagues and I so appreciated being clapped on a Thursday night. Of course, due to lockdown nobody could shake our hands or, better still give us a hug but it

has been encouraging to be appreciated. It has also been good to hear of all the kindness that emerged from lockdown. I keep mentioning that word and it has been drummed into our minds over these past months: Keep Your Distance, wear a mask, wash your hands, stay at home. I couldn't stay at home or stay apart from patients. It has been hands on - administering drugs, washing and turning patients in their beds - on and on it has gone.

I was horrified when in that hot weather we had we were all sweltering under our protective clothing in the hospital and scores of people poured to the seaside. I saw them on the news, all sunbathing cheek by jowl, and you wouldn't want to wear a mask sunbathing, would you? I suppose that in life some people are heroes and some couldn't care less - that is, until they are struck down with the virus.

Anyway, there is a bright, bright light at the end of the lockdown tunnel. This very day (*This was written on December 14th, Ed*) the general public start getting their vaccinations. Oh yes, that reminds me: haven't the scientists worked a miracle to produce the vaccine in months instead of years, to give us all hope. The pandemic will get conquered. They need recognition and a huge thanks.

So that's me, a hope sewn in my heart that lockdown will be over this year. I have so many people I want to hug. In my dreams tonight I may dream of life as it will be: lockdown free, fun and laughter, going to the cinema, opera, concert or ballet. If one good thing can come out of this, may it be that folk are locked up in a life of thoughtfulness and kindness to each other.

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THE HALF DEAD POETS' SOCIETY

We were due to meet on December 28th, but overnight snowfall and forecast freezing temperatures made travel for our Kidderminster members a risk. So the meeting was cancelled and we arranged to meet again on January 25th, but the matter of a strict lockdown scotched that.

Tony Smith was one of those who understood the logic of not driving over 12 miles of December's frozen roads, but offered his Covid-19 poem to help fill these pages:

One step forward,
Two steps back
When will we be back on
track?
The world is horror and
despair
And Covid, Covid everywhere
With hundreds ill
And thousands dead
The madding crowds increase
the spread
Still they mingle, still they mix,
Despite the fact there is no fix.
We could not know a year ago,
What was to come
How could we know?
And now comes as a foul
descant

a more infectious variant
Where will it end? But end it
will
for there is hope and hoping
still.
Man survives when all is done
and will emerge into the sun.
Tony Smith
*Thank you for that, Tony. As ever,
a thought provoking careful look at
the world.* JR

ROAD CLOSURES IN MARCH

Shropshire Council advise that there will be roadworks at the junction of A4117 and B4363 from Monday, March 1st to Friday the 6th. Work to be carried out includes resurfacing and signage.

The notice mentions both closure and diversions on the two roads, but the county's map showing the work site suggests the work will be mainly on the B4363 Bridgnorth road. If you have a journey to Bridgnorth that week, leave early and be prepared for delays.

THE NATIONAL GARDENS SCHEME

Allison Walter, county organiser for the Gardens Scheme, writes to tell us that there are 23 new gardens on

the Shropshire list for 2021. 12 of those were new on the 2020 list, but we all know what happened to that.

If you want to plan some visits to wonderful places this summer, you can see the list on www.ngs.org.uk. And as well as the pleasure of visiting, the proceeds from the entrance fees go to help a range of charities.

THE CHRISTMAS SHOEBOXES

Jenny Vanderhook reports another successful despatch of gift laden shoeboxes to the poorer countries in Eastern Europe. Now the work for the 2021 drive begins.

It's normal at this time for Jenny to ask for Christmas cards to be saved, as they help to decorate the boxes. But we do have to be careful with just what we send, as we do not want to offend the religious beliefs of those we are trying to help. So just the front page of the cards, please, with no use of images of the Christ child.

In the pandemic situation, there is no public building open for cards to be left, so Jenny asks if you'll keep them until she can find a collection point. We'll let you know when she does.




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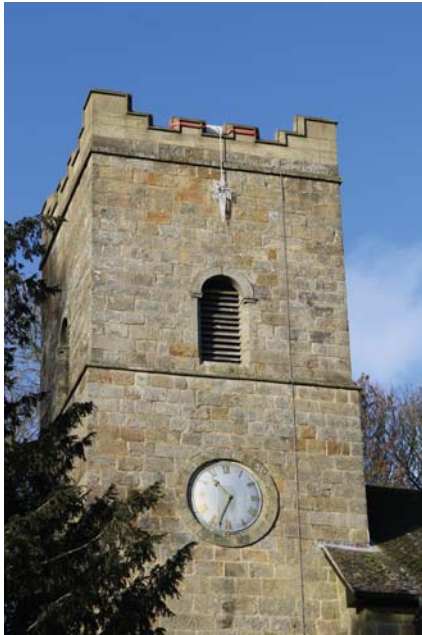


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CHRISTMAS GOODWILL UP ON THE HILL



The tower of Saint John the Baptist Parish Church at Doddington.

In a very simple but highly visible way, the Parish Church at Doddington put out a sign of Christmas goodwill to all who passed through the village or just happened to look up and see an illuminated cross on the church tower.

The Gibb family were part of the presentation and invited the Clarion to witness the installation of the cross. But the English weather did not cooperate and the hill was

shrouded in mist on the day the event was supposed to happen. We did go, and had a friendly chat with the Gibbs, but a sensible decision had been made to wait for better weather.

We did promise to try to get pictures of the cross in both daylight and darkness, but while in daylight the result was fine, in darkness not even the quality of Canon equipment could overcome the editor's inability as a photographer. Could it have been the power of belief keeping the mischief of the Prince of Darkness at bay?

A great gesture of goodwill at a time when any passerby would appreciate it.

AND DOWN IN THE TOWN....

Didn't the High Street look warm and welcoming with the Christmas lights once again making us locals and drivers passing through feel the spirit of the festival, despite the bad news on the coronavirus situation.

Cleobury has long been the town with Christmas lights when others had stopped the habit. We used to have pretty shabby lights - but no longer!

SPRING IS HERE

The Cleobury park area is proving to be the most wonderful asset for us all in the Cleobury Area. Even in winter a walk round the paths with the various seats offering a rest has proved the most effective exercise and wellbeing for all age groups. Thanks to Paul French for clearing the ice and investigating ways to divert water which flows over the pathways in one or two places which then freezes and is dangerous.

We are now coming up to the time of the year to plant out clusters of snowdrops, and the Town Council is happy for them to be planted around the base of the lovely big oak tree next to the Skate Park and exercise equipment. They are best planted when the flowers are nearly finished and there are still the green leaves. There are often pots for sale at places like Attingham Park or similar.

WARNING! It is an offence to dig them up from hedgerows and sides of roads.

Madge Shingleton

SILLY BIT

"We hang the petty thieves and appoint the great ones to public office."
Aesop

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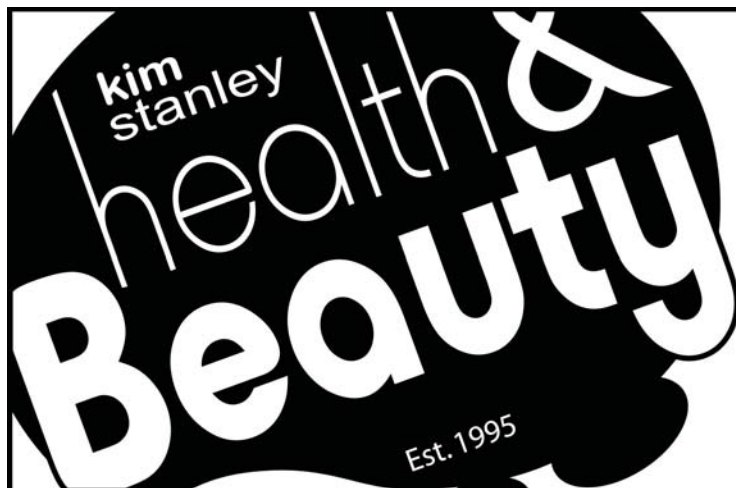
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JOHN GREAVES - A NEW FACE ON THE TOWN COUNCIL

John Greaves has been working in the energy industry for 15 years and can explain how that vital sector has improved the cleanliness of its operation and is still looking forward in its search for efficiency. When he tells you that pollution from generating that vital power we all take for granted when we just switch on a light has been reduced by one third in the last 30 years, you realise there are some very bright brains on that job. It also means that these people have the ear of government when future planning is discussed.

He knew this area as a child, when his family had a holiday home up on Clee Hill and he could wander freely. So it was a natural move later in life to come back in 2014 to a place that had given such happy memories. He attended council meetings to capture a feeling of what was happening and was well impressed with the work he could see being achieved.

A chat with one of the council revealed vacancies and he was invited to apply for one of the co-opted posts. He and Guy James were selected and are settling into the job, John fitting the work in with his full-time energy research role.

He clearly likes the busy atmosphere of the town and the work of moving the community forward. He's one of three councillors on the Neighbourhood Development

Plan and is happy to give his professional view wherever it can help in the council's work.



He sees catering for the young people who will be the next generation to work for the good of the town as important and wants to see development of employment that will make the place more secure as a community. Ask how many hours he puts in and it varies, but he reckons he gives 30 to 40 hours a month to the town's work.

Does he enjoy working as a councillor? "I'd recommend it to anyone who wants to contribute to the community," he says. "You'll find that some of the greatest rewards in life are not necessarily financial."

Could there be a better reason to become one of our town councillors?

THE LAPTOP PROJECT

To put it simply, this is a typical Cleobury Mortimer way of showing community spirit as you help people in need. Matt Yarranton was moved by news shots of

children struggling to share space on the family computer as they tackled their home schooling. He could see this was talent wasted and access to information was badly needed.

There was a pilot scheme in Sheffield, but nothing nationally. So Matt contacted Darren Reynolds at Lacon Childe School and they agreed cooperation. A message on social media asked for laptops less than ten years old for Matt to clean of data and upgrade with a Cloud Ready scheme that runs on low level hardware.

We spoke to Matt four days after the scheme was launched and he'd already had five laptops donated and cash donations of £480. Lacon Childe have provided a room for him to store and work, giving his time for nothing.

There's a need for cash because updating and making the laptops ready for use does require parts. There is an audit of income and spending in operation already - the operation is transparent.

If you have a tired laptop you can give, contact Matt at Blisstech Solutions on 07791 416 890, www.blisstech.co.uk or matt@blisstech.co.uk. On the blisstech site you'll find a link to the gofunding site, where you can fill in an assessment form and tick a box to be kept informed of progress.

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CANCER SUPPORT GROUP FITNESS

The Kidderminster Prostate Cancer Support Group is a very go-ahead operation that has been setting standards for a long time. In January they added another service that will help mature chaps who have had prostate treatment to keep fit and reasonably agile.

All done via the Zoom service and run by Di Fox, a Personal Trainer and Cancer Rehabilitation Specialist. No charge, free to all members of the Group, who can log in from home and not have to travel at all.

Di has a personal history with cancer, as she explained: "I was working as a personal trainer when I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2015, but found that staying active helped me deal with both the physical and emotional side of my treatment; I've had chemo, surgery and radiotherapy. I'm now on hormone treatment and found that I felt better more quickly than I'd been expecting."

"I wanted to help others have the best experience they could, so in 2016 started working for Active Herefordshire and Worcestershire as the Macmillan Move More Physical Activity Co-ordinator. The role changed over the years, but working with others with a cancer diagnosis remains my passion. Funding for that role is no longer available and I'm aiming to provide a similar service independently, setting up sessions where I see a need. I

approached Mary Symons, who I'd met through work at Active HW, to see if we could set up a Zoom fitness group for the Prostate Cancer Support Group and happily the committee liked the idea. "

"The aim of the sessions is to incorporate exercises to target upper body strength, lower body strength, cardiovascular fitness and core strength, each of which can be done at different levels, as appropriate."



The lady herself, with a charming smile and persuasive manner.

Hers is a very gentle and friendly approach to the job of getting a collection of mature chaps to work together, with encouraging comments and tips on making the best use of whatever's handy if you don't have a resistance band or dumbbells around

There lay my first mistake, because I had dumbbells from long ago in the wardrobe, but when I got them out there was only one size left, 5 kg weights that I used to use for bicep curls, but not for straight-arm lifting at my present age. Damn it! I could do it 25 years ago, but time has not helped. Di's helpful advice was use a can of soup or baked beans - I'll have those to hand next time.

She led a warming up session, then took us through a set of exercises with specific body areas in mind. Upper and lower body and heart rate, followed by areas affected by prostate cancer treatment. It was challenging to test simple balance, with one foot in line behind the other, and a chair or wall nearby to aid balance.

It was interesting when the one-hour session was over to realise what muscles I'd been using that hadn't had to work for a long time. Discovering new areas to ache may not sound like a good idea, but with a regular Monday gentle workout, they'll soon be in proper working order.

Di's sessions are on Zoom every Monday at 10.30am and I intend to follow the plan as often as I can. Keeping in some sort of trim - I do not kid myself I'm any sort of athlete - is good for both body and mind.

If you want to know more about the Kidderminster and Worcestershire Prostate Cancer Support Group look them up at www.kwpcsg.co.uk. In normal times they have a big programme of events to help anyone facing prostate cancer and are a really helpful and friendly bunch. JR

SILLY BITS

'A politician is a man who will lay down your life for his country.'

Tex Guinan

'Instead of giving a politician the keys to the city, it might be better to change the locks.'

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

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Beginning on March 1st, I shall be walking 10,000 steps per day for 100 days to complete my challenge. I am raising funds for Severn Hospice because they cared for my dear friend Pat Williams who passed in April 2019. She was a wonderful friend & she raised thousands of pounds for charity, so I'm doing this for her & to thank Severn Hospice, who supported the family during the most difficult time of their lives.

Any donations / sponsorship will be very greatly appreciated. My JustGiving page is:

[h t t p s : / /
www.justgiving.com/
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So if you see me out walking in March through until end of May/ beginning of June please give me a wave! Thank you.

Alison Andrews

THE BUSINESS OF INSTALLING KISSING GATES

Last month we repaired a footbridge on the Simon Evans Way that had been washed away – photos and more detail on our Facebook page. Looking back, we can say that access into the countryside around Cleobury has improved considerably by our replacement of stiles by gates. We installed our first at the bottom of Lion Lane into Clarvers Field in 2008. Since then we have installed a further 34 kissing gates and supplied four to landowners for them to instal. The two most memorable events were beyond the top of Clarvers and on Mawley Town Farm. In the first we hit a water main in the last place you would expect, in a field a long way from any houses. It turned out to be the supply to Sadlers Barn Farm coming from Eagle Lane. It was a long, tiring and wet day, especially as it was raining.

With the second we hit bedrock making it very hard work to make the holes necessary. David Robinson joined us and got stuck in putting us all to shame.

Shropshire Council also put in quite a few in Hopton Wafers and Neen Savage in 2009 when they overhauled the footpaths in those two parishes and some more in connection with diversions at Dinmore and Overwood Common. In more recent times, the Parish Council in Neen Sollars have been installing gates with our help; 11 so far and more to come. The Mawley Estate have removed all but three of the stiles on their land. Improvements in the neighbouring parishes of Bayton, Mamble and Rock can be added to that list. All this means that in the last 12 years a considerable amount of clambering over stiles have been replaced with an easy walk through a gate. We hope to continue to improve on that.

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I needed a pair of gates to replace an old and rotting pair in the garden wall. The natural choice was Turner's at Hopton Wafers, long time supporters of the Clarion and a well respected family concern. Friends who had used their service all spoke well of the quality and friendly style of their service.

Steve Turner came out to measure and discuss what style suited best - they have a big range to choose from. The place was clearly busy, with a wait of some weeks to get them made before Steve was back to hang them. But he had trouble getting a firm mounting and was off to the workshop to fabricate a broader hinge plate and get a resin filler that would give a stronger support.



As you can see from the picture in the left column, Steve had cut two hinge backplates and made a wider one. That's the advantage of a family business where the same man does the measure, plus the fixing and deals with any little problem along the way. The result is one area of my house much smarter than it's been for some time.



The finished job. Really smart.

The whole package has an air of quality, with heavy and adjustable hinges and all the ironmongery clearly made to last. Clear instructions from Steve's mum Sue on the best paint to apply every year to keep them looking smart and lasting a long time. The complete job was so easy for me, the customer. JR

CLEOBURY MEN'S SHED ON SKY TV

On the run up to Christmas the Shropshire Star featured our Men's Shed, including the Nativity scene recently made by local 'shedders' for the community at the request of Liz Smith, of St Marys Church.

This led to an unexpected call from Rhiannon, a Sky News producer. Rhiannon then arranged a live Sky News interview at 09:45 on December 28th using Zoom from our homes with myself and Mike Jenn - the President of the UK Men's Shed Association - from London. It was a strange yet fun experience and hopefully we did our bit to help Mike raise the profile of the hundreds of mens sheds throughout the UK at a time where the whole country is fairly isolated during the Lock Down. The UK Mens Shed Association website is: <https://menssheds.org.uk>
Pete Blackburn

SILLY BIT

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"I'd wonder whose trousers I'd got on"
Anon.



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Philip Dunne's Letter from Westminster

This month marks one year since the Coronavirus reached our shores, and the remarkable transformation our society has undertaken due to its devastating impact over the past 12 months.

The whole country has come together to try to stop Covid in its tracks, and restore some sense of normality to our lives. But at the heart of this great national effort has been our NHS, who have endured 12 months of intense pressure, saving lives from Covid while also maintaining as much as possible the regular service on which we all rely.

So I wanted to take this column to offer my sincere thanks to all those who have played their part – doctors, nurses, and all NHS and care staff, as well as those who have come out of retirement to volunteer. Volunteers have played a key role in supporting the NHS this year, whether in delivering healthcare or the vaccination programme, or helping people who have been shielding to secure supplies. I am pleased the government has swept away some of the bureaucratic issues that were preventing people from taking part.

Like many, I spent much of 2020 having meetings through Zoom, including with our local NHS leaders and public health directors. I suspect for most public health directors around the country, the idea of having to deal with a pandemic was hoped to be a remote possibility. So I am grateful that we have been so well served in Shropshire, with an effective test and trace system that has acted swiftly to curtail outbreaks, including last year in few local

care homes, some businesses, and rather publicly at a site in Craven Arms. There is no question that swift coordinated action stopped greater spread of the virus into Shropshire's wider population.

Local GPs and primary care staff have also been crucial in the roll out of the vaccine in South Shropshire, and the inspiring vigilance of care home staff has ensured that two thirds of care homes in Shropshire remained covid-free last year.

I also pay tribute to the work of the Armed Forces, who have stepped up to offer logistical and medical support, such as providing ambulance drivers, as well as personnel to man testing centres around the country.

As a former Hospitals Minister, I am well aware of the pressure that exceptional events can put on local healthcare systems, let alone a global pandemic that has morphed into an increasingly contagious variant. So I can only commend and thank the resilience of all those involved in keeping our health services going, but particularly all those working in our NHS.

We are not through this pandemic, but each vaccine into an arm is another light to brighten the end of the tunnel. I know everyone involved in care and health will continue to do their utmost to keep us safe this year, as they did last year. So it is up to all of us to step up to and stick to the rules, follow the guidance, and take whatever steps we can to break the chain of infection. That way we hasten the return to normality in the months ahead.

Philip Dunne

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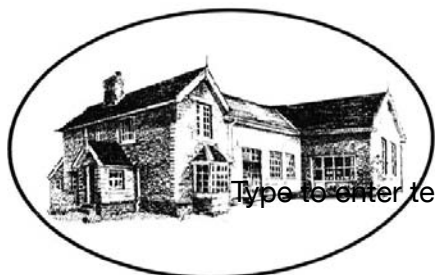
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Cleobury Community Hub

A belated Happy New year! The start of 2020 feels a distant memory when the Hub was welcoming up to 100 people a day. As we enter 2021 and another Lockdown, we reflect on how things have changed, but also the happy memories of a year spent exploring more of our surroundings and the ways the Community has adapted and found positive things to do.

News and Events

As you may remember towards the end of last year we were effectively using @TNLCommunityFund and @DCMS Government support to allow the hub to operate in a Covid secure manner.

However as we all know England has moved into a state of Lockdown. Although we would legally be able to remain open for milk and takeaways we have taken the decision to **close the Community Hub**. The Hub and it's Cafe have never been about income generation, but as a tool to allow community interaction and engagement. As great as it would be to see you in person on collection we would struggle not having the time to chat and catch up!

Please do keep in touch with us through our social media or contact through the website, and keep an eye out for remote events that you may be able to join in with (and for updates on the climbing wall as construction starts!)

In uncertain times it is normal to feel worried and sometimes scared about the future. Please do make contact if you need help or a listening ear.

FB @CleoburyCommunityHub / Insta @saintmarysyouthproject





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NEW BUSINESS IN TOWN

It's another good sign for the town when a young family moves in and with them comes a new business. The Woodall family have been negotiating the purchase of their new home for 14 months, but have managed to get into the place and dad Steve has got his home office established.

They've come here from the West Midlands to Yeldside on the eastern side of Cleobury and their sons are now well established at primary and nursery level. Steve has a range of experience in the business of environmental consultancy and the vital matter of evaluation and remediation of contaminated land. In a national atmosphere of recognising that land should be put to best use in whatever area of industry or housing is most needed, the skills and knowledge that Phoenix Environmental offer can help progress the matter.

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Steve Woodall - looks you in the eye and tells you the truth. A good starting point for a young business.

His training and experience in assessing, clearing and preparing sites for development have developed a streak of curiosity about the landscape. So no surprise that he looks at The Wells in the town centre and wonders why what was once a main source of water has dried up. He'd like to learn more from local experience of the facility, not as a commercial project, but to assess the reason the water flow stopped and how it could be re-established.

Steve's business is Phoenix Environmental Ltd on 07800 6 4 6 6 9 1 or enquiries@phoenixenviro.co.uk

CLEOBURY W.I

All of us have experienced cancellations and your committee tried hard after every new instruction to make the best of the situation. Who had ever heard of 'lockdown' and 'isolate yourself' and hugging even grandchildren was not allowed. Being socially distanced, wearing masks and washing hands became our mantra. We organised two socially distanced walks in December when the weather was crisp and sunny, invited members to donate treats to the Food Bank, created a 'Lockdown Cook Book' of favourite recipes and gave one to each member at Christmas. We encouraged votes on the WI resolutions for 2021 with Fight against Ovarian Cancer and Women's Heart Disease gaining the most support. We are waiting to start our Programme for 2021 but the meeting for January was cancelled. Let us all be positive and hope that we'll beat this Virus soon and can resume a 'new ' normal life. We certainly have learned to be more respectful of nature's strength and I am sure will be more thoughtful and appreciate families, friends and neighbours. *Gabby*



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The February Social Calendar

Please bear in mind that these few events we list are all subject to current coronavirus rules. But you can regard the weekly bin service as pretty certain to continue as usual.....

Thurs 4 th		BLACK WHEELIE BINS & RECYCLING BOXES EMPTIED TODAY		
Mon 8 th	10.30am	Di Fox leads an hour of gentle exercise for prostate recovers. PAGE 17		
	6,30	The Creative Writing Group meet at the town library	Jim Reynolds	CM 270642
Thurs 11 th		GREEN GARDEN WASTE WHEELIE BINS EMPTIED TODAY		
Thurs 18 th		BLACK WHEELIE BINS & RECYCLE BOXES EMPTIED TODAY		
Mon 22 nd	7.30	The Half Dead Poets Society meet at the library in Love Lane	Jim Reynolds	CM 270642
Thurs 25 th		GREEN GARDEN WASTE WHEELIE BINS EMPTIED TODAY		
		AND LOOKING AHEAD TO MARCH....		
Mon1st-Fri 5 th		Road closure at Bridgnorth Road junction. Diversion signed. PAGE 9		
Thurs 4 th		BLACK WHEELIE BINS & RECYCLE BOXES EMPTIED TODAY		
Mon 8 th	6.30	The Creative Writing Group meet at the Library	Jim Reynolds	CM 270642

NEIGHBOURHOOD

DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

Why have a neighbourhood plan? Once a NDP achieves a simple majority vote at a public referendum it becomes a legal requirement. Any development must then comply with the policies of the plan. IF there is NO plan the community have little or NO influence over any future housing development in Cleobury Mortimer.

Housing Density? Sometimes it is difficult to picture what housing density looks and feels like so local examples are: Cleobury Meadows development: housing density is 46 homes per hectare (10,000 sq. metres or 100 metres x 100 metres). Bovis Homes estate development has a housing density of 43 homes per hectare

The Draft NDP has housing density at 20 homes per hectare meaning a more spacious look and feel

Benefits to Town? The plan includes: 20% affordable homes being a mix of 1,2 and 3 bedroom properties, 80% will be market housing composed of 20% bungalows, 60% other housing or self build homes, Housing density of 20 homes per hectare, on plot parking, more open space to enjoy and improved walking/cycling routes

What happens if there is no plan? Developers maximise the profit of the site, meaning a lot more houses squeezed in, not enough parking, and the community will have no say in how / what is built with little or no obligation to provide other community gains.

When will I get to vote on the plan? A referendum is likely September to November 2021

2021 Timeline: May: Plan to Shropshire Council for review;

June: Shropshire Council give opinion on the Plan; August: Town Council vote on the Plan; September: Legal review by a government examiner;

September - Nov: Public Referendum; Late December: Plan made law and becomes part of the Shropshire Local Plan (if a majority vote) These dates could be subject to change.

Can I still give my views? Yes - we welcome feedback - please get in touch on the following e mail:

chair.cleobury.ndp@gmail.com

Peter Blackburn

Community Chair2



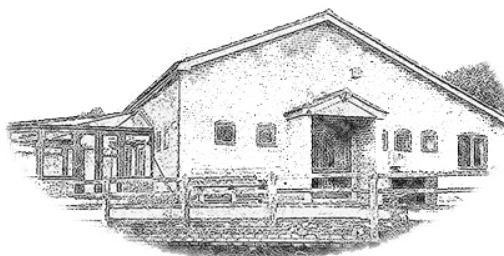
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CORONAVIRUS JABS

Another reason to be glad we live in Shropshire.

Along with a lovely lady of whom I'm very fond, I got my coronavirus vaccine jabs, both of them, by January 7th. We were given appointments for December 17th and travelled separately, to comply with government recommendations, to Bridgnorth Medical Centre. A brief wait, a friendly reception and clear instructions before a jab in the upper arm and out to a waiting area, to sit for 15 minutes before heading home. Each of us given a card stating that we'd had the treatment and giving our next visit on January 7th.

Same system, equally speedy and we were issued with a card confirming that we'd had the jabs using the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine. The news about new strains of the virus emerging and the decision to impose another lockdown did rather dampen any temptation to break out the champagne, so we agreed to keep low and take care. But it is a great relief to know that this treatment was available so early and was delivered in a very efficient way.

Philip Dunne advises that the South East Shropshire Primary Care Network had been chosen to deliver this pilot scheme, with all nine GP practices taking part. The next local development was the opening of a vaccination unit at Ludlow racecourse to serve the South West Shropshire area with invitations issued by local practices.

ZERO CARBON PLAN

The Shropshire Climate Action Partnership is a team of volunteers from across the county motivated by the climate emergency. It took them just three months to come up with a plan which does suggest that this is no mere talking shop.

Their aim is zero carbon Shropshire by 2030 and state that they know the scale of that challenge and that we have the ability to meet it. The key issues include:

1. We have carbon dioxide emissions about double the global average.
2. The Paris Agreement demonstrated the need to stop using fossil fuels by 2030.
3. The technologies needed to achieve zero carbon are available and affordable.
4. A pathway to zero carbon has been put forward and about 70% of changes needed have been identified. More work needed this year to develop a comprehensive plan.
5. Actions are needed from now. www.ZeroCarbonShropshire.org will tell you more.
6. Time is pressing. We all need to work together on an emergency footing.
7. Zero carbon represents a major commercial opportunity for employment and sustainable growth.

Join in via <https://zerocarbonschropshire.org/sign-up/>

For more information the contact is markfermor@ZeroCarbonShropshire.org or telephone 07976 800730

THE READING GROUP

Samples of readers' views, for and against 'Himself' by Jess Kidd:

A good lockdown book, it kept me guessing but was not too taxing on the brain. The storyline was intriguing and we were introduced to a variety of interesting characters. I especially enjoyed the description of the village play and wished I could have seen the performance. The style of the writing felt quite lyrical; an imaginative and entertaining book. *Gabrielle*

Not a book I rated, though it had some merits. I found the prologue more nasty than it needed to be. This would have put me off reading it! It turned out to be full of ghosts used to tell a lot of the story and induce humour; funny at times, but not convincing. It was very Irish and maybe easier to identify with if Irish.

I felt it would have been better if Orla's ghost could have appeared - why didn't she? I felt the author couldn't quite decide what sort of story she was writing. However, I did feel the author had a way with words at times, but it was not my book.

David

Congratulations to Deana Kimber for keeping the Group active by putting in time and effort to get the books delivered to them. JR.



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Dear 'Clarion' Readers

Some people (well one) have asked how I came to be called Ariadne. This is a slightly puzzling story so if you are sensitive or easily bored, turn the page now...

Those of you familiar with Greek mythology will remember that Ariadne was a Cretan Princess, the daughter of King Minos. She helped Theseus in his confrontation with the Minotaur, the half human half bull creature- which didn't end well for the latter- by supplying the thread to show him the way back out of the labyrinth. She then travelled to Naxos with Theseus whereupon he abandoned her although there are two main versions of what happened next. The first tells that she hanged herself following his departure, the second that, although left to die, she was rescued by the God Dionysus and became his consort. The latter is obviously the better result for her although Theseus doesn't come out well in either case. Abandoned by a man? Tell me about it...

In more recent times, names from Greek Mythology were adopted by the Royal Navy for their ships and a series of 8 vessels carried the name 'Ariadne' between 1776 and 1992. This is where things start to become slightly uncertain. Although I am a proud Yorkshire 'Tyke' my mother only moved there from Plymouth shortly before I was born. As a result, I never knew my father and mother was always a little vague about his identity as she was about her occupation in Plymouth. She always described this as 'Customer facing work within the dockyard'. As a result, I had always assumed that she was a secretary or telephone operator although now I am beginning to have my doubts.

One reason for these is a large scrapbook with photos of a number of sailors that she always kept in her wardrobe and, when I was young, I used to flick through the pages and ask if any of the photos was of my father. Whenever this happened, she would always reply 'Possibly' and refuse to be drawn further. I would dearly like to talk with her again about this but sadly it is not possible as she has now passed on.

I can only assume from the little I have been able to glean that my father may have been a crew member on HMS 'Ariadne' and could have met my mother when the ship was docked in Plymouth. As a result, she named me after the ship. Obviously this is just supposition but should you have any elderly relatives who served in the Royal Navy and who, having read the above, looked a trifle sheepish or worried, you might want to ask whether they ever served on HMS 'Ariadne'. If so, perhaps you could enquire whether they ever enjoyed a 'run ashore' in Plymouth and met a girl named Doris. Should this prove to be the case, could you send me a photo of them in their navy days via the Editor and I'll compare them with those in the scrapbook. Who knows – we could be related!

As you will appreciate, knowing who your ancestors are is a matter of great importance to most people and any help to fill in the blanks for me would be very welcome.

Yours sincerely

Ariadne J Grumpy

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THE MEDICAL CENTRE - AN UPDATE

As we head into the winter months we thought we would update you from The Medical Centre.

Obviously this has been a year like no other and we are very grateful for all the support and understanding we have received from our patients throughout this difficult time.

Due to Covid-19, we have had to change the way we work and we are now screening all patients by telephone prior to arranging the most appropriate appointment or treatment for them. This measure is to ensure the ongoing safety of our patients and staff and to minimise the likelihood of disruption to services that may occur should large numbers of staff have to isolate. To help us with these processes we do ask that you do not come into the Surgery without an appointment, or prior approval from us, and whenever possible attend appointments on your own.

Despite these changes, we are seeing many patients face to face and a clinician is always available to talk to and discuss any medical concerns with patients on the phone.

We are performing our usual full range of services in the Medical Centre and are catching up on services that were cancelled earlier this year such as cervical screening, and blood tests. If we offer you an appointment or review at the surgery for screening or for chronic disease management than please be assured that it is safe to attend the surgery and we urge you to come to these appointments as planned.

We have across the October to January period run a number of flu clinics and are pleased to be able to report that in excess

of 2,760 patients have received their vaccination from us this year, this compares with 1,800 across the whole of last winter. We do still have a small number of vaccines available so if you have not yet been vaccinated and believe you fit the vaccination criteria this year, please give Reception a call and they will be pleased to help you.

Please always remember to follow government advice and if you develop symptoms of Covid-19 such as a high temperature, a new continuous cough or a loss of sense of taste or smell, to self-isolate and obtain a covid test. These can be accessed through the government website www.gov.uk or by calling 119.

Please do not attend the medical centre if you or any of your family have symptoms as this puts other patients and staff at risk.

In December 2020 we began working alongside our neighbouring practices to deliver the Covid-19 vaccination programme which covers the whole of the South East Shropshire population from Bridgnorth Medical Practice. So far we have given 5,190 vaccinations, with a total of 9,170 to have been given by the 31st January 2021.

As new vaccines become available we will be continuing to review our processes. You will be contacted if and when you are eligible for your vaccination; please do not contact the surgery about this as we are working diligently through the cohorts provided by NHS England, and our phone lines are already extremely busy. Rest assured, all normal services will continue at the surgery whilst we are involved in the vaccination programme.



Cleobury Mortimer Benefice

Church Services in Cleobury Benefice

Rector's Letter

This year Ash Wednesday, opening the season of Lent, falls on the 17th of February. What are we to say about Lent this year? I write as the highest daily death toll of the pandemic so far – admittedly elevated after the weekend- has just been recorded. This figure is of course the saddest of statistics, but it only stands as the tip of the iceberg as far as the full total of human misery generated by this wretched virus is concerned. The full picture includes illness, short and long term, separation and loneliness, poverty, unemployment and debt.

Lent is sometimes seen as a time to give things up, deprive ourselves, almost to punish ourselves. It seems very difficult to see how we can place ourselves this year in a worse position than we are already – or why we would want to.... It is better to think of the holy season as one of preparation for a great joy, even a purification. We can use this Lent not so much as a period of denial as an opportunity for greater attentiveness, loving attention to those around us and their needs. No relationships are perfect, all can be improved. Whenever we relate to each other and to our community there is often some accumulated hardness of heart or cynicism, that can be dissolved by an effort towards greater sympathy and understanding.

This Lent, let's try to become more sensitive, and to reach out towards others in whatever way we are able, to try and relieve what suffering we can. We can also become more conscious of the beauty of the natural world, of our countryside, and use the growing beauty of spring to refresh our souls and direct us towards awareness of the goodness of our Creator, and the victorious sacrifice his Son made for at the first Easter, to redeem the world.

God bless, and keep safe,

Ashley

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

The Services are: Evensong every evening at 6.00 pm in modern language

Eucharist every Sunday at 10.00 am

Eucharist every Wednesday at 10.00 am

Eucharist every Thursday at 12.00 noon

Evensong every Sunday at 6.00pm according to the Book of Common Prayer,

If you would like to be part of any or all of these services please access Zoom and request to "join the meeting" then input number 2636386004 which should take you directly to the service.

We look forward to seeing you.

Please keep looking at our Facebook page, website and the noticeboard for up-to-date information.

Although we are in lockdown, we are still available to talk and listen for whatever reason (big or small). Even if you just want a chat feel free to ring Ashley or Joe.

Rector: Preb. Ashley Buck (07477 165602)

Curate: Rev'd Joe Simons (07516 381857)

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A Garden is for Life, Not Just the Summer

I recently discovered a cunning 'hack' that provides an instant disguise for missed weeds, incomplete pruning and the general 'fraying around the edges' state of my garden. Like all useful hacks, it's easy, available to all and, best of all, free - simply leave your garden until the depths of winter and let Mother Nature do her thing. As you lie tucked up in bed, she'll pop along and transform your slightly shambolic patch into a marvel that could grace the pages of any glossy gardening magazine.

How does she do this? The payoff for chilling us all to the bone is that she sprinkles frozen jewels far and wide.

Why is this a noteworthy 'hack'? Because frozen gardens *always* look wonderful (yes, even mine).

There's something truly magical about the icy cleanliness of a garden under a blanket of frost. The deeper the frost, the fresher and more enchanting it becomes. Everything sparkles under the low sun of a Winter's morning. Pesky weeds that previously drove you to distraction transform into horticultural specimens encased in diamonds. A hoar frost reveals the bone structure of your garden with your plot laid out in front of you in relief, a skeleton upon which you can plan next season's blooms, crops and impromptu picnics.

And it gets better. Crunching your way around your garden on such a morning is another delight. The childlike pleasure of seeing your breath, cracking through frozen puddles and navigating super-slippery paving slabs is an invigorating way to wake up. Tea and toast back indoors never tasted better.

Finally, there's the joy that follows a big dump of snow. It immediately adds a wonderful curvaceous tone to your garden. Big plump marshmallow pillows dot

themselves around your plot, giving everything a sense of cartoon fluffiness mixed with box-fresh cleanliness. Ruddy marvellous.

This naturally raises the question, why do we obsess over getting our gardens in tip-top condition for the handful of months where stuff flowers and it's briefly warm enough to sit outside and enjoy it? A cruel irony is that this brief moment of horticultural wonder coincides with the need to keep on top of the lawn, weeds and watering. Running around like a headless chicken, titivating your garden and not actually taking time to enjoy it is an easy trap to fall into.

Now, I'm not suggesting for one moment that you don't think and plan ahead for the summer, but let's not forget we have 12 remarkable months with which to enjoy our gardens. Granted, the soggy ones can test the patience, but the cold ones can be just as arresting as the height of summer. After hours of research (primarily looking out of the window with a cuppa), I can reveal that the secret is leaving some stuff in the ground. For example, the spent Allium heads I left in the border by the house looked cracking encased in frost. Same goes for the Teasels (lethal to anyone unfortunate enough to brush past them, but irresistible to birds and beautiful in the arctic morning air). I even risked leaving my new favourite plant, *Verbena Bonariensis*, exposed to the elements. The books told me that taking them back to the ground would be the best way to save them, but seeing their stems and seedheads encased in a frosty coat made the gamble worthwhile. Keep your fingers crossed that they make another appearance...

Whatever the weather, I hope you get the opportunity to enjoy your garden, inside or out, over the coming weeks.

Simon Morton

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We know that the winter months are not 'dead' and that even January can see gorse flowering, but February is the month when I wake up to the fact that spring is approaching. The Christian feast of Candlemas (2nd February) has customs linked to the lengthening of the days, some of which it inherited from the Celtic Imbolc festival: the celebration of the start of lambing. Also this month we have St. Valentine's Day: the time when birds pair up for the year and humans turn their thoughts the same way! Those of us not inclined to follow in that direction can still make use of National Nestbox Week to help our garden birds.

This month the hardy and cheerful Snowdrop greets us in gardens and hedge banks: my 'Wild Flower Key' by Francis Rose doesn't seem to be sure whether it's a native but allows that it may be so in the Welsh Borders, and that's good enough for me. I'll be watching for buds bursting on the trees (especially the 1250 little saplings we've underplanted over the winter in the oak woodland near Unclys Farm with the help of enthusiastic, socially-distant volunteers), but I may have to wait another month. Meanwhile I can enjoy the display of catkins in the hazel coppice: male flowers of the tree opening in fine weather to shed their yellow pollen. Look carefully and you will see the tiny red female flowers clinging close to the bare twigs, ready to produce hazelnuts when fertilised by pollen carried on the wind.

Our opportunities to exercise have been very limited recently and the temptation is to stride out on woodland walks and cover a bit of ground. However, I would advocate going a little more slowly and pausing so that the

wildlife around us can recover and resume normal activity. How about taking something to sit on and taking a break on a log or under a tree? The calls and songs of birds will return and you may be surprised to see insects on the move or hear the rustling progress of a mouse or vole. The reservoir near Unclys is a popular spot but I can still find myself as its only observer and be rewarded with a sighting of its most colourful resident, the Kingfisher.



At this time of the year the males and females live separately, watching out for fish from their bankside perches. 'The Nature of Wyre' by the Wyre Forest Study Group, tells me that four pairs have nested along the Dowles Brook in recent years, excavating tunnels up to three feet into the bank to do so. Their choice of nest site may put them at risk of being washed out by flash floods but in good years they may rear up to three broods of young. We are very lucky to see Kingfishers in this area, not only in the forest but often along the banks of the Severn, which is where Mick Farmer took this splendid photo.

Linda Iles

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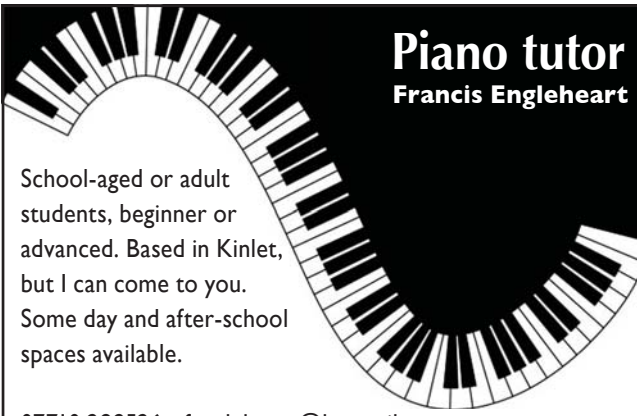
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A big thank you to everyone, including the Severn Hospice shop, and the Market Hall, who have contributed towards our plea for soft toys, bed clothes and children's clothes. You have done us proud: 10 bags of soft toys to the Teddy Trust, bed clothes and children's clothes to a local women's refuge. Many thanks and stay safe,

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No doubt some, like Jeremy Corbin, still hanker after the Socialist dream which never really existed. In reality, even one of his heroes, Vladimir Lenin was less than cuddly. At the All Russia Food Conference in 1921, he made it clear that he was not in favour of equal sustenance for all, saying that State support should only be given to essential workers and food distribution (or lack of it) used as a means to reduce the numbers of those who were not considered essential. Nice.

Pigeons seem to be proliferating at present, possibly helped by individuals feeding them and are a real nuisance. Tom Lehrer had the right idea with his cheerful ditty '*Poisoning Pigeons in the Park*'. This includes the immortal couplet: 'When they see us coming/ the birdies all try and hide/ but they still go for peanuts/ when coated with cyanide'. Note: please don't try this at home boys and girls (only because you might poison yourselves...)

You may remember the row when Spike Milligan wanted the inscription on his gravestone written in Gaelic and the Church was not keen. I think the best example of an inscription is on the stone of Jack Lemmon the comedian. It just reads 'In'.

The late Victoria Wood was always coming up with great quotes including one about a disapproving matron complaining about the young entertaining themselves by turning to each others private parts out of sheer boredom.... 'I kept myself happy for years with a couple of bobbins and a crochet hook'. Well said.

I see that Boris Johnson is on record as saying that equality is impossible as '16% of our species have an IQ of less than 85'. If this is the case, he must be commended on recruiting his entire Cabinet from that small proportion of the population. Following the latest lockdown, it's easy to identify the relevant 16% of the UK population. They are the ones still partying and mixing freely. You

will remember that the geological epoch that spawned the dinosaurs was named the Cretaceous period. Given the above behaviour, shouldn't 2020-21 be named the Cretinous period? Still the vaccine is now being rolled out and Boris has said that all the most vulnerable will be jabbed by the middle of February. We'll have an update on the figures next month to see if this is one promise he did keep. After all, the law of averages says that he must get something right eventually.

Sadly, the popularity of 'Dry January' has been overtaken in 2021 by 'Die January' as deaths soar. Please, please, take the lockdown seriously. The latest mortality figures are really worrying with the total announced over 13/14th January nearly equivalent to the entire population of Cleobury – in two days!. Just keep your heads down and stay safe....

Well, Brexit has finally happened with the predicted chaos at ports around the country. Northern Ireland has been especially badly hit with supplies of M&S 'Peppa Pig' sweets (amongst other things) unobtainable. Apparently the sweets are made in Germany but shipped via England so lose their identity, are treated as third country produce and liable to much bureaucracy and extra paperwork. Brilliant... French and Dutch Customs have also been confiscating travellers' ham sandwiches – perhaps they forgot to bring their own...

Shropshire Council have been given another national award, receiving the 2020 'Private Eye' 'Consultant of the Year' prize for paying £1000 per day for a consultant to 'look into' the problem of potholes. There certainly still seems to be plenty for them to look into... You can see and feel the difference when you cross the boundary from Worcestershire (remember going that far?) with smooth tarmac giving way to crumbling surfaces. I wonder how many potholes £1000 per day could fill?.

Ariadne J Grumpy

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SAMARITANS

Mental health is a subject of much concern at the moment, with the extra worry of Coronavirus adding to the stress many people find it hard to cope with. One of the better known support charities for people in crisis is Samaritans and we talked to one of their volunteers and found out more about this remarkable free service.

The charity was founded in 1953 by Chad Varah, a Church of England priest who was also a cartoonist and script writer. Quite a character. Not that the church origins dictate who can seek help - it is open to all who need someone to simply listen.

Today there are 20,000 volunteers working for the cause, with 200 branches in the UK and ROI. The service is free and operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. They are busy all the time; in the six months from March to August 2020, there were 1.2 million calls and email contacts made.

We talked to Paul, who volunteered in 2016 and took a training course as a listening volunteer. That took almost six months, from briefings to sitting and listening to an experienced volunteer before taking calls and then sharing a debrief before being welcomed as one of the team at Telford. There are two listeners on each shift, working as a team and supporting one another.

The calls may come from anywhere in the country, from Europe and sometimes further, the automatic switchboard puts the incoming call through to the first available volunteer. "So I could be dealing with a call from Morpeth or Southampton," as Paul puts it.

What the team do not do is disclose personal details - their job is to sit and simply be a sympathetic listener. Anyone who has been through stress will almost certainly have found it hard to just sit and talk; Samaritans listen without the need to comment until they feel the caller may need the support of their voice..

If a caller has to end the talk, there's no way he or she can get back to the same person. It's part of the volunteer training that they explain there will be another sympathetic ear on the line next time they call, but not the same person. Do callers accept that? "We're all human beings," is Paul's answer. "Listening is the most important thing to do." And that is the essence of the Samaritan service - willing to listen.

Volunteers normally work three hour shifts, with the 10.00pm to 2.00am four hour shift being the exception, as these hours are often a critical time for those who need support. Listening may not seem to be a very tiring business, but taking in what a person under great stress is

trying to tell you can be. What volunteers are trained not to do is give advice or to be in any way judgemental; that simple service of quietly listening is what works best.

So how does the service measure its success? Suicide statistics give a clue, and the fact that a GP with a stressed patient might suggest a call to the Samaritans could help is a clue to the service's standing with medical professionals.

What the volunteers do not have is a target, the only pressure they face is that of listening, talking when it's necessary and being a kind presence, even though the caller will never know what they look like.

We were bound to ask how the training covered a caller with suicide in mind. Not an easy matter to deal with and a suicide happening during a call is not unknown. There can't be many more tests of a volunteer's mettle than that and we ended the interview full of admiration for people whose motivation is to help others.

So why did Paul volunteer? "In 2014 I was going through the worst experience of my life and a stranger asked how I was. It was such a kind gesture. I realised that life has been good to me and I wanted to put something back."

The Samaritans' free of charge telephone number in the UK is 116 123 and their email is jo@samaritans.org

Jim Reynolds

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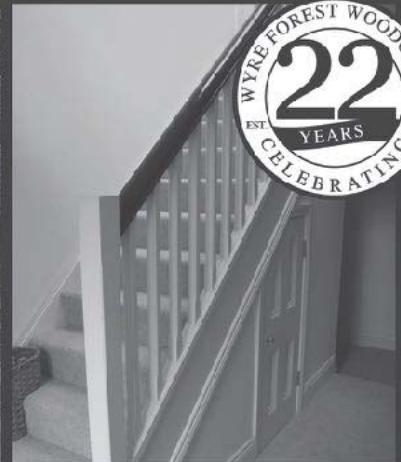
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Cleobury Clarion - Page 50 - February 2021



"We tried artificial flies. We tried lures. We tried live bait. Nothing works ... it's like they're psychic!"



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

February 2021 CMTC Report

A new year with new challenges now as we all need to work together to support those in need and get through all our challenges together.

There are a couple of important things happening this year, the 2021 Census in March and local elections in May.

The 2021 Census will be on 21st March with postcards to all household's 8th to 14th of February followed by a letter with online access code 8th to 14th of March. At this point paper copies can be requested.

There will be Census support centres, with our local one at Ludlow library.

Good news for genealogists as the 1921 Census will be made public as it has to remain confidential for 100 years.

At present all are preparing for the local elections in May but I think we have to watch that space because of Covid.

The Christmas lights did their job in lifting spirits with lots of great comments. We are grateful to all the volunteers who help every year and for the decorations on the trees and thank you all on behalf of the community. Thank you again to Alan Guest and we are especially glad that some put their own baubles in memory of someone. We hope it brought some comfort.

We could not get the Lime trees pleached before Christmas due to our contractors having Covid issues, but they are now scheduled to be done on the 15th of February.

The Town Council and councillors continue with all its normal work and projects for the coming year, working with community groups and volunteers to sustain and enhance what we are so lucky to have around us. One of the projects is to provide solar lighting in the park area which is needed as it gets much more use.

The QEII area has become even more important for our health and wellbeing, seeing more people enjoying the walk around the park even in the coldest of days. There are noticeably more dog owners and I would ask that they are respectful to others and please pick up after your dogs.

On a better note, if anyone would like to plant snowdrops, bluebells, or other spring plants in the wooded areas, or spread wildflower or poppy seeds in our wildflower areas, please contact the council for more information and direction, as it would be good for families and children to be involved and see the fruits of what they can contribute to nature.

The way we work with Shropshire council has changed completely over the past few years and we do not have the direct contacts we once enjoyed. One call or email was all it took, and it would be sorted. As Clerk, the same as others in the county, I continue to report and chase issues but have to do it online the same as everyone, so as well as us please keep reporting issues too. We do chase higher as needed but even then, they are restricted by staff and cuts. All things considered I know we do very well consider where we are in the County, thanks to our councillors and Unitary councillors.

Thank you to all the volunteers again ready to help those in need, to those who donate to the Foodbank so those in need can have food on the table for themselves and their children. Thank you to those volunteers in the community that put themselves before others and most of all please continue to adhere to Government guidelines and protect our NHS, but most of all stay safe and protect our community.

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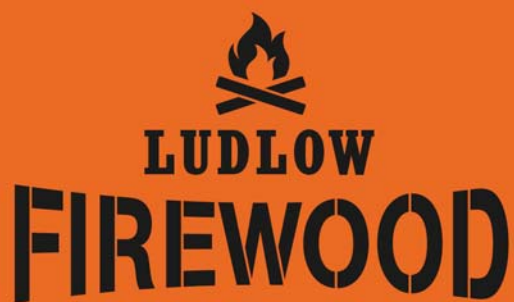
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A belated Happy New year to all. At the end of last year, we looked at electronic scam activity. We looked at the "Rule of 5" relating to the use of passwords. I cannot stress enough the fact that password management is one of the most important ways of staying safe online. Let's assume you have good password control on anything you do online, but that's not the only way the bad boys will come after you. There are so many scams being perpetrated online that are designed to relieve you of your money. While the approach varies greatly, the objective remains the same. You are tricked into revealing enough of your bank details whether it is credit/debit card or bank account details, to enable the scammer to access your money. Once the scammer has access to your cards or accounts, they will go on a spending spree and order goods in your name but have them sent to a different address. Once the goods are received, they are usually sold off or 'fenced' and the criminal gets the cash. If they don't use your credit or debit card to order goods there are other ways that they can use your card either by cloning the card or cloning your personal details to remove money directly through cash machines. I will go into more detail on these aspects in a future article. Going back to the 'front end', I said that there are many ways the scam can suck you in, so let's focus on those that come through your email. A good email account or reputable host provider will pass genuine emails to your inbox and direct emails where the sender is not in your contact list, to the spam or junk folder. For example, on one of my email accounts, I had two genuine emails in the inbox and 31 spam emails in the junk box. Many of these spam emails are genuine businesses trying to sell you something, but there are also some that are far less than genuine but either catch your eye with a subject heading that looks genuine or comes from a sender that looks like it might be genuine. EG. Sender: Post Office, Subject: [your name] followed by We were unable to deliver your parcel. Looks very plausible especially in today's environment when the amount of goods we are ordering online has risen significantly. You open the email and see that there is a link you are asked to click on to provide your full details, or payment information for the small redelivery fee. If tempted to offer your details or card details to pay this small fee (usually £1 or £2), you have

just given the scammer enough info to potentially clean you out! DO NOT BE TEMPTED, the folder is not called spam on your email account for nothing. Personally, I delete 100% of the messages in my spam box. I work on the principal that if there is a genuine message in there the sender will contact me again, possibly by a different route. I have mentioned in the past that clicking on the sender's name on the email reveals more detail about who they are. In the example I gave above where the sender was 'Post Office', the real sender was 'contact@consenttop.com'.

Just to remind you, genuine business owners sending emails will always use a sender address that comes from their genuine domain. E.g., One with sender as National Railway Museum did actually come from them, the senders address was 'norepy@railwaymuseum.org.uk' I did read it, they were not asking for personal details, but I deleted it anyway once I had read it. The message I am trying to get over is this. An email may look like it is from a genuine source, always check the source by clicking on the sender name. There are so many apparently genuine senders, like Royal Mail, HMRC, TV Licencing, Energy suppliers, Banks etc etc, it always makes sense to check if the sender is really who they say they are. If you decide to open the email, be very wary of any links you are asked to click on. They usually are highlighted and start with http:// or https://. However, as the scammers send out hundreds of thousands of these emails every day, just opening the email confirms to the sender that your address is active and you could be flagged by them as a possible future target. You can find out more online on Facebook Group 'SCAMS and How To Stop Them' or online at 'www.beat-the-scams.info/' or '<https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/beatthescammers/index.html>' If you are reading this online, you can just click on these links to be redirected. If you don't have access to a computer, ask a friend or go to the library and ask to use one of theirs. As always, BE ALERT, BE AWARE AND STAY SAFE. Next month we will look in more detail at the methods scammers use to try to trick us.

Nigel Reid



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SAVING ICONIC BIRDS

Clee Hill Community Wildlife Group has been monitoring local Curlews, Lapwings and other birds since 2012. In 2020, about 25 local people sent in records from home, or obtained while out exercising, or after the coronavirus restrictions were lifted in mid-May. A full report of what we found has been sent out to our members and can be found on our website www.shropscwgs.org.uk

The good news is that the Kestrel population is doing well (we found six nests, including two in nest boxes we've put up), we heard more Cuckoos than usual, and Red Kites have spread right across the area.

Save our Curlews



Such a beautiful bird, with a distinctive cry that echoes across the Clee Hill area. Photo made available thanks to Gareth Thomas.

In spite of the restrictions, our Curlew coverage was not much worse than in previous years. We found 8 pairs, so sadly many of the 13 pairs we found when we started have already disappeared.

There is a real danger that we will lose these iconic birds forever unless we can find out why they are disappearing,

and take action to halt and reverse the decline. Remind yourself of what we might lose by listening to the Curlew's evocative and mournful song on <https://www.british-birdsongs.uk/curlew/?type1585>

The Community Wildlife Group has been working with Shropshire Ornithological Society, carrying out research to find nests, put an electric fence around them to protect the eggs from predators, and then fix radio-tags to the chicks and track them to see how they use the landscape, and what happens to them. Not enough young birds fledge to replace the older birds dying off. We need to know why so we can do something about it.

This innovative research will continue in the Clee Hill area in 2021, with land-owners' help. It is expensive, and we need to raise more funds to carry it out. An appeal has been sent to our members and supporters, and we would be very grateful for support from other Clarion readers too.

Curlews should be returning to the area at the end of the month, or early March. We will be asking Clarion readers to help with the survey, or send in Curlew records to help us to find all the pairs that come back.

Clarion readers can find more information, including the Bird Report for 2020, and details of how to make donations to the Appeal and where to send them, on our website www.shropscwgs.org.uk or

contact Chris Bargman 01299 270514, email chcwgs@shropscwgs.org.uk

In normal times we would hold a meeting to get people involved in our survey in 2021, but that's not going to be possible this year so please contact Chris if you want to help. It's very easy, simple instructions are provided. We hope to run a Birdwalk in April that will provide practical fieldwork training.

Leo Smith

CYRIL BREAKWELL

Cyril was a month short of his 96th birthday when he died on Boxing Day. A local lad, he was one of nine children and is survived only by younger brother Ron.

Cyril was a lovely man to sit and talk to, as he recalled work driving lorries for British Road Services and later local coaches including school bus duties. The late Paul Bland first put his stories down on paper, then asked Cyril to read through and check the facts before sending another instalment on for printing in the Clarion.

It was an instant success, the voice of a man who actually experienced those adventures and misfortunes to come up still smiling. The loss of Paul to act as Cyril's messenger was really sad.

Ladies now over 21 would say what a handsome man he was and he would smile at the memory without telling tales. A true gentleman with the manners to keep his lips sealed, Cyril and his tales will be sadly missed.

Jim Reynolds

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In Business - Lauren at Amba Legal Services

Lauren Hirst has been part of the family business for five years, having moved over from a post in Human Resources to help her father with a growing demand. She had some knowledge of employment law, but came with a lot to learn.

Being an ambitious and able lady, she set about the task with lots of enthusiasm and advice from father Mark. In addition to having been a fully qualified member of the Institute of Professional Willwriters for four years, in three months she will have completed her law degree.

She's taking on more of the workload and has built good relations with customers. "One client was so pleased that they gave me a picture, as I resolved a complicated issue for them," she recalls.



"I just love what I do. Going out to see clients and hearing all their stories," she smiles. As you would expect, the bulk of business comes from this area, but it does spread wider. As well as clients in London, they have one in Australia who has family in Worcester and made arrangements to draft their will during a visit here.

Lauren's husband, whose job is completely separate, gets involved with the IT side

and work on the website, a very handy skill to call on.

Her plans for the future are to continue with the family business, where she's so happy. Her next target membership of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives.

She has strong local connections: "Our Cleobury roots go back to my great grandparents the Kinnishes, who lived in Furlongs Road until 1993 and my grandparents farmed at Neen Savage for many years."

Has coronavirus hit the business? "In the first lockdown we had a lot of enquiries, but since then it's been normal." And what is Amba's greatest strength? "Our clients regularly comment that they find us friendly, professional and easy to deal with."



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CRIMESTOPPERS		0800 555 111	Free Police contact. Talk in confidence, to report any crime.
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINE		0800 783 1359	Women's Aid, 24 Hour support:
HOME FROM HOSPITAL		01584 878046	Help over the first weeks back home from Age UK
MARKET HALL	Ali Sheffield	07752 542 853	markethall@cleobury.org.uk
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SHROP DOC		111	Service available evenings and weekends
THE PHARMACY		01299 270219	Closes for half day on Saturday. Delivers prescriptions
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NIGHTINGALE NURSING FUND	Rosemary Abbiss	01746 718451	
TOWN COUNCIL	Clerk Matthew Sheehan	01299 271154	Cleobury Country Centre 9 to 2 pm, Mon to Fri. www.cleobury.org.uk . Council meets in the Centre on the first Monday of the month
POST OFFICE		01299 270211	In the Select and Save Grocery Store, Church Street
SAINT MARY'S YOUTH PROJECT	Mark Greaves	07828 116810	mark.stmarys@live.co.uk
SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL		0345 678 9000	
SOUTH SHROPSHIRE YOUTH FORUM			richard@ssyf.net .
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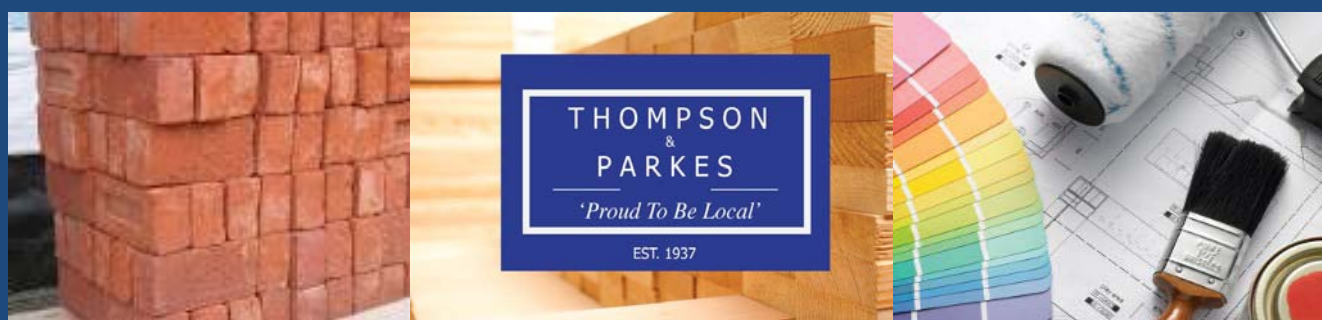
Editor and Advertising Sales: Jim Reynolds, 4 Childe Road, Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire

DY14 8PA. Telephone: 01299 270642 Mobile: 07410 977 212

E-Mail: editor@cleoburyclarion.co.uk or uncle.jim@icloud.com

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