

The Cleobury Clarion



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January 2017



Father Christmas had a very busy day on December 3rd, when he looked after crowds of young children at the Christmas Fair in the Parish Church. He then walked up the road to look after the 5.00 o'clock switching on of the town's lights, before coming back to the Fair to carry on dealing gently with more shy and overwhelmed young children.

What a nice old chap he is, though it's actually the youthful looking Sir George Castledine behind that full set of white whiskers. **Report on Page 7.**

ROAD CLOSURE

Anyone who travels along the A4117 knows what a busy road it can be. With the bigger trucks using it, it becomes a slow road as well, while the surface suffers from the passage of 40 tonners.

This inevitably means work to maintain the road in a decent state and a major maintenance project is due to start on January 30th. The aim is to resurface where necessary, and make the road markings and drainage good.

This work will cover the stretch from Station Road here in Cleobury, through to the border with Worcestershire at Lem Hill. The work is scheduled to take 30 days, which means closure of different stretches of the road as the job progresses. Diversions will be signposted, taking traffic across country to and from the A456 Kidderminster to Leominster road. Do please bear in mind that the dates we quote were given out early in December; they may vary if other jobs are delayed or the weather is extreme.



Christmas is a time for giving and on December 12th the proceeds of the Christmas Fair run by Pat Williams, Stephanie Morrison and Alison Andrews were handed over to three worthwhile charities. Front row from left are Marion Jones of Midland Air Ambulance, Pat Williams on behalf of The Haven and Sue Henderson for Macmillan Cancer Care. Behind are Alison, Stephanie and Golf Club chair Graham Pain. Each cause took home a cheque for £266, raised by people having a good time at an evening hosted by the Golf Club, who are very good to local charities.

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The Cleobury Clarion, January 2017.
Volume Fourteen - Edition Ten



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Fitness and Therapies
See Page 9*



*STEM - Science, Technology,
Engineering and Maths - at
work in Lacon Childe School.
See Page 39*



*Well set up to look after
your sight.
Cleobury Opticians. See
Page 55*

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ROY'S DVD CHEQUE FOR MCMILLAN



Roy Rogers hands over the cheque to Sue Henderson of Macmillan Cancer Care.

Roy Rogers handed over a cheque for £140 to Sue Henderson of Macmillan Cancer Care in time for Christmas. It was the profit made from the sales of the DVD he had produced from the video of Cath Groves' renowned Guided Tour around Cleobury.

There's much more to the story than just the sale of DVDs. Cath Groves was well known as a local historian who loved to tell people something of the local folk history as she led walks around the town. And when she heard that Roy had a new video camera she promptly asked him

to make a video of her telling her stories about the town. "I'd never made a video, I didn't know what to do, but we just walked around and I filmed Cath talking. The result was the video that she sold and I went on to make videos of other places," he explained.

There had been lot of requests to have the film available as a DVD, which Roy arranged last year, selling the discs through Simply Fresh and Spar. The result was the £140 he handed over to Sue Henderson. And that was a bit of a reunion in itself, as Roy and Sue were in the same class when they were at Lacon Childe School.

AN APOLOGY

It seems that a lot of email messages addressed to the editor have not been getting through. Not very helpful with news for the Christmas issue, as the editor@cleoburyclarion link had stopped accepting mail.

Until that problem can be sorted out, please use the **a l t e r n a t i v e** : uncle.jim@icloud.com

KNOWLE SPORTS GROUND SALES

Just a reminder that there is no Sale in January. They start again on February 4th, at 8.00 in the morning. In the meantime, if you have unwanted furniture or

household goods, you can leave them as a donation to the sale at the Sports Ground, just off the Tenbury Road as you drop down from Clee Hill Village. All proceeds go to the Sports Ground and facilities.

NEEN SAVAGE W.I.

We decided this year to hold our December meeting in the day and to do something different.

We all thought it would be fun to do 'Afternoon Tea' and had a very pleasant afternoon at the Clive Hotel in Ludlow - next door to Ludlow Food Centre.

We enjoyed a selection of sandwiches and a sumptuous choice of scones, cakes, Christmas cake and shortbread, accompanied by copious amounts of tea and coffee - very much recommended.

Our first meeting in 2017 will be at 7.30 on Wednesday January 11th with a visit from Mrs Ann Cuckson, Cleobury Freezer Centre. Everyone welcome to attend.

Julie Hobin

SILLY BITS

The real art of conversation is not only to say the right thing at the right time, but also to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.
Anon.



Cleobury Players is your local amateur dramatics society that has provided entertainment for our community for the last forty years. We are always looking for new members to join our cast and crew to support our own productions. We can also provide technical equipment and support to other local groups needing assistance in their own shows if required.

If you would like to find out more, then please get in touch with Annabel (01299 270666 or annabelgemmill@btconnect.com).



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GREAT CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Once again, Cleobury's main street was a welcoming sight through the Christmas holiday, with a super display of lights. It's a habit that seems to be dying in many parts and few small towns take the trouble to put up lights as we still do. That makes our effort look so much better, and people do comment on how welcoming the place is.

The crowd that turned out for the Christmas Fair in the Parish Church and the 5.00 o'clock switching on of the lights was a testimony to how much people appreciated what had been done. And the chocolates that Father Christmas handed out to the children were a fine and generous gesture on the part of the Parish Council.

Having seen the lights come on, Father Christmas then made his way back to the church to listen to more requests from shy youngsters as he gave them a little something and promised to do what he could for his visit on Christmas Eve. The editor dug deep and had a go at a raffle for Winnie the Pooh. Imagine his surprise when he found Winnie had been delivered to his house on Sunday morning, as his ticket has been the lucky one. Even

though it was his birthday, he passed the bear on to the youngest of his grand daughters who share the house.

THE KING'S ARMS SHED

Roger Skelhorn explains:

We have run Faith in the Pub for over seven years and like most things it's in need of some new ideas. A recent meeting felt that we should keep the idea of a regular meeting, re-focussed on it being a men's group again. A few ideas were presented about what we could do, which included more social activities such as a curry evening, mentoring and sharing with the young people that SMYP supports. Perhaps going bowling at Leominster, doing walks in the summer rather than everything being a visitor talking to us, though that's not ruled out entirely as we have had some great speakers over the years.

Along with this change of activities, we have brought a new name to it, The King's Arms Shed (KAS) building on the idea that for many men the shed is an important part of life and activities.

Wendy has agreed to us using the second Monday of each

month and to provide some refreshments for us, and we start on January 9th. Please try to come along and give some thought to activities we could pursue in the future.

THANK YOU

Carolyn & Keith Balmer would like to thank Ellie Targett for her talk on "The Teddy Trust" for the Thursday Girls group at the Market Hall on November 10th.

Also to everyone who has contributed with teddies and soft toys which get passed onto disenfranchised children throughout the world.

Please keep them coming. Call 07976307889 to arrange a collection.

Carolyn and Keith

WALKING FOR HEALTH

We are again running Walking For Health winter walks through January and February. They will start from the Market Hall on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month, to fit in with the CoCo coffee mornings.

The dates are January 11th and 25th and February 8th and 22nd. The contact will again be me on CM 271754.

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KERRIE'S STEALTH THERAPIES



Kerrie Ladek - new face on main street.

Kerrie Ladek takes over the lower room at the Market Hall every Wednesday, to offer her Stealth Fitness and Therapies service. We first heard about her from Matt Sheehan, who was full of praise after experiencing her massage technique.

She's a local girl, ex Lacon Childe School, building a new business with home visits and regular spots like the Market Hall one. She offers a wide variety of help, from Swedish, Sports or Bamboo massage through holistic treatments to facials and manicures and

pedicures, waxing, nail extensions and personal fitness training. If you can't find something from that lot to help you feel better, you're just not trying.

Talk to her on 07812 586312 or 01584 892107.

THE FRIENDSHIP CLUB

49 Cleobury Mortimer Friendship club members, volunteers and friends enjoyed a three course Christmas dinner at the Parish Hall on 6th December.

The meal was prepared and cooked by Gill and Brian Davies, And we were very grateful to the students at Lacon Childe School who waited on tables and the Primary school students, who entertained us with carols.

All the members are looking forward to next year with entertainment, trips and days out. If you are interested in joining, we meet every Tuesday at 2.00pm at the Parish Hall.

Val Breakwell

AN EVENING OF FLAMENCO

This looks like another very interesting musical evening coming our way at Clows Top

Victory Hall in February. It's organised by Shindig and features 'Synergy', an Aire Flamenco trio offering songs and instrumentals. This is not a musical form that can be presented with anything less than passion and it should be a good evening.

It's on Saturday February 11th, starting at 7.30, with a bar and snacks available. Tickets are £11.00 each, available from the Box Office on 07788 604 542.

The Victory Hall committee have sent a reminder that there are spaces in their booking schedule. The same 07788 604 592 number is the one for any enquiries if you're looking for a local venue.

FRIENDS SUPPORT THE LIBRARY

The Friends of Cleobury Mortimer Library have joined the Parish Council in sponsoring a Christmas entertainment for younger children at the library and a series of similar events through the New Year.

The idea is to introduce the younger ones to stories and poems that can be found on the shelves. That can build interest in curious young minds and encourage the wonderful and fruitful habit of reading.



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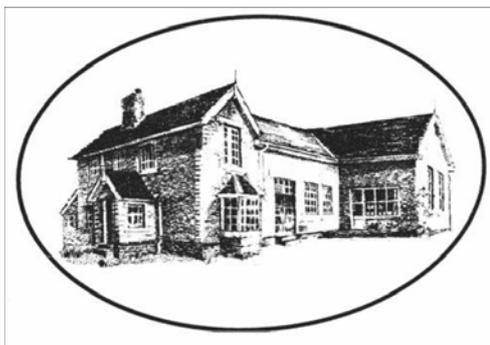
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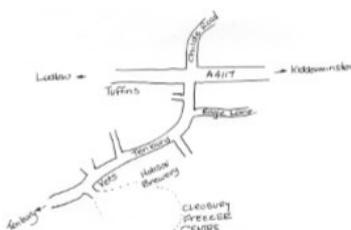
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THE POETRY CLUB IS LAUNCHED

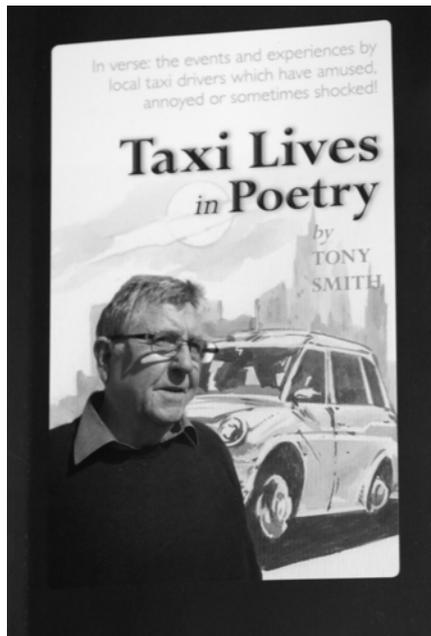
There was a small gathering of those with a poetic leaning or just plain curiosity in the Kings Arms on November 28th. Tony Smith travelled over from Kidderminster to offer encouragement and read some of his work, David Walford read some of his recent collection and Robert Hodge read some of his favourite lines. The editor got the drinks in and sat there just listening.

The surprise of the evening was Robert revealing that while living in China he wrote a poem in Chinese, which was published in a literary magazine. This is clearly a man of hidden depths.

It was a relaxed atmosphere, jokes and stories mixing with readings, and there was a strong feeling that there's enough enthusiasm to start a club. It will be a relaxed affair, open to all even if you don't want to read aloud and will meet in the library, on the final Monday of each month, starting at 7.30. That means on the 30th of this month. So if you enjoy poetry, of whatever sort, do please come along. If you care to bring a bottle of wine, it will help the evening along and maybe

overcome any nerves a prospective writer might feel. The whole idea is to encourage people to listen and maybe try writing their own verse. If not, they will still be made welcome to simply share.

AND HERE'S A NEW POETRY BOOK



This is another work by Tony Smith, the Kidderminster poet, who does seem to like coming over to Cleobury to support any poetry event. He has another life very different from poetry, working as a taxi driver in the Kiddy area, which probably means some strange hours.

It's mainly stories in verse, with some plain script to give it

balance, and tells of life behind the wheel and dealing with traffic, customers from grumpy to charming and even given to running away without paying.

It's a tongue-in-cheek look at one man trying to make a living and finding loads of humour and human warmth to balance the odd grumpy passenger. Self published, its 82 amusing pages cost £7.99. Come along to the Poetry Club's first night and he'll happily sell you one and even sign it for you..

THE LACON LOTTERY

Sally Andrews was the winner of the November Lacon Lottery when her lucky number 116 was drawn. That gave her a handy £101 as Christmas approached.

WISE BITS

'Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.'

'The older you get, the tougher it is to lose weight, because by then your body and your fat have become really good friends.'

'The easiest way to find something you've lost around the house is to buy a new replacement for it.'

'A penny saved is probably a government oversight.'

'He who hesitates is probably doing the right thing.'



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KINLET'S TYRE PARK



Happy Kinlet Primary School pupils gather on one of the tyres .

There are two new play experiences for the children at Kinlet C of E Primary School, thanks to a £10,000 funding grant from the National Lottery. The play area just inside the front gate has been transformed with the installation of a tyre park, which features truck tyres laid flat and used as a standing point and moulded into the soft play surface as climbing challenge. When the Clarion called in its first week, it was full of happy children running, jumping and occasionally falling onto the absorbent soft surface. A great time was being had by all and the tyres are all new - no scruffy old used stuff here

Nearby was a brand new tractor, big and realistic enough to hold up to six children if they were good friends and looking much like some of the tractors that pass down the nearby B4363.

Lottery funding came thanks to an effective application put together by head teacher Anita Raymond and administrator Theresa Ray. They had to explain what they wanted to create was not directly involved in the school curriculum, but did make the children's day more interesting.



Five children crowded into the tractor and nobody fell off or complained. Must have been a very good driver.

The school has a new extension to the traditional building. There is now a

welcoming entrance lobby, extra teaching space, a comfortable staff room and Mrs Raymond's office is now much larger, but can double up as a meeting room or an extra classroom. Not a bit of space is wasted.

GLOW RUN IN JACK'S MEMORY

Last January there was a glow run organised to show support for Jack Edwards' family. Rachel Shields was the power behind the event and she's decided to make the run an annual event in young Jack's memory.

It will happen at 6.30pm on Friday the 27th of this month, starting and finishing at Lacon Childe School. Entry costs £10 and includes a glow stick; the run is open to anyone over eight, but under-16s must be with an adult. All proceeds will go to the charities that supported Jack's family: Anthony Nolan, Stiliyan Petrov Foundation and Make a Wish.

You can enter online at <https://race-nation.com/jack-edwards-glow-run-2017>. More details on the Facebook event page or you can talk to organiser Rachel on 07779 270 451. There is space for 350 entries, which will get a real glow along the streets in Jack's memory.





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GROUND SOURCE HEAT FOR HOMES

By the time this edition of the Clarion has appeared, there will be drilling work going on in St Mary's Place and then College Close. No need for panic, there's not a problem, it's simply a more efficient way of heating the homes there.

It's a big job and will last until next month. Boreholes will be drilled down to extract low grade heat from deep underground and that is then converted to greater heat that is pumped into the houses. More heat, lower cost as the old electric storage heaters are replaced by modern units powered by ground source heat pumps. Hobson's use a similar system to heat the offices at their Tenbury Road brewery.



This big drill is not something to worry about, it's just an energy saving system making some of our homes warmer.

The work is being done by Ice Energy, working for Shropshire Housing Group, who have government funding. They estimate that for every 1kW of energy used, the system provides between 2.5 and 4.0kW,

using a reverse of the refrigerant system. What we are having installed here is a system that comes from Austria, where they have a long experience of using the energy that is lying beneath the surface and heating homes at low cost. Ice Systems have been designing systems since 2000 and have worked all over the UK.

When the work is completed there will be no intrusive equipment left around, just a box outside each house for readings from the pump. In all, it's another good move forward to make life a little better.

LOOKING FOR WITNESSES

Cleobury lady Lauren Dempsey is appealing for witnesses to the condition of the B4201 from Mawley Town Farm along to Mick Burke's garage early last year.

On February 7th she was driving down the road towards Mawley when her Peugeot 207 hit a pothole and suffered a puncture plus a broken wheel and suspension wishbone. She lost control of the car, which hit the verge, bounced back into the road and hit an oncoming car.

Lauren was taken to Worcester Royal Hospital, where she was found to have a broken tibia, knee, damaged kidneys, three broken ribs on one side and one on the other side, a broken shoulder and her back broken in two places. She has not been able to work since the accident and was wearing a back brace when we talked. She is waiting for further operations.

What she needs is local witnesses to the state of the road at that time. She'd like to hear from you if you can help, on

0780 503 5344 or email dempsey72@hotmail.co.uk



You have to admire Lauren's determination, out here with mobility provided by her dogs.

EMILY PRICE TOP AGAIN

Cleobury Golf Club member Emily Price has been declared winner of the Girls' Order of Merit in 2016. In other words, the best junior girl golfer in the country.

"Playing with other girls at such high levels is really motivational and helped me to understand what I need to do to become better," she said. "Overall this season has been brilliant and I have really enjoyed it with playing in events, travelling to different countries and playing with Team England."

Let's not forget that she took a break from competitive play to sit her GCSE exams before coming back to win the women's stroke play title and represent England in both the European and World Girls' Team Championships. Quite a remarkable young lady, still out there practising to improve her game.

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KEYHOLE NEUTERING

By Dr Dan Nicholls BVMedSci BVM BVS



At Severn Edge Vets Ltd we pride ourselves on continually investing in our facilities, our branches, and being up to date with the latest treatments. For instance, a recent addition for female dogs is key hole neutering, a modern approach to spaying which results in less pain, lower risk and faster recovery. Our vet, Daniel Nicholls, talks more here about the method and the extraordinary benefits it can bring to the recovery process of your pet

Key-hole (Laparoscopic) surgery is something that was barely on my radar at university. It was always something that was discussed as possible but not really normal practice. So, when I started at Severn Edge, key-hole surgery wasn't something I had seen much of or had much experience with. It's only since being here I have seen an array of operations that have been done using key-hole methods. My eyes have most definitely been opened to the possibilities.

Key-hole surgery isn't something new in human medicine but it's only in the last decade or so that it has emerged in the veterinary world. It can be used for a variety of operations that were previously done by more invasive methods, often opening the animal up (laparotomy) in the traditional method giving you total access to the abdomen.

Why bother with this new stuff? Well the benefits are mainly seen in the recovery of the animal post operation. Having abdominal surgery for example is a very painful experience and although we try our best to alleviate that pain using medications, often the discomfort from the surgery is there regardless. Key-hole surgery means that instead of a large hole required to access the cavity, a couple of small holes are used instead. This means there is a lot less trauma to the skin and muscle layers so therefore much less pain and less time needing to be rested. This all means your animal gets back to normal life quicker than ever before.

There are a variety of situations and surgical procedures that key-hole is suitable for. At the moment the routine surgery we are doing at Severn Edge is a keyhole ovariectomy (spay). However, we are now using the technique more and more for other things such as taking liver biopsies for patients with liver disease that needs investigating and removing retained testicles (cryptorchid) in male dogs.

In my time seeing and performing key-hole operations, I have already seen the dramatic improvement in recovery times and pain experienced post operatively. I am excited to see what we can use the technique for next, so that we can constantly progress and improve our patients' quality of care.

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**PARISH COUNCIL
REPORT**

Parish Clerk Matt Sheehan will be reporting regularly on the Council's work and future plans , to keep us all up to date:

The Christmas lights switch on went very well, with a festive market, teas and coffees and chocolate given out to the children. Councillors Thorogood, French, Brown and Dorothy McBride all helping on the night with the teas and coffees. Cllr French has worked over the last two years with the Christmas lights, even donating some lights for the Christmas trees. Thank you to Paul. We need to express a big Thank You to Mike and Julie from Carrot Tops, who always donate the electricity for that side of the street.

We have new challenges ahead for 2017 to keep our community going, and with support from the community we are pushing Shropshire Council to continue the services that they provide for which we all pay Council Tax. Thankfully the councillors for the last four years have

worked really hard to get us where we are today.

We have three volunteer groups running alongside the council: World War I group, Crime Reduction group, and Cleobury Community Celebration group, for the June 2017 event. We treasure and always welcome volunteers so anyone with spare time who would like to get involved in any volunteer work please talk to the parish clerk for direction. We also have a Vacancy for a councillor at present.

Among future items to look for, are a public consultation into changing our status to be called a Town Council, old streetlights being changed to LED, pushing for the Talbot car park to be revamped, roadworks starting on the A4117, new footpaths and a makeover of the play area, to name a few.

The parish council meet on the first Monday of every month at the Market Hall at 7.00 pm, with the Agenda posted on our website and on our Notice board, next to the

Market Hall. The meeting allows the public to speak at the beginning of proceedings about anything on the agenda or any issues that you wish to be raised; we always encourage residents to come along.

If you would like to be kept up to date with information from the parish council office then please pass on your email address to the parish clerk. If you are new to Cleobury Mortimer, then call in to the office in the Market Hall for your free Smart Water security kit.

One thing that we need to get used to is reporting incidents to the police. Unless this is done we cannot expect them to concentrate here when people in Bridgnorth and Ludlow report things regularly. If you see anything suspicious, please phone 101 and if it involves a vehicle and you can get the registration number, all the better.

Happy New Year to all!

Matt Sheehan
Parish Clerk



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THE WORLD WAR ONE GROUP

This was set up by the Parish Council to coordinate events that commemorate the Great War. Councillor Paul French is a member and in a series of articles will be writing about some of those who were lost.

**Private William Brown,
1895 - 1916**

The events of the Great War took place in far flung corners of the world. We are familiar with events in France Belgium and Italy but perhaps less familiar with events in Eastern Europe and the near East with exception perhaps of Gallipoli

No matter where the conflict took place it was hard, bloody , uncomfortable and cruel. Just because the sun shone in Greece it wasn't any easier.

In 1915 a joint force of English and French troops arrived in Salonica , now called Thessalonica in Macedonian Greece. The objective was to assist the Serbs in their fight against Bulgarian aggression.

Amongst the units who arrived was the 8th Service Battalion of the Kings Shropshire Light Infantry. Private William Brown of Little Isle Corley Worcs was a

private in that battalion and he died on December 21st, 1916.

A service battalion broadly speaking provided combat service support to its brigade. They fought in a defensive role but essentially carried out logistical operations for others. This included building roads , digging and timbering trenches and laying barbed wire.

It is probable that William was involved in the fortification of the city of Thessalonica which was protected by so much wire that it was known as 'The Bird Cage '.

It was easy for the public to find accounts in the press of conditions in which our soldiers fought and lived in near Europe....sticky mud, treeless landscapes and driving rain and more. However, few had any knowledge about the freezing winds, raging summer heat and treacherous landscape of Macedonian Greece.

Those serving in this theatre were mocked at the time and referred to as 'The Gardeners of Salonica 'as they did not fight as many battles as those in France and Belgium. Press accounts suggested that they

did nothing but 'dig trenches and tend their tomatoes'

All those who fought in Salonica did so because they were sent and did their duty far from home in an alien environment in support of a system that they and few at home understood.

This is probably best understood in a quote from a war diary of the time 'it is all very well dying for your country but not for a country that refuses to recognise your valour'.

William died on the 21st of December 1916 in Deden Hospital in Salonica and he is buried in Skopje British Hospital. It is likely but not certain that he died as a result of wounds received in the 'Battle of Tumbitza Farm' Salonica ... 17th November to 7th December.

As we slide into this new year of 2017 let us remember all those who did not see theirs in 1917 and those who had to endure the months that were to follow.

Thank you William and all those we cannot name.

The motto of the Kings Shropshire Light Infantry is 'Rise again with increased splendour'

Paul French

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

Every page, including the advertisements.

Just call up www.cleoburyclarion.co.uk from anywhere in the world and read what's been happening here at the centre of the universe.

(There may be a little exaggeration in this statement, but at the centre of the universe a touch of tolerance is probably a good thing to have?)

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

RoSPA

RoSPA, or the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, was formed in December 1916. The country was at war, there was a blackout in operation and pedestrians were stepping into the road in the path of passing vehicles, with disastrous and too often fatal results.

RoSPA was formed and campaigned for people to walk facing oncoming traffic, so you walked on the right hand side of the road, able to see the vehicles who were keeping left. The result was a 70 percent drop in fatal accidents and the Royal Society hasn't looked back ever since.

We wish them a Happy Birthday and continuing success in keeping people safe.

THE BENEFIT OF CONNECTIONS

Geoff Hainsworth worked for the Jaguar Rover Group from its early days - we interviewed him for this page a few months back - and still proudly drives the company product. In this case a Jaguar XK Estate, in for service at 21,000 miles when he was told he needed three new tyres. A very experienced man, he asked to see the wear and with

the car up on the ramp was horrified to find that there were deep cracks where the tread moulding met the tyre shoulder. He naturally ordered them to be replaced and got ready for a sizeable blow to the wallet.

The same evening he was at an ex-Rover Group engineers' dinner and mentioned the problem, only to be told it was a well known fault and that the tyre maker had put out a warning to dealers.

Next day he was on the phone asking why he hadn't been notified and very soon had a call to say that his Jaguar was now wearing a new set of tyres, free of charge. Quite right, too.

It is rather worrying that a man with a car he's owned from new was not made aware of a possible problem with a faulty batch of tyres. He's a very capable and smooth driver, who doesn't waste time on a journey and could probably handle a tyre blow-out if it happened, but such a serious fault should have been sorted long before cracks began to appear in what is a final point of contact with the road.

A customer without trade connections would probably have paid for new tyres and not known better.

A GREAT EVENING



Nic Sanders - nine times around the world by motorcycle.

Kidderminster's Motor Cycle Mart hosted a talk by the remarkable Nic Sanders on December 14th. Over 100 people crowded into the showroom to listen to a man who first travelled around the world by bicycle and has since done it nine times by motorcycle including a world record 19 days and four hours.

Nic is clearly a one-off and told how he can cover 1,000 miles in a day and come back for more. He puts his stamina down to careful preparation of mind, body and bike. He is due to leave for New York shortly, to lead a party of 55 on a ride to Patagonia. Irrepressible.

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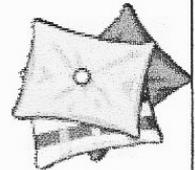
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Since this is my first letter of the year, I would like to wish all readers a Happy New Year. I hope you have had a pleasant break over Christmas.

My January ‘Letter from Westminster’ usually looks to the year ahead – but 2016 has rather shaken my confidence in predicting the future! Nevertheless, this year does hold some certainties.

I fully expect Brexit to dominate political developments here at home. The PM has made clear we will trigger Article 50 to leave the EU by the end of March this year. The House of Commons, including Labour, voted for this timetable by a substantial majority (461 to 89) in December. Once triggered, we have two years to negotiate the best possible exit for all of the UK.

The Government will be focussing on getting the best for Britain, revealing elements of the deal as and when we can. Plainly, it is not in our national interest to disclose our strategy to those with whom we will be negotiating. Nobody should believe that this process will be quick or straightforward. It is going to require significant skill and a consistent approach. But the Prime Minister is experienced, a strong leader, and well placed to secure the best Brexit deal for Britain.

The country moves to initiate Brexit from a strong position. The summer’s quick leadership transition, coupled with time to calm the markets, has meant Britain’s economy is still strong. According to latest statistics from Lloyds Bank, the West Midlands economy has the strongest economic growth of any region in the UK, and Britain is predicted once again to be the fastest growing major advanced economy in the world.

This resilience will put us in good stead to combat potential shocks to our economy during Brexit.

We also know that this month Donald J. Trump will be inaugurated as the 45th President of the United States of America, confounding most observers. It has been a year of unexpected political results, but the American people spoke, so we respect the result. He has stated his affinity for Britain, and our two countries will continue to work together in our shared interest.

This year we also have local elections in May, which include all Shropshire Council seats, but also seats on town and parish councils. In South Shropshire town and parish councils are typically non-party political, so offer a good opportunity for those looking to give something back to their community to take a more active role in local decision making. So I encourage anyone who feels they might have time and skills to contribute, to put themselves forward for election.

I shall be holding my regular surgeries in towns across the Ludlow Constituency in 2017, so please do come along if you would like to raise something with me. Details can be found on my website at www.philipdunne.com. Alternatively I am contactable by email at philip.dunne.mp@parliament.uk or by post at House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.

I wish all my constituents across South Shropshire the very best for 2017.

Philip Dunne



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DO YOU HAVE AN ODDITY YOU'D LIKE TO REPAIR?

My name's Ben and I'm a producer at Ricochet TV, part of Warner Bros TV UK.

We are currently making a new tv series for BBC which revolves around the repairing or restoration of sentimental personal, interesting, unique and historical items called the "The Repair Shop"

Just a little bit about us. We are one of the UK's leading production companies. Broadcasters, viewers and contributors trust us to make programs that are entertaining, revealing, witty, honest and popular. Whilst we never shy from revealing the truth about a story, we pride ourselves in treating everyone we come across in front or behind the camera with respect. Ricochet is part of Warner Bros TV UK and we have created popular shows such as "Food Unwrapped", "Supernanny" and "Cowboy Builders" to name a few.

The basic premise is a repair shop at a contained location which is kitted out with everything our skilled craftspeople need. We will have a skilled/master craftsman

who will individually be responsible for repairing items in their field. Like a blacksmith, upholsterer, carpenter, clockmaker etc. Each are chosen for their experience and quality at what they do. Interesting personal or historical items in disrepair are brought to the repair shop, fixed and given back to the owner. It's to be a glossy, visually beautiful series that focuses on the intricacies of the restoration/repair and the story behind the item from broken to repaired.

We have the location, however we are looking for items that are interesting, unique, old and have an interesting story or history, or we are looking for items that have emotional importance and a connection to the owner. For example "inherited pocket watch from my great grandfather, would love to see this fixed and working again". Even better, an item that has a vivid history but also has sentimental value to the owner. The items themselves need to be in a state of disrepair or broken and can be repaired or restored back to working condition and their former glory.

I'm enquiring to see if you'd be happy to help us reach out into the different areas where we

might find these items and their owners, as the brilliant "Repair Café" sustainable concept is positioned perfectly in the field we wish to reach out to.

Also if you have any suggestions or contacts you could suggest for us to get in touch with we'd be very grateful for any help to spread the word would be fantastic.

You can call Ben at 01273 224800 or email ben.King@ricochet.com

THE REPAIR CAFE

This is a neat idea that has proved to be very popular and will continue for another year. It's the Repair Cafe, based in St George's Hall in Bewdley on the third Saturday of every month, from 10.00 until 2.00.

There's a panel of experienced craftspeople available, who will repair that broken household or gardening device, even sharpen knives for you. No charge, but donations to help with the room rent are welcome. And there's the Cafe itself, where you can sample cake and tea or coffee as you wait for your broken or worn device to be mended. The first Cafe this year is on the 21st this month and John Rhymer on john.rhymer50@gmail.com can tell you more.

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THE SCHOOL ENTERTAINS

Lacon Childe's Senior Citizens' Christmas Party is an established favourite in the festive calendar. It's a simple formula: Year 10 pupils work with staff to organise a party that provides entertainment and a delicate lunch of nibbles. The pupils greet their visitors at the door and guide them to the hall, decorated for the occasion with tables laid out to accommodate eight pensioners plus a steward or two to fetch and carry.

I shared a table with Robin and Helen Parker from Tenbury Wells and Peter and Pat Horsfall from Kinlet. Pat is one of the team running the excellent Kinlet Newsletter and we read each other's product.



Peter and Pat Horsfall from Kinlet - good company.

Robin Parker I've known for years through motorcycles and we swapped tales happily until the show began. It was hosted by Tom Beech and Arnold Edmonds, who did a competent linking job with a light touch and smiles. They introduced a range of music and dance and a stand-up comedy set by Ben Clay-Allen; there's a young man you could see on stage, with an impressive self confidence.



Ben Clay-Allen. Good stage presence, groanworthy jokes and a pretty naff hat.

The biggest round of applause came for Harvey Amps, singing Justin Bieber's 'Cold Water' with dad Joel accompanying on guitar. Can you go wrong with a Bieber song delivered to a hall of teenage mates, no matter

what the ancients around the tables thought. In fairness, everyone clapped them.



The Amps family in crowd pleasing action.

There was a Bingo session, the hard of hearing helped by the patient pupils in stewarding roles. Then, after singing carols and listening to the Cleobury Mortimer Training Band, we were all given a Christmas gift and the Beech and Edmonds duo wished us all a Happy Christmas and farewell, not forgetting to thank the local traders who had supported the occasion, bless them. Proud parents and grandparents spent time with their juniors before we all shuffled out, happy to have been asked and very impressed by the hospitality shown by the Year 10 pupils. If they're that good at 15, there's a promising generation coming.



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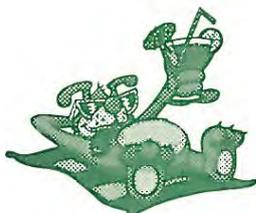
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Tel. 01299 270312
email - admin@lacon-childe.org.uk

Date	Time	Details	Contact	Telephone
Fri 6th		GREEN WHEELIE BINS EMPTIED TODAY		
Sat 7th		Please Note: No Household Goods Sale at Knowle Sports Ground this month but do leave donations of unwanted goods at the ground.		
Mon 9th	10.00am	CoCo Coffee Morning in the Market Hall. Homemade cake and tea or coffee for £1.50, extra donations to the cause naturally welcome.		
	8.00pm	The Kings Arms welcomes men to their new discussion group. Food provided, new members welcome, lively discussion very likely. PAGE 7		
Wed 11th	7.30pm	Neen Savage W.I. meet at the Village Hall to begin their 2017 programme.		
	8.00pm	The Cleobury Mortimer branch of the Royal British Legion meet at The Bell Inn, Lower Street.	David Taylor	01299 270793
Thu 12th		BLACK WHEELIE BINS AND RECYCLE BOXES EMPTIED TODAY		
Mon 16th	7.30pm	The Reading Group meet in the library to exchange views on the latest read.		
Thu 19th		GREEN WHEELIE BINS EMPTIED TODAY		

Neen Savage W.I. open their 2017 calendar at 7.30 on Wednesday 11th at their regular venue, the Parish Hall.
They will be welcoming Ann Cuckson of Cleobury Freezer Centre, who will be talking about the development of the family frozen food business with the opening of their warehouse and food

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The January Social Calendar Continued

Date	Time	Details	Contact	Telephone
Sat 21st	9.30am	Cleobury Country Farmers' Market is in and around the Parish Church. Good place to pick up local produce with great flavours.		
	7.30pm	'Flicks in the Sticks' is back in the Parish Hall, featuring 'Belle'. PAGE 48		
Mon 23rd	10.00am	CoCo Coffee morning again, See 9th above.		
Thu 26th		BLACK WHEELIE BINS AND RECYCLE BOXES EMPTIED TODAY		
Mon 30th	7.30pm	The Poetry Club meets at the Library on Love Lane. All welcome, to read or just to listen as you sip a little wine. PAGE 11		
AND LOOKING FORWARD TO FEBRUARY...				
Thu 2nd		GREEN WHEELIE BINS EMPTIED TODAY		
Sat 4th		Sale of Furniture and Household Goods at Knowle Sports Ground, Tenbury Road, Clee Hill. Super place for bargains.	Audrey	01584 890644

Philip Dunne MP

Will be holding a Local Surgery in the Market Hall, Cleobury Mortimer, 4.30 to 6.00pm on Friday January 6th.

You can book an appointment to speak to Mr Dunne on 01584 872 187

THE JACK EDWARDS GLOW RUN, 6.30pm JANUARY 27th

Raising funds for the charities that supported Jack Edwards' family through that brave little lad's illness, the Glow Run in his memory will start and finish at Lacon Childe School. The cost of entry is £10 each, which includes a glow stick, and the run is open to anyone over 8 years.

Contact Rachel Shields on 07779 270 451 or enter online at <https://race-nation.com/jack-edwards-glow-run-2017>.

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THE CRIME REDUCTION GROUP

There was a large turnout for the Group meeting on November 9th, with Professor Tank Waddington joining and the Cyber Crime Squad present for the first time. The meeting was chaired by Matt Sheehan.

Philip Dunne MP joined us and congratulated the Group on its success, particularly the establishment of a Smart Water Town, the installation of the new CCTV system and the way the community have become involved.

Matt Sheehan reported that the incidence of anti-social behaviour had reduced since the CCTV system was installed. He has been in talks with the parishes of Arley, Rock and Trimpley about the success of Smart Water, which they are considering using. Asked about the life of the treatment, Mick Simpson of We Don't Buy Crime advised that the manufacturers claim a useful life of five years, but goods were recently recovered in Telford using the system that had been applied in the early 1990s.

Kit Smith reported on the Saint Mary's Youth Project and its work mentoring both disaffected youth and families.

He pointed out the danger of school exclusions in an area of deprivation - official figures suggest that we are in one of the top 40 percent most deprived areas. Mr Smith suggested that the mentoring work of SMYP is addressing that problem in helping people cope.

Matt Sheehan addressed the matter of speeding and advised that the 20mph town centre limit would be enforced and that the site of the pedestrian crossing at the new Co-op store has yet to be decided.

The CCTV scheme may be extended to cover the Talbot car park. Improved lighting and resurfacing is needed and will be pursued.

Matt Sheehan acknowledged the presence of the Cyber Crime squad, a sphere where there is a growing problem. He also pointed out the presence of a mobile police station at each Farmers' Market, which drew the public into conversation with the officers. He thanked the group for its effective work and pointed out that the population of Cleobury Mortimer had grown by about 50 percent in the last twenty years or so, but the level of crime had dropped. That is a measure of success.

Next meeting: February 6th, 11.00 am, Sports and Social Club

DON'T MISS THIS

Dr Mark Baldwin is speaking on 'The Invasion and Occupation of the Channel Islands in World War Two' at the Sports and Social Club on Friday the 27th of this month. If you haven't heard this man talking about military history before, do make sure of going to this - he is one of the best speakers I've ever heard.

It starts at 7.30, tickets are £8.00 each, available from the Club or Severn Hospice Shop, and the price includes a 'Pie and a Pint'. So it's not just going to be a really interesting evening, it's also darned good value. Book your tickets by calling CM 270555 if you can't make it to the shop or the club. See you there on the night.

Jim Reynolds

FIR CONE FIRELIGHTERS

I found these at the December Farmers' Market. Firelighters based on fir cones, with the scent of your choice added. I went for cedar wood.

Mary Eden explained that it used to be her job to light the morning fire and she vowed that one day she'd make firelighters that work properly. So she'll be at the market this month, with packets of fir cones with a candlewax base that her long experience has produced. We'll tell you more in the February Clarion, after our test.

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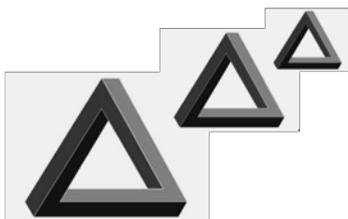
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The meeting with Shropshire Council took place on 29 November and I passed on the gist of what happened to the LJC meeting on 7 December. To summarise for those who couldn't make it on that evening, these were the broad conclusions:

It was revealed that another operator has expressed interest in taking over the 2L route and this will be pursued together with a separate look at options to continue a commercial service with a community service running alongside. A similar system already operates in other parts of Shropshire and there is already a great deal of experience. This could be accessed via a link to the Shropshire Community Transport Consortium as Bridgnorth, Bishops Castle and other areas already have for advice, knowledge, funding, administrative support etc. This service would initially require prior booking to avoid unnecessary journeys although this could be done on a block basis.

We could also use this as an opportunity to look at all elements of community transport including the transportation of children to schools by coach, minibus and taxi and how to provide the best and most efficient use of existing vehicles such as the Lacon Childe minibus fleet. It might also be useful to consider if any end of lease vehicles from existing schemes could be available to purchase or if it would be best to lease a new vehicle and negotiate the length of the lease to match the warranty. There is also the possibility of a Government grant for the purchase of a minibus and Bridgnorth are going through this process at present.

There are a number of other factors to consider as we would need to include Parish and Town Councils along the route in future discussions as well as putting an administration system into place to cover the booking of places

on the community buses – possibly Cleobury Country Ltd who are happy to look into this.

The current contract with Diamond ends in April 2017 and it is unlikely that new arrangements could be completed by then but we are now seeing light at the end of the tunnel even if there is still some way to go.

On the subject of Diamond, they were called to a public hearing in front of the West Midlands Traffic Commissioners on 30 November. The matters to be covered by the hearing included the good repute, financial stability and professional competence of operators and offences relating to these together with their ability to operate a satisfactory service. Any offences proved under any of the above can involve substantial fines based on the number of vehicles operated as well as other sanctions.

The results of these hearings usually take about a month to be published so I await these with interest and will update you when they are known. Mind you, I am not holding my breath as last time this happened, Diamond were let off with a gentle slap on the wrist and a fine of about 5% of the possible maximum.

On another subject, Philip Dunne has replied to my invitation to take him for a ride on the 2L. Unfortunately, he says he is rather busy at present (which I can understand as he is presently Minister of State for Health and no doubt juggling with the impending NHS Winter crisis). However, he has said he might be free next Summer so we shall see what happens then. I have said I will take a map, food parcel and fire extinguisher along so that should cover all possible eventualities en route...

Steve Todd

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**EMBRYO BUSINESS
AT LACON CHILDE**

The Clarion was introduced to members of the board of a new venture that is working towards a public launch early this year.

It's part of the STEM project - that's all about Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths, a project launched in response to the need for more science talents in industry. We met six people. Project Manager is Esther, Ethan is in charge of Marketing, Isaac is the Financial Controller, William the General Manager, Oliver is one of those heading Manufacturing and Syd answers for Production, all working under the guidance of Charlotte Johnston and Nick Houghton.

They are six of eleven board members, the others absent at other lessons. The board meets every Wednesday when school ends at 3.15 and work together until 4.30, at which time one of the school buses takes the STEM students home.

Their project is the production of a range of natural cosmetics, soap, lip balm and a moisturiser at this early stage. They have traced material sources, widely spread over the country, and produced trial samples. The soap will come in lavender, rose

and coconut oil scents, while the matter of perfumes for the lip balm and moisturiser has yet to be finalised. "Work in Progress," as Esther puts it with a wry grin. She's nobody's fool and quotes that response when the questions don't have a direct answer.



STEM Project board members, from left: Syd, William, Esther, Isaac and Ethan. On the table, progress reports and early product samples.

The plan is to launch the range before Valentine's Day and Mother's Day, two obvious peak sales times for such a product. Early plans are to use local markets, the Cleobury Farmers' Market the clear preference.

They are following the normal legal requirements, with the ingredients of each product detailed on the boxes that will

contain a quantity, with the production batch number shown on every individual piece. Lip balm will be in small jars, moisturiser in a larger size and the soap in either a straight box shape or heart shaped for the more romantic gift. They will also come with personalised gift tags to make the giving process easier.

What do they think they'll gain from this project? Syd: "Experience and knowledge of this area of work." William: "Knowledge and how to run a company." Esther: "Experience and I'll learn how to run a company; I want to be a scientist." Isaac: "What people like and how to start a business." Ethan: "Experience, help with marketing."

When you sit and talk to young people facing the tasks of a product launch, you realise how wide reaching modern education has become. And when this new brand - the name is "Work in Progress" - is out on the market, how will they judge if the project has been a success? "If we cover our costs and can make a profit," explains Isaac. "If we do make a profit it will go to local charities." A good sign that their talent is being directed towards a good cause, not just a chance to gain personally.

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This is the time to make resolutions for the New Year, so here I go!

Spend more time walking and cycling in the great outdoors. I really love getting out there and psychologists agree that being out of doors (especially in woods, for some reason) lifts the spirits. What looks like a dull, drizzly day from indoors is always better once you get out. There are various walking and cycling groups who would welcome you to join them, e.g. the forest Health Walks who meet at Callow Hill every Tuesday and Sunday at 10.30am for 11am and will help you to build fitness at a gentle pace, or the Cycle Touring Club who organise rides in the area (www.kidderminsterctc.org.uk). It's remarkable how much you can notice of the turning of the seasons when you look for it: the green shoots and flowers of snowdrops, little leaves growing on honeysuckle, the first hazel catkins showing their yellow pollen and inconspicuous flowers of chickweed and white dead nettle near the ground. A quick investigation of the leaf litter will show that there's plenty still going on in the 'underworld' too!

Make my garden as wildlife-friendly as possible. I just scared away the greater spotted woodpecker but the thicker-skinned nuthatch is now tucking into the sunflower seed we put out and the usual gang of bluetits, coal tits and goldfinches aren't far away. I saw very few butterflies, bees or other insects this year and

think that a concerted planting of lungworts, violets, primroses and early-flowering scented shrubs will boost their food stores in the tricky spring months. This will, in turn, help insectivores and other creatures higher up the food chain.

This does NOT include the mole, which I shall encourage to tunnel off somewhere else.

Help and encourage other people to do the same with their gardens. It would be great to have more schools visit Unclyls Farm. The Wildlife Watch group are to come a couple of times and other events, such as Farm Open Sunday in June, will bring in members of the public.

Finish the pond! This will amuse my friends, who have heard me say the same thing for at least four years. The wildlife like it well enough (see second point) but aesthetically it leaves a lot to be desired. Once I get the cobbles, gravel and rocks placed I can finish the edge planting. This will provide even more nectar for insects, perching places for emerging dragon- and damselflies, escape routes for frogs, toads and newts, and cover for birds such as the grey wagtails which drink and bathe at the edge, running the risk of giving Archie the cat hunting practice.

I'm hoping that, if I do all the above, I'll manage to lose some weight too!

Linda

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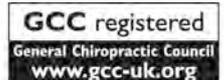
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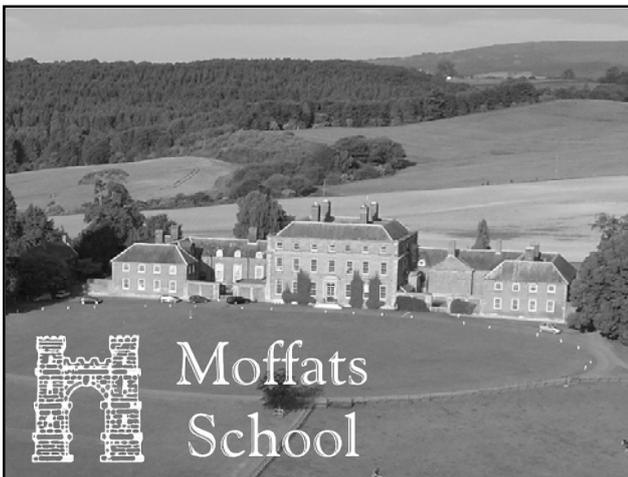
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Dental implants

❑ Am I a good candidate for this procedure?

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Neil Sampson – overriding considerations with implant dentistry are all about recovering quality of life



IT'S HARD to imagine after losing natural teeth things could ever be quite the same again. Even the loss of a single tooth is now recognised as a serious life event.

And for most, with the loss of teeth comes an emotional hurdle – now clinically recognised as a mourning process and recently highlighted in the British Dental Nurses' Journal.

The article noted the loss of one or more natural teeth is “a serious life event that can result in significant disability by impacting on daily living activities, including chewing food adequately, preferred food selection and speech.”

Less visible, however, and perhaps more significant, is the way it can compromise social interaction. Losing teeth and having teeth that are failing can erode confidence and dislocate lifestyles by embarrassment or discomfort.

And the same can also be said of dentures that are unstable and uncomfortable.

Although recent figures suggest oral health is improving, millions of UK adults suffer with tooth loss.

Solutions without dental implants have been around for a long time – indeed, bridges, full dentures and partial dentures still offer excellent options.

But a growing number of people have found a renewed confidence by having teeth supported on implants, small titanium anchor points that fuse into our jawbone.

It's a procedure still often perceived as only for the very rich and Hollywood A-listers. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Keen finance packages – Cleobury Dental Practice is currently offering interest free

Who can benefit?

- Those with missing single teeth due to gum disease, trauma or decay
- People with teeth that are mobile and painful
- Denture wearers experiencing stability problems.
- Those with multiple missing teeth. Implants can support bridges without compromising adjacent teeth
- Those for whom root canal therapy has failed
- People whose crowns are damaged or the tooth structure beneath them no longer offers enough integrity for a replacement

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deals on implant loans – have put this hugely creative therapy, with increasingly predictable clinical outcomes, within reach.

Improved patient education also means more are becoming aware that replacing missing teeth with implants is a worthy lifestyle investment and if cared for could last a lifetime.

Smile of your dreams

Implants are effectively substitute tooth roots and form a stable foundation for replacement teeth that look, feel and function like natural teeth.

Implant restorations can also create the smile of your dreams.

The preferred choice of dentists for fixed replacement teeth, Cleobury Dental's implant surgeon Neil Sampson MFGDP(UK) BDS Birmingham GDC 60624, says: “Implants present a choice of clinical options for us to explore, but the overriding considerations with implant dentistry are all about recovering

quality of life. Procedures can also restore confidence and enable a better social experience for the patient.

“Ultimately those considering implants have to ask themselves how much their smile is worth.”

An experienced implant dentist, Neil won Dentist of the Year with Oasis Dental Care in 2010 for his “personal approach and expertise in the area of dental implantology.”

One of his Cleobury patients, who has had three implants placed – two for crowns with single teeth and one to support a two-tooth bridge – says: “Neil was so generous with his time, put me at ease and explained everything to me and that the process would take a few months.

“He was so calm and it's easy to trust him.”

A dentist with a long experience of advanced restorative and aesthetic treatment, Neil is a member of the Association of Dental Implantology.



For appointments & information call: **01299 271747** 5 & 6 Talbot Square, Cleobury Mortimer Kidderminster, DY14 8BQ

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As we start the new year unsure of what the future will bring, with so much uncertainty both at home and abroad, the farming cycle continues, in many ways just as it has done for hundreds of years. The farming calendar is determined by the changing seasons rather than the dates on the wall. The majority of our planting has been done with only a few fields remaining to be planted in the Spring, this is mainly due to the dry and mild weather in September and October allowing all Autumn tasks to be completed in good time. The winter months are taken up with stock work, feeding the cattle and sheep takes up a large part of daylight hours and the rest of the time is used for maintenance and paperwork. The first major activity in January is early lambing, with the first lambs due at the start of the month. These ewes have already been scanned to ensure they are in lamb and will be receiving extra food dependent on the number of lambs they are expecting. We hope they will all be couples! Since my last report we have also had a full herd TB test which fortunately came out clear, much to everyone's relief. This means no more testing for 12 months unless we inadvertently buy in infected stock. Walkers amongst you may have noticed the new gate configuration on the footpath between the Recreation Ground by the school and the Catherton Road – this is due to the gate being left open! The new gate has a small pedestrian gate within the wider field gate so

please just use this and make sure it is closed securely behind you. Could we also politely remind dog walkers that this is not an exercise area, the footpath runs diagonally across the field and dogs should be kept on leads at all times.

Chickens have been in the news with concerns over the threat of Avian Flu entering the Country via migrating birds. From the 6th December all Poultry owners have been asked to keep their flocks indoors and prevent wild birds from accessing the fowls' food and water. This restriction is due to remain in place until at least the 7th January 2017. Fortunately we have indoor housing for our hens and whilst the weather is so miserable I don't feel too bad about keeping them shut in. Hopefully the risk will pass and we will be able to let them run free again soon. Symptoms to look out for are swollen head, blue discolouration of neck and throat, loss of appetite, respiratory distress such as gaping beak, coughing, sneezing, gurgling, rattling, diarrhoea and fewer eggs laid. There is no evidence that any recent strain of avian influenza has been able to spread directly between people.

On a more positive note, the two chicks that in August I thought were cockerels, have turned out to be hens so hopefully they will start laying in the Spring.

In light of all the uncertainty above can we just wish everyone a peaceful and trouble free 2017!



CROOKED STEEPLE MORRIS NEWS

It seemed right to put this news here, as Catherine Evans is a member of the Morris. They were dancing in the King's Arms not long ago, their clogs making a fine thunderous noise.

Linda wrote to tell us their results for 2016: "We raised £196.22 for the Severn Hospice collecting whilst dancing out in 2016.

We danced out at Cleobury Markets, Ludlow Spring Festival, Ludlow Brewery and others."

Good traditional stuff, helping the Hospice and the breweries!

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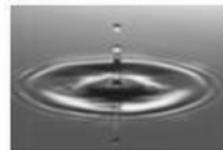
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They've been in Church Street for close on two years, that smart showroom where you can find a range of spectacles from £49.95 for single vision glasses and from £99.95 for varifocals that give you good vision over a wide range from one set of lenses.

The partners are physician Paul Gill and technician Martin Taylor. Paul is the man customers meet, who did three years at Cardiff University to earn his BSc in Optometry, plus a year of prescription training, while Martin is largely the behind-the-scenes man with an apprenticeship to qualify as an optical technician. There was a lot of time learning and gaining experience before they decided to open their own business. At this early stage Paul is in the salon two and a half days a week and Martin two days, the rest of their working week spent at other opticians' until the Cleobury business grows and can support them both full time.

They are supported by the reception team, Gemma and Jane, two charming and helpful ladies who watch over the appointment books and look after enquiries. It all amounts to a business where people care, which reflects in growing business with customers from as far away as Kidderminster, Bridgnorth and Tenbury Wells.

There is a high degree of care in this place: "We spend at least 30 minutes on each eye test," Paul explains. "The big operators have to get people through quickly, and can only give you about 20 minutes."

The Cleobury approach is a very thorough one, covering the basic matter of eyesight and ocular health and other related areas of general health. If you meet the NHS requirements, the test is free.

I know from personal experience that there is no big pressure to sell. Paul again: "You don't necessarily have to buy glasses at every check. The health side is more important." That's what he told me - long before this interview - and I only ordered a pair because my old ones were falling apart. He also emphasises how important it is for children to have regular sight tests

Paul has been in this business for 15 years, he very clearly has high standards and is working with Martin to build the business. Receptionist Gemma is getting the name out there on Facebook and their new website is up and running: www.cleoburyopticians.co.uk. It's significant that customers tell friends and family about their experience - there is no better advertising than personal recommendation - and he has had people down from Manchester because they've heard how well customers are treated here.

It isn't just the keen prices, there's a range of 600 frames on display for you to choose from. Take a look at the equipment they use, including a full test kit for house calls, all of it officially approved, and you get a hint of the commitment here. These two have made a serious investment in this town.



Paul with the latest addition, the retinal camera.

They will make home visits, which are free if the customer is housebound, subject to the standard NHS terms being met. In a rural area where older people can have problems with travel, that is a thoughtful service to offer.

The speed of their service surprises most customers, with lenses ground to prescription and the finished glasses ready in less than week. That's because they do a lot of the work on the Church Street premises.

We must mention one special offer available only for this month: free eye tests if you call 01299 270012 and make an appointment. If you try it you'll be pleasantly surprised at the care and attention you get from this very promising newcomer to the town.

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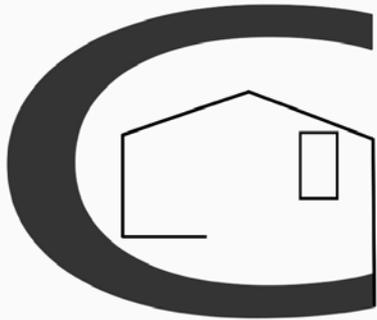
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Community Contacts for Clarion Readers

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CLEOBURY COUNTRY CENTRE		01299 272300	In Love Lane, 9 to 5 Mon to Fri.
CITIZENS ADVICE		08444 991100	Advisors on line 10.00 to 4.00
CLEOBURY CARERS	Wendy Duley	01299 270562	
CLEOBURY COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES	Katja Ward	01299 270018	10.00 to 12.00 Weds
CLEOBURY MORTIMER LIBRARY		01299 272301	Open 9 to 7 Mon, 9 to 5 Tues/Fri and 10 to 1 Sat.
LOCAL POLICE	Constable Anne O'Leary		ann.oleary@westmercia.pnn.police.uk
CLEOBURY MORTIMER GUIDES	Dorothy McBride	07761 976610	
CLEOBURY MORTIMER SCOUTS	Ingrid Purslow	01299 270314	
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:
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MARKET HALL	Dorothy McBride	07761 976610	dorothymcbride@cleobury.org.uk
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NEWLIFE CHURCH	Pastor E Stirrup	01562 630595	Sunday services at 10.30
NIGHTINGALE NURSING FUND	Rosemary Abbiss	01746 718210	
PARISH COUNCIL	Clerk Matthew Sheehan	01299 271154	Market Hall 9 to 2 pm, Mon to Fri. www.cleobury.org.uk. Council meets in the Market Hall on the first Monday of the month
POST OFFICE		01299 270211	In the Spar 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.
VOLUNTARY CAR SCHEME		01299 666119	for bookings
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THE DEADLINE FOR THE FEBRUARY ISSUE IS JANUARY 24th

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The Clarion is published by Cleobury Clarion Media Ltd and printed by Glint Print (01299 266657)



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Residential Sales

In general terms, house prices in Shropshire "stayed steady" during 2016, which indicates a healthy housing market. Looking back over a combination of our own figures and national statistics, we've calculated that the average monthly rise throughout 2016 was 0.2%, which is very encouraging and bodes well for 2017. The fact that house prices stayed steady is good news for the market as a whole, because we do not want to see a return to the days of boom and bust. The year-on-year increase when you take all 12 months in total is 4.9%, so prices have seen quite a significant rise overall.



Erica Hinwood
MARLA MNAEA
Office Manager

Lettings

The Government has announced it wants to ban letting agents from charging fees to tenants. This may seem like a good idea at first glance, helping to save tenants money, but I feel it is more likely going to end up costing tenants more in the long-run. The fees cover a wide range of costs, and those will now have to be met by agents elsewhere. The vast majority of these fees pay for a range of critical checks and surveys, and these costs will most likely be passed on to landlords who will raise rents to pay for them - ultimately increasing costs for the tenant.



Coral Walrond
MARLA MNAEA
Lettings Negotiator