

St Weonards, Garway, Orcop, Pencoyd,  
Tretire, Michaelchurch, Hentland and Hoarwithy

## PARISH NEWS

August 2020



Thanks to Lousie Brosnan

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**For more information on what is going on within our parishes, go to [www.stw.org.uk](http://www.stw.org.uk)**

### Magazine News

Another magazine as life begins to open up which is exciting and challenging! Our churches are open for private prayer, and live services are scheduled to begin as outlined below. However, zoom services are working well and we look forward to the possibility that they will be a regular part of our worship in the future.

Many thanks to those who have shared their experiences of lockdown with us.

Please note we have an event in Orcop on 31<sup>st</sup> August!

As usual, we are putting a few hard copies in St Weonards Shop and Broad Oak Garage for those who do not have access to the internet. Please take a copy to anyone you know who needs one, but we have only printed a few! Enjoy your reading and keep writing for next time! **Fiona Mynors**

## Vicar's Letter

Hello Everyone

Six months ago as what we now know as the Covid 19 pandemic was emerging around us it would, I feel, have been very hard to imagine the world looking as we now see it, to imagine the world feeling as we now experience it. Almost everything has changed. We no longer have the same freedoms that we simply took for granted. We can no longer travel on a whim. Things we thought of as 'rights' we now know can be taken from us in the stroke of a pen or the words of a speech. In this benefice, seven weddings have been postponed, across the country the number is many thousands. Millions of holidays won't happen and many, many people have been unable to attend the funeral of someone they cared about.

As we begin to emerge from the deepest days of the virus, with its lockdown and isolation, we see the promise of light at the end of the tunnel, but when we look carefully we see that it's a shaded light, almost a false light. Lockdown will ease – gradually with some stops and starts, uncertainties and celebrations – but it will almost certainly be painful and difficult. Nothing can go back to the way it was and the eventual opening up of what we could call ordinary life will bring challenges and unanticipated difficulties.

Covid 19 is leaving us a legacy and it's a legacy of unemployment, financial struggle, mental and emotional health issues. It's a realisation that if you keep paring back provision to care homes – with poorly paid staff and inadequate resources – then when disaster comes calling, the consequences will be severe. It's a realisation that racism is insidious and institutionalised, that some lives have not mattered as they should, and we have too often failed to challenge that.

The world will move forward from this disaster and we will be presented with opportunities. Opportunities to be kinder to the world, to be more caring to one another. Opportunities to walk more gently on the earth. An opportunity to be more respectful of creation and of human life. This is our opportunity to give more and take less, to waste less, to need less. It's our chance to live more simply so that others may simply live. It's our chance to speak out for the right of every person to live their life in peace and without fear.

*Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain. Unless the Lord keeps watch over the city, the watchman stands guard in vain. Psalm 127*



### Church services

During July we have begun to open our churches, and people can once again visit for times of private prayer and reflection. It's good to see the church buildings in use once again, and as a part of that opening up process we're holding a series of five short services of Evening Worship during July and August – one in each parish. These will be a combination of music, readings, prayer and reflection held at 6pm on Sunday evening.

Once released, online services are available to view at any time.

## Services July/August

19 July 10.00	All Age Worship & Communion	F. Mynors, A. Herbert & Rev Dr F Phillips	Zoom
19 July 6.00pm	Evening Worship	Rev E Cathie	Orcop Church
26 July 10.00	Holy Communion	Rev E Cathie & Rev Dr F Phillips	Zoom
2 August 10.00	Lammas Service with Holy Communion		You tube
2 August 6.00pm	Evening Worship	Rev E Cathie	Pencoyd Church
9 August 10.00	Holy Communion	Rev E Cathie & Rev Dr F Phillips	Zoom
9 August 6.00pm	Evening Worship	Rev E Cathie	St Weonards Church
16 August 10.00	All Age Worship	F. Mynors & A. Herbert	Zoom
16 August 11.00	Morning Worship	P. Pember	Zoom
16 August 6.00pm	Evening Worship	Rev E Cathie	Garway Church
23 August 10.00	Holy Communion	Rev E Cathie & Rev Dr F Phillips	Zoom
30 August 10.00	Morning Worship (non-communion)	Rev E Cathie & Rev Dr F Phillips	Zoom
30 August	On-line Deanery Service		
2 Sept 10.00	Holy Communion	Rev E Cathie & Rev Dr F Phillips	Zoom

For the services on July 26, August 9 & 23, the link to join the service will be sent out at 9.45am to everyone who has asked to be included. If you have not attended the service before, please send a note to Frances at [franjphillips@gmail.com](mailto:franjphillips@gmail.com) with your email address.

For the All Age Services on 19<sup>h</sup> July & 16 August, the link for the service will be sent out at 9.45am to everyone who has asked to be included. If you have not attended the service before, please send a note to Stephen Herbert ([stweonardspcc@gmail.com](mailto:stweonardspcc@gmail.com)) with your email.



Lammas Service in the Woods on You tube!

This year our annual service to give thanks for the first fruits of the harvest, and to ask God's blessing on our animals, will be on You tube, on August 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10am.

In response to my plea last month, lots of people have sent in pictures of their own 'first-fruits', and also of their pets and animals, and we are in the process of building these into a service for us all to share.

The link to find the service will be published on this website by 29<sup>th</sup> July, so do keep a look out for it. Like our other You tube services, it will of course be possible to view it at any time after the link is published, but it would be lovely to feel that we are all celebrating together on August 2<sup>nd</sup>.

This is a non-Communion service. Do join us!

*Frances*

## September Services

At the moment the plan from the diocese is that all Benefices should be ready to hold regular Sunday worship, including services of Holy Communion, from the beginning of September. It's too soon to say what that pattern will look like and it's clear that there will be people who won't feel ready to return to regular church services in September. We'll keep you updated with plans as the way forward becomes clearer.



For those of you who watched Countryfile on the 5<sup>th</sup> July, you won't have failed to see the item about the Borderlands Rural Chaplaincy. Some of us were very excited to see it as we've been closely connected with the Chaplaincy from its inception in 2013. David Gwatkin, who lives and works on the family farm at Tibhall, Herefordshire is the country's only full time Agricultural Chaplain. He works with a team of part time chaplains, both lay and ordained across Shropshire, Herefordshire and Eastern Powys.

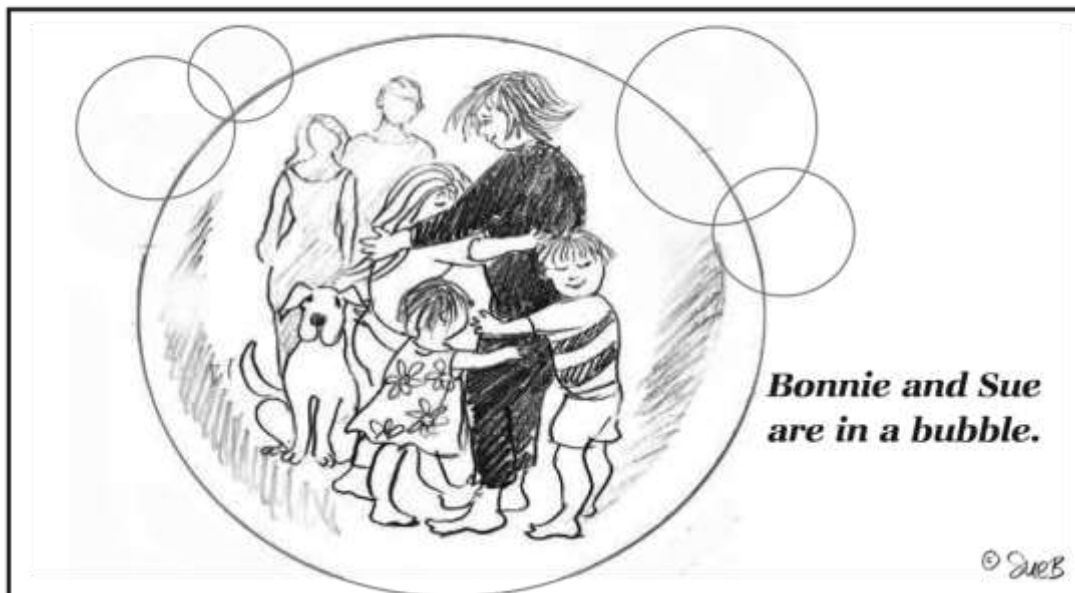
Many of you will know the real stresses that the agricultural and rural community faces, and perhaps some of you reading this will be facing those difficulties at this very minute. In the programme David focused on his work supporting those with mental health issues and reminded us of the very high rate of those in farming who take their own lives.

Just in case you're worried that contacting the Chaplaincy means that the 'God squad' will turn up on your doorstep – nothing can be further from the truth! All the chaplains have a background in farming or rural issues and simply offer a listening ear, a helping hand. They can signpost folks to those agencies or places where they can find specialist help. I know many conversations have opened up as David (and indeed the other chaplains) have helped check crops, hump bags of feed around or cajole stock into a pen. I suspect grabbing and handling a wayward ewe wins you a bit of respect! If you feel someone really knows where you're coming from and what your life is like, then you're might likely to open up in times of trouble.

You can watch the Countryfile programme again on iplayer, and you can also visit their web site.  
<https://www.borderchaplain.org/>

*Rev Frances Biseker.*

## Quarantoons A granny and a dog surviving isolation during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020



## Village Pages

### St Weonards

Our zoom services each Sunday at 10.00am are enabling us to share worship with many others across our benefice and from other parts of the UK. If you want more information about how to join, do look on the benefice website or contact Frances or Elizabeth.

A few services are taking place in our churches, and Elizabeth will lead evening worship in St Weonards Church at 6.00pm on 9<sup>th</sup> August. **Fiona Mynors**

#### Bridge building



During lockdown, after morning lessons, I decided to use my afternoons to build a bridge across the stream with the help of my grandfather. This would enable us to walk across the fields and up the road to the village. I discussed my design with grandpa and later with Peter Garratt.

The first thing to do would be to source two telegraph poles which would be laid next to each other across the stream. We asked around the local farmers and managed to locate two, which were kindly put in the front field. We needed to cut the ends off the 10m poles and to prepare the route on both sides of the stream which meant removing vegetation.

A week or so later, after getting the poles in the field, we had a great afternoon of actually putting them in place. The people who were there to help were: Ron and Paul Evans from Treago Farm, grandpa and dad. The machines used were a telehandler and a mini-digger driven by Ron and Paul, a buggy by dad, a Toro tractor mower and trailer by grandpa and me. The telehandler and mini-digger were used to put the actual poles in place. The buggy was for transport, while the Toro and trailer carried all the hand tools and other things. The range of tools and other equipment was large with a chainsaw, various pieces of wood, fence posts, a range of spades, shovels, loppers, slashers, secateurs, post-hole diggers, axes, a couple of sledge hammers and a double sided pick axe!

A day or two after we had put the main structure of the bridge in place, we had a phone call from farmer Brian Whistance. He said that he had looked at the bridge which is at the bottom of his field. He thought that we might need some planks to go crossways across the bridge and offered us some spare timber. Later that day, grandpa and I went to see the planks and brought them home as they were ideal.

Over the following weeks, I hand sawed about two to three planks a day, changing after a while to a bow saw which was quicker. Then we found grandpa's ancient electric drill had a saw attachment. It was rather blunt, but more accurate. All this timber has been coated with preservative.

We are currently designing a platform for the far end of the bridge to make it easier to access the opposite bank which is difficult because of a leaning tree. Several bits of flood defences include: rope to hold the bridge down, sleepers, wedges to keep each side flat and a handrail need to be added. No doubt we will think of other things we need to do.

I greatly appreciate the help I have received from all those involved, particularly from my grandpa for his support, help and patience throughout this project. I am pleased with progress so far, although there is plenty

still to do. It has been a challenge, but a very enjoyable one, and I have a great sense of achievement. I look forward to seeing the finished construction.

**Jonathan Herbert.**

## **Garway**

### **Garway School and pre-school**

It has been a challenging term for everyone at school, coping with social distancing and an altered curriculum. However, Miss Jones and her team have worked tirelessly to ensure that all the pupils, those attending or at home doing home schooling, have had excellent access to work and activities. Preparations are in hand for all pupils to attend next term, but meanwhile we wish everyone a good break over the summer and the governors are extremely grateful for everyone's hard work. **Fiona Mynors**

### **Garway Heritage Group**

The Garway Heritage Group (GHG) was created to explore the rich and diverse heritage of Garway and the surrounding area and to make its work available to others who may share our interests.

Our focus is on learning how historical events, from the Bronze Age to the present day, have impacted on our area and have influenced -- and continue to influence -- the bigger picture of social development.

Monthly talks are held between September and April on the third Tuesday of every month. During the summer months, walks, visits and events are arranged and advertised through an email list and this magazine. To find out more, look at the website.

<https://www.garwayheritagegroup.co.uk/>

For the time being, we will be posting some pieces on an irregular, more or less frequent, basis depending on what you send us – whether you are a Garway Heritage Member or not, you are welcome. These will offer a little more depth to previous talks, reminisces of World War 2, looking to the future post Coronavirus and more.

Please send them to me, the chairman – ***liz@fouracretrust.org.uk***

### **Weeping Willow Tree**

Blackbird's family lived in the Willow Tree

Nested among the ivy growing there to see

This year such tragedy to that family in their fight

For life; first hawk flew by stole the fledgling chicks in first flight

Then Mother blackbird flew into window glass

The garden reflected there with grass

She broke her neck and died

I buried her still warm body in the compost and cried

Blackbird sang his sad lament in the Willow Tree

**Mari** Monnow View, Garway

# Orcop

## ORCOP CHURCH FINALLY TO HAVE ITS FRENCH DRAIN

After 8 years of planning, design, parish consultation and fund raising, our contractor, MV Gammon, will commence work at the end of July or early August. The contract includes refurbishment of rainwater goods and the installation of a perimeter French drain. Run-off from the roof and groundwater seepage will be piped to a soakaway in the churchyard to the north east of the church. The aim of the French drain is to dry out the foundations, so as to protect against further deterioration due to damp and permit remedial work to the rotten timber floor and leaning pews. When the PCC embarked on this project it was not anticipated that the works would eventually be delayed by a global pandemic!

An ecological survey has been carried out and, fortunately, there are no great crested newts or other creatures that might delay things. An archaeologist will be on hand to properly record and deal with anything of archaeological significance that might be uncovered.

The work is expected to take 4 to 6 weeks. It will be started after the service planned for 19<sup>th</sup> July and should be completed before the resumption of a normal service rota following the Covid-19 disruption.

Our thanks go once again to all who responded to the 2017 appeal, which raised £2500 towards the project.

**Peter Garratt**



## Orcop Neighbourhood Development Plan - Update

A remote meeting was arranged in June between the Steering Group and Herefordshire Council Neighbourhood Planning Team. This was an exploratory discussion to gain useful information as to how we can achieve our housing targets within the Core Strategy, particularly bearing in mind the drainage problems in Orcop Hill and the dispersed site submissions in the parish. It was led by our planning consultant who has now completed his Housing Delivery report.

The Steering Group will take careful and detailed consideration of the various options, bearing in mind the Questionnaire responses. A subsequent meeting with the planning consultant will aim to agree a recommended way forward, and a public Presentation will be arranged to enable residents to participate and voice their opinions.

Meanwhile any questions can be addressed to Mark Hearne, Orcop Parish Clerk, tel: 01981 251887 [clerk@orcopparishcouncil.org](mailto:clerk@orcopparishcouncil.org)

**Margaret Serle**, Chair, NDP Steering Group, July 2020

In these very strange times we decided that we would still produce the annual fete quiz sheet and these are available from Christine or myself.

### !!! Village Fete !!!

We hope that we will be able to share the answers of the quiz at the annual fete due to be held on 31st August at Orcop Parish Hall (however this will be dependent upon the Covid 19 restrictions in place at the time). More details to follow.

If anyone feels that they are able to help with the fete or contribute towards it please let me know.

**Julia Garlick**

### Orcop Evergreens Update – August 2020

Well even though many groups and activities are being given the green light to start up again, we are being very cautious. As nice as it would be to believe that we were through the worst, we are not taking any chances, and definitely do not want to contribute to a second wave of the virus now being predicted to occur during the autumn.

We are still keeping in touch with all our members, and many phone each other for a chat.

Normally at this time of year we would have had our annual picnic at Brooklands House, when the weather has always been wonderfully kind to us. This year everyone had to make do with a photographic reminder instead - and some word games.

And just in case anyone fancies a challenge, I'll include one here:-

How many words, of four or more letters, can you make from **BROOKLANDS PICNIC**? We have found at least 150, including two eight letter words.

As soon as we feel it is safe to do so, we will again meet once a fortnight in Orcop Parish Hall and provide a hot two-course lunch. We will always warmly welcome new members.

If you would like to know more, please call

**Gill Bannerman**. Tel: 01981 580685

### Thanks

Many thanks to Gill and Tim Bannerman for the lovely booklet with pictures of your garden and flowers and the competitions that you sent to all the members and volunteers to replace our annual picnic which was to be held in your garden. Everybody was so pleased to receive it and the perfume from the enclosed spike of lavender on opening made it extra special.

**On behalf of us all**. Thank you both so much

### ALL AT SEA IN ORCOP

Matters maritime seldom make the news in Orcop, although I know a number of keen sailors and former sailors reside in the parish. Last year, some of you may have seen on national TV or in the newspapers coverage of an ambitious art installation on Anglesey called "All at Sea".

This comprised a large double sided panel, 4.5mx2.8m, mounted on a mast so that it could rotate according to wind direction. The installation, by artist Anthony Garratt, commemorated the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tragic wreck of the *Royal Charter* at Moelfra, on the north east coast of Anglesey, after a passage from Melbourne, Australia. She was within a few hours of reaching Liverpool.

On her 6th homeward voyage, the *Royal Charter* left Melbourne on 26 August 1859, carrying 79000 ounces of gold, as well as wool and hides and about 460 passengers. On 25 October (after a passage of only 58 days) the ship passed Holyhead. Captain Thomas Taylor continued northwards and rounded the northern coast of Anglesey, entering Liverpool Bay at around 9pm. By 10pm the wind had strengthened from the north east, and attempts were made to stay the ship (that is to go about onto a northerly tack, away from the coast). These attempts failed and by 10.15 she was battling both the wind and a full ebb tide. By this time the wind had reached over 100mph (a hurricane). The port anchor was let go at 11pm. At around 2am the port anchor chain parted, followed by the starboard one. At around 2.30 the ship grounded on a sandy sea bed. From around 5.30



she was pushed higher onto rocks by the rising tide. At around 7.15 the ship broke up, pitching most of the passengers and crew into the sea. About 450 perished, mostly women and children.

The following Electric Telegraph message was published in Lloyd's list on 27th October: ***Beaumaris 26th Oct. Received E.T. at 5.55. The ROYAL CHARTER, from Melbourne to Liverpool, a total wreck at Moelfra.***

Returning to the installation, the panel had on one side a painting of the ship running aground in the storm (shown below) and on the other, the same scene in a flat calm. The base unit incorporated an electronic device that recorded all the wind shifts over a 58 day period (the duration of the fateful voyage).



What, might you ask, has the commemoration of this tragedy to do with Orcop?

The panel, mast, boom, bowsprit and steel "foresail" together weighed about half a tonne and the installation had to be designed so as to spin freely in winds up to 80mph. This was an interesting design challenge that was met thanks to our very own Steve Methven. I went to consult Steve with a conceptual sketch of the base unit, incorporating steel tubes and bearings to take the horizontal and vertical loads. Without a moment's hesitation Steve said, "**What you need is a 10 tonne trailer axle**". These immortal words formed the basis for the design of the base unit and its foundation structure, which Steve set about fabricating. The completed base unit and foundation steelwork are shown below:



The installation was erected in April 2019 and the superstructure was dismantled in November. It successfully withstood the elements over this period and was much admired by passing walkers (it was deliberately sited adjacent to a footpath). The base unit remains in the ground and, knowing the quality of Steve's fabrication, it will be there for hundreds of years unless we dig it up.

The recorded wind shifts were translated by Anthony into a strange and haunting piece of music:



On the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the wreck, 26<sup>th</sup> October 2019, this music was played by the internationally acclaimed violinist Phillipa Mo, accompanying a Welsh male voice choir. The former Welsh Poet Laureate, Gillian Clark, composed a moving poem for the occasion, which she would have recited, were it not for flooding and closure of the Menai Bridge due to high winds. In the end, the weather had the last say, and Anthony felt that this was, perhaps, appropriate.

Two commemorative events were held, one in Moelfra Church, where many of the victims were laid to rest and another at the installation:



Strange, what we get up to in Orcop.....

**Peter Garratt**

## **Tretire with Michaelchurch & Pencoyd**

As I write things seem to be improving a little with a return to “the new normal”. Some things don’t seem to have changed at all and other new rules feel decidedly odd. I am pleased to report that both our churches, after risk assessments, are now open for private prayer. Please abide by the new protocols (you can’t miss them!) if you go into the church even if you are only there for a few minutes. Many thanks to those who have done sterling work cleaning them, after nearly 4 months there was plenty to do! Peter went to put up the final notice and unlock the door at Pencoyd and, as he was leaving, a couple arrived on their bicycles and asked if the church was open. The visitors were none other than the former Bishop of Hereford Anthony Priddis and his wife Kathy. They were kind enough to approve the safety arrangements, sign themselves in and use the hand sanitizer and stayed to pray before they pedalled off.

Please see the piece about the Ross Community Larder and give what you can.

**Liz Everall**

## Ross Community Larder

As you may already know food banks are in great need of supplies at the moment and the Ross Community Larder is no exception. Local parishes have been donating to them for several years. Before lockdown there was much panic buying and even if we didn't buy 50 loo rolls I am sure we all stocked up with more flour etc. than would be in our normal weekly shop. Some of these goods will keep for a very long time but other more perishable items may be approaching their best before date. **Please give them now**, do not wait until they are out of date as the food banks will not accept them. The thought of people throwing away food is appalling, please go through your cupboards this week or buy extra in the supermarket and donate what you can. Here is the link with more details of what, where and when you can deliver <https://rossparishes.uk/the-community-larder/>

Thank you for helping those in need.

## Hentland

### Hentland Chancel

When I wrote a month ago, I gave details of what still needed to be done, and now, on 12<sup>th</sup> July, there is not a lot of progress to report. There have been site meetings with David Arnold and Shaun Hester, Sally Strachey's man who has taken on the overall direction of the project, and with Dave Rowlands of Heritage Roofing. The new roof tiles were delivered late last week, and the young men made light of the formidable task of unloading them from their pallets into wheelbarrows, and wheeling them the eighty metres to the hoist to take them up to the roof. Today, half the south side is covered with new tiles and very handsome they look. As soon as the new roof is in place, the scaffolding, which has been there since March 2019, can be removed and the French drain, as described in last month's news, can be dug.

The internal scaffolding has now been removed, to be replaced with moveable towers, which the craftsmen will need to get at the missing plaster panels in the north wall above where the Walker organ's decorated pipes will be reinstalled. Scheduled to return on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July, they estimate they will need another three weeks to complete the revival of the chancel decoration. Then, once all the debris and piles of waste have been removed and the site left thoroughly clean and tidy, David Gallichan and his team can start rebuilding the organ.

**Robin Symonds** 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020

### How we have coped with lockdown!

Lockdown has, as I am sure for many of us, been an oddly 'interesting' time. On a positive note, it has been a time to catch up with a few of my own gardening projects particularly a 'Grow our own campaign!'

We recently moved into a cottage that has been rented out for many years. The garden was fortunately a blank canvas which can sometimes be more difficult to know where to begin than a more established garden. The soils are rich in organic matter and so we were confident that we could make something succesful of our vegetable garden.

After much discussion, I was finally given the go ahead by my fiance Isabel (Partridge) to be allowed to start to dig up the garden to create three vegetable beds. Fortunately we had bought the seed for most of our vegetables by early March, so were able to get going and make the most of the warm spring. Our potatoes got caught out by a late frost, but thankfully have recovered and we are now waiting patiently to see the results!

**James Davies** (Environmental Landcare)



## Introducing Environmental Landcare.

We are a RHS award winning company that specialises in rural gardening. We offer bespoke garden and landscape solutions to country gardens, farms and smallholdings. With over 18 years' experience, we have worked on a range of projects in Herefordshire and the surrounding counties including for the Duchy of Cornwall, National Trust, Historic England, Malvern Hills AONB Partnership and more locally at Treago.

With such variable landscapes, soils, weather and access in Herefordshire, our history of projects are wide and variable which can make projects an interesting challenge. Our areas of work where we are most cost effective and experienced include:

- Garden restoration & maintenance
- Hedge & tree planting
- Hedge trimming, topiary pruning and maintenance
- Herbaceous border design and creation
- Knot gardens
- Kitchen gardens
- Lawn creation
- Lawn drainage
- Mature tree planting
- Pergolas , gazeboes, summer house assemblage, and fencing
- Traditional orchard establishment, espaliers and pruning
- Use of geotextile materials for erosion control and for pathway construction;
- Weed control
- Wildflower turfing
- Woodland creation

We are a small yet professionally trained team with a good knowledge of the rural landscape to help try and find suitable solutions to meet your garden and landscape needs. For more details, please contact James Davies on 07920 05 48 44.

[www.environmental-landcare.co.uk](http://www.environmental-landcare.co.uk)



A few of our projects:



RHS Cardiff Flower Show 2012



[www.isabelsbakehouse.com](http://www.isabelsbakehouse.com)

## Chocolate Brownies

- 8"x12" baking tray, lined with baking paper
- 185g butter
- 185 dark chocolate
- 90g plain flour
- 35g cocoa powder
- 3 eggs
- 260g caster sugar
- Decoration: 50g chocolate chips

### Method

1. Heat oven to 170°C/ gas 6
2. Melt the chocolate and butter over a low heat.
3. Whisk the eggs and sugar together for 2 minutes until the sugar has dissolved.
4. Pour in the melted chocolate mixture to the egg mixture and stir together.
5. Stir in the flour and cocoa powder.
6. Once mixed together, pour into the prepared tin.
7. Bake for 20 minutes (for a fudgy brownie) or 25 minutes for a more cakey brownie, sprinkle the choc chips on the brownie as soon as it comes out of the oven.
8. Allow to cool and cut into slices.

### **Book Review**

#### ***The Running Hare: The Secret Life of Farmland, by John Lewis-Stempel***

Recommended at Garway Book Club's zoom meeting in June, this book is a good read. Probably already known to many locals, it chronicles the life of one field, bought by the author to try and bring life back to the soil, and encourage the return of wildflowers and wildlife, notably the hares.

The fact that it is local is one of its attractions, but so too is the language, which can only be described as charming. I love this little "clip": *"I'm at Flinders [the field] to feed the sheep with ewe nuts. They flouncy-bottom run to the trough, a remnant of lambyness; then, when I am deemed too slow with my shoulder-sack of food,*

*cat-tangle my legs.*” I am right there with him, chuckling at the antics of the sheep and struggling not to fall into the red soil.

His prose is littered with original double-barrelled adjectives (“*soft-winged; sun-happy, clear-skied morning; the partridges come express-sprinting down the paddock; .....*”) and with imaginative similes, but never (well – almost never) involving the word “like” – thank goodness.

On a visit to East Anglia, the author is asked how long it took to get there from Hertfordshire, and has to correct it to Herefordshire – how many times have we all encountered this? Some websites will not even recognise Herefordshire as real.

The writing has charm, but it is not a “fluffy” book – it is full of passion for the plight of the rural environment, and a hatred of the widespread use of pesticides and of the destruction of hedges and trees.

He refers to the owners of the next door field as The Chemical Brothers – I can’t help wondering whether they are still on speaking terms! **Hilary Smallwood**

## Garden Notes

I planted *Escallonia* ‘Pink Elle’ some three years ago and I am so pleased with it that I am now looking for other evergreen shrubs that will perform just as well here. It is all part of my mission to make this garden lower maintenance over the next few years. I am looking for dense, preferably evergreen, shrubs that will cover the ground well and prevent weeds germinating. ‘Pink Elle’ is different to other *Escallonias* – lower growing (mine is now 1700mm across but only 900mm high), compact and with much larger flowers. It is in flower right now and is covered in beautiful pink flowers which show up well against the glossy dark green leaves – very decorative.



I will be avoiding anything with a suckering growth. I have two shrubs over by the duck run which I deeply regret planting. One is *Rubus spectabilis* ‘Olympic Double’ and the other is a rare Scots rose called ‘Mrs Colville’. Both have shocking pink flowers which is why I was drawn to them in the first place, but both have outgrown their allotted space and are still spreading; spreading into the lawn and spreading through the border smothering other lovely shrubs which disappeared into the midst of these thugs long ago. The *Rubus* is particularly invasive and I would recommend avoiding it all costs, unless you have a particularly wild area. The rose was originally obtained from an acquaintance who regularly opened her garden for the NGS. She grew it with other species roses in a wild apple orchard, where she left the grass to grow long and where the roses would occasionally get munched by deer. I should have taken note.

No, I am looking for the kind of shrub that a few years ago used to get dismissed as being reminiscent of Victorian shrubberies or municipal planting schemes – spotted laurels (not everyone’s taste but I really like those), the lower-growing *Cotoneasters* (or Cotton-Easter as my husband calls them), *Elaeagnus*, good old *Euonymus*, *Hypericum* ‘Hidcote’ (which I fell out with years ago but now yearn for its cheerful yellow flowers), shrubby *Potentilla*, dwarf varieties of *Spiraea* and so on. I will get another *Prunus laurocerasus* ‘Otto Luyken’ to replace the one ‘Mrs Colville’ smothered. I love this easy, compact cherry laurel with its very shiny, narrow dark green leaves and its spikes of white flowers. It is fine in a shady border and makes very good ground cover.

I know that I have just grumbled about suckering shrubs but I do like *Sorbaria sorbifolia* ‘Sem’, of which I have three, even though it also spreads by suckers. It is nowhere near as invasive as the *Rubus* or the Scots rose and I love its feathery lime green leaves which darken with age; the new leaves are bronze and it contrasts well with plainer shrubs. It has stiff upright panicles of fluffy white flowers, but I grow this for the foliage not the flowers, which I am almost tempted to cut off as they don’t really enhance it all. This variety is smaller than other

Sorbarias and in this garden doesn't seem to want to rampage through the border too much – so far it is under control!

Is variegated foliage still out of fashion? I do find shrubs with yellow variegations particularly useful and as long as they are chosen carefully, I don't see a problem with using more than one in a group; perhaps not white and yellow variegations together, but something spotted next to something with yellow-edged leaves say works for me and really brightens a border which might otherwise be unrelenting green.

**Julie Davies**

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Hereford Civic Society continues to operate virtually!

[www.herefordcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.herefordcivicsociety.org.uk) especially commenting on latest reports about housing design; and worries about loss of democracy with the suspension of the planning committee.

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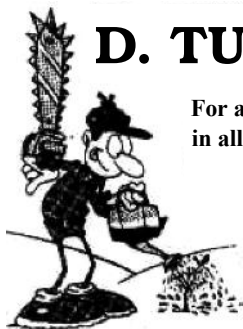
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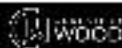
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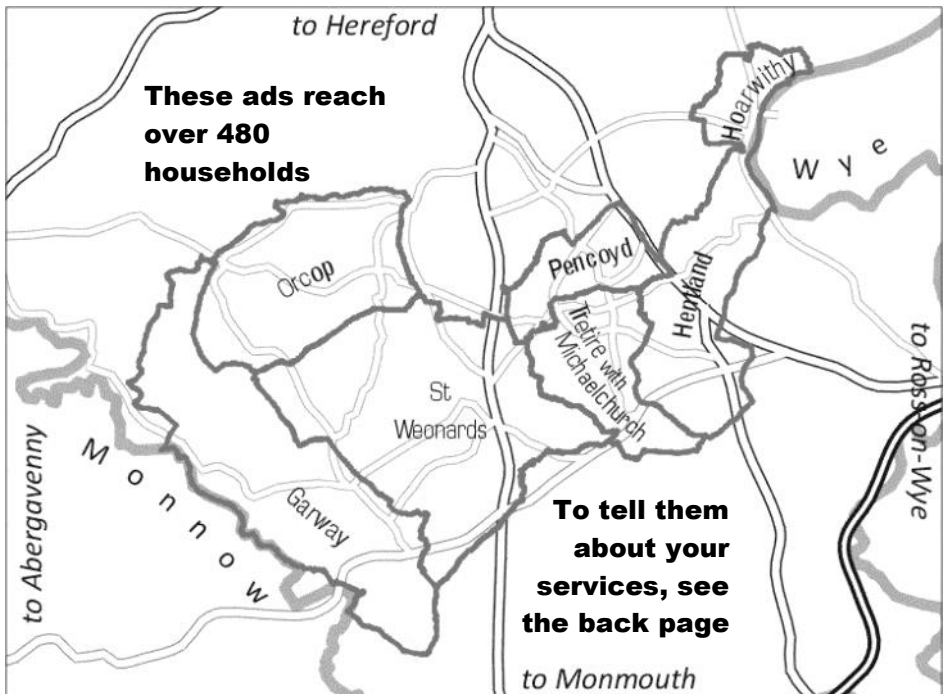
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