

PARISH NEWS
OF
ST WEONARDS, GARWAY, ORCOP,
PENCOYD, TRETIRE, MICHAELCHURCH,
HENTLAND AND HOARWITHY
DECEMBER 2022



**When lo, a great and shining light
What should it be, before my sight?**

CONTENTS

Page

3	Parish Contacts
4	Magazine Contacts and Parish Council Contacts
5	A Christmas Letter; Future Vicar
6	Prescription Collection; Magazine early copy for next month; Magazine Grants
7	Service Rota; Village Pages - St Weonards News
8	St Weonards News continued; Fay's Churchyard Bingo; Hereford Food Bank
9	Garway News - Garway School and Pre-school; Garway Stitchers; Carol Service; Garway Heritage Group Christmas Party
10	Christmas in Garway; Flicks in the Sticks; Garway Live
11	Garway Live continued; Orcop News
12	Orcop News continued
13	The Shepherd's Play; Magazine Distributor Vacancy
14	Orcop Parish Hall Christmas Bazaar; Festive Quiz Night Orcop Hall; OWL Good Neighbours Christmas Lunch; Tretire with Michaelchurch and Pencoyd News
15	Tretire with Michaelchurch and Pencoyd News continued
16	Tretire with Michaelchurch and Pencoyd News continued; Wye Worry??
17	Wye Worry?? continued; Wildlife in our Garden
18	Wildlife in our Garden continued; Book Review; Garden Notes
19	Garden Notes continued
20	A peek in the bookshop
21	Safety on our Roads
22	Gardening for Good; Talk The Talk
23	Chuckle Corner; Hereford Cathedral Events
24	Hereford Cathedral Events; Christmas Concert
25-26	Feeling overwhelmed by the energy crisis? Support is available
27	Diary Dates

CONTACTS IN THE ST. WEONARDS GROUP OF PARISHES

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St Weonards Group website	www.stw.org.uk

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCILLORS

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		office hours 01981 540721
Dinedor Hill Ward:	David Summers	david.summers@herefordshire.gov.uk

Samaritans	National Helpline	08457 909090
	Hereford	116 123 free calls
0330 094 5717 local call rates apply	jo@samaritans.org
	HOPEline UK (Prevention of Young Suicide).....	0870 1704000 01978 367333

Golden Valley & Hereford Rural South local policing teams

Sgt Emma Freer, PC Kirsty O'Brien, PC Jim Phillips, PCSO Lowri Anderson, PCSO Adam Westlake, PCSO Christina Howard, PCSO Hayley Cohen and PCSO Christopher Yarwood. How to get in touch:101 to talk to your local SNT or report a crime. herefordsouthside.snt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk www.westmercia.police.uk

Only call 999 in an emergency, when a crime is in progress or life is in danger.

MAGAZINE CONTACTS

Contributions to the Parish news can be given to your parish representative by the **5th of the month**:

Magazine Editor:	Fiona Mynors	01981 580208
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Tretire/Pencoyd:	Margaret Oubridge Tretire Smithy	01981 580233
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Ballingham, Bolstone & Hentland:	Nicky Mackenzie clerk@ballinghambolstonehentland-pc.gov.uk	07581 353103

VILLAGE INFORMATION, PHOTOS AND NEWS www.stw.org.uk

PARISH NEWS

THE ARCHENFIELD GROUP

Rural Dean: Rev Sean Semple
Rector of Ross on Wye
01989 562175

Please see St Mary's Ross website for more details or contact your churchwarden.

A Christmas Letter

Happy nearly-Christmas! It's Advent as I write, but I've never been one to ban everything Christmassy. The whole reason for the season is to get ready for the Coming, after all – the coming of the Christ-child, the coming of Christ again, or the coming of family and friends as we celebrate together. So we tell the stories and act them out, sing the songs and play the merry organ, stir the pudding and scoff the mince pies. And then if you've got the energy, enjoy having twelve more days of fun and feasting afterwards as well, as our ancestors did.



Having a good time in the dark times goes back a long way. Our archaeologist son helped on the Stonehenge excavations (they're on the telly again - a good programme on My 5 with Rob Bell), and it's clear that they pulled all the stops out. Alongside the big stone henge where they remembered the dead they built a big wooden settlement where folk from across the country gathered at midwinter to eat massive quantities of pigs, have a good time, build bits of the monument, and share in the rituals. They did it then because though people these days converge to watch the midsummer sunrise, it was the midwinter sunset that mattered to them, marking the return of lengthening days. The unconquered Sun: and it's no surprise that when Christians came to celebrate the unconquered Son that they pinched the date. Never let a good festival go to waste!

We don't know just when our ancestors hereabouts heard the good news that just as the Sun brought new physical life each year, so the Son brought eternal life, but it's probably earlier than you thought. Long before the Normans built the Hereford Cathedral we know now, the Anglo-Saxons had a cathedral and bishop here, and well before them Saint Dubricius/Dyfreg was founding churches in the Ariconium/Archenfield/Ergyng area in a tradition that could go back to quite early Roman times – not that long after Christ.

I've been coming over to help out a bit in the benefice for a while now, and I find it really moving to celebrate communion, baptise, confirm and share the ancient words of our prayers and hymns with you in country churches like yours where generation on generation of our ancestors have done just the same, and to deck the church with holly and fill it with candlelight at Christmas just as they did, right back to a time when their great-grandparents might have heard the stories of Jesus from their great-grandparents who heard them from someone who was actually there when they happened – or something like that.

And you know – the world in those distant days was as secular and multicultural, as full of wars and economic disasters, as fragile but also as fruitful as it is now. And what was good news then about how a fragile world could find hope both for this life and the life to come is still good news now. Don't let a good festival go to waste! Have a great time! And don't forget to check in at church just like all those generations before.

+ David Thomson (Hon Asst Bishop in the Diocese, in retirement)

Future Vicar

After careful consultation and discussion, parish profiles have been developed and a document outlining our needs and what we have to offer a new vicar is now ready. This will be used to advertise for a new vicar in January after the Christmas rush. Interviews will take place in March, and we hope to have someone in post by the late summer.

PRESCRIPTION COLLECTION



6th December Carolyn Trew 01600750227

(Please note 5 weeks until next collection)

Volunteers desperately needed for the monthly collection of the Garway Prescription box from Ewyas Harold, Golden Valley Surgery.

There is already a rota of volunteers in place, but a few more would be most welcome. If you are able to help and for more details, please contact Carolyn Trew on 01600 750227

!!! MAGAZINE EARLY COPY FOR NEXT MONTH !!!

DECEMBER 1st

To be for the January mag we need copy by 1st December...WOW.. we know it is early, but we need to keep costs down.

The company handling the collation and stapling has advised that it can hold current costs as we have advanced the copy deadline by one week. The earlier date will enable them to fit in the magazine between other jobs, which will be more efficient for them, and hence more economical for us.

Also, if at all possible, please send WORD documents as our software cannot copy PDFs.

Dear Subscriber,

Your magazine subscription for 2023 is now due, held at £7.00, despite rising costs.

Please pay via BACS transfer if possible.

Details are: **St. Weonards Group Magazine Sort Code:20-00-85 Account No. 70786276.**

Please advise your distributor if you have paid in this way.

Alternatively, you can pay by cash or cheque given to your distributor. Cheques payable to **St. Weonards Group Magazine**, please.

Thank you for your continued support.

Magazine Grants

Profits from the magazine are distributed each year in small grants to local community/charity organisations. Please apply to Peter Garrett before the end of December, explaining what you plan to do with the money. **Peter Garratt** garratt_peter@hotmail.com

Service Rota

For any changes please check the benefice website www.stw.org.uk

December 4th Sunday	10.00a.m	Garway Benefice Communion Advent Service
December 11 th Sunday	10.00a.m	St Weonards, All Age Baptism & Communion Service
	11.00a.m	Orcop, Holy Communion
	3.00p.m	Hentland Carol Service
December 16 th Friday	6.0p.m	St Weonards Carol Service
December 17 th Saturday	3.00p.m	Orcop Carol Service
December 18 th Sunday	10.00am	Hoarwithy Carol Service
December 22 nd Thursday	3.00p.m	Orcop, <i>Shepherd's Play</i>
December 23 rd Friday	4.00pm	Garway Common Carols
December 24 th Saturday	4.00pm	St Weonards Crib Service
	11.00pm	St Weonards Midnight Mass
	11.00pm	Hoarwithy Midnight Mass
December 25 th	9.15am	Tretire Communion

For enquiries about baptisms, weddings or funeral services, please contact the relevant church warden.

VILLAGE PAGES

ST WEONARDS

Archdeacon Derek came to celebrate communion for us on Remembrance Sunday, and we took time to reflect on those who have given their lives for others in the service of their country. We are grateful to the many different priests who come to help in leading our communion services while we do not have a vicar.

On December 11th we will be welcoming the Partridge family as they bring Max for baptism. We are delighted that Bishop Richard is coming again to take our service and share in this special event for a local family.

Come and join us for our carol service on December 16th at 6.00pm, with mince pies and mulled wine. If you would like to come and join the choir for this occasion, we are holding rehearsals in the Dower House at Treago on 8th and 14th December (children 6.30. adults 7.00pm) all welcome. For more information ring 01981 580 208 or fionamynors@btinternet.com.

Our popular crib service will be on Christmas Eve Crib Service at 4.00pm. This is ideal for families with younger children.

Our Midnight Communion at 11.00pm on 24th December will be taken by Bishop David who has generously agreed to help us.

We were delighted to receive a grant of £4000 from the Herefordshire Historic Churches Trust towards the recently completed roof repairs. The chancel floor repairs are on hold at the moment while we await the necessary permissions. The Hook Mason architect has given us full details of what needs to be done. Once we have permission and estimates we will seek further grants and hope to raise further funds ourselves.

Tickets for a Christmas hamper will be on sale this month.

The popular churchyard bingo is to be held on Friday 2nd December in the village hall. Please see the poster below. Many thanks to all those involved in the organisation for this event which will help replenish much needed funds. We are always grateful to Tracy Knights for keeping the churchyard looking so good for us.

To help raise some funds for the repairs, we are holding a Christmas Hamper Draw. Tickets from the shop or members of the PCC. Do buy some! **Richard Mynors**

!! FAY'S CHURCHYARD BINGO !!
Friday 2nd December
Come and enjoy the game at St Weonards village hall.
Eyes down at 8pm.
Raffle and refreshments.

Funds raised for the upkeep of the churchyard.
For more information contact Gwyneth Williams

Hereford Food Bank

We were able to take two large boxes of goods from the harvest service to the Hereford Food Bank. The Food Bank provides emergency food parcels throughout Hereford and surrounding areas.

They are at 41 Monkmoor St, Hereford HR1 2DX. 01432 607011

Collections of goods are taken at Tesco and Sainsbury's.

They have given us a list of items that are desperately needed:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Tinned meat | Personal hygiene items |
| Tinned fruit | Washing powder |
| Smash potato | Cooking oil |
| Pasta sauce | Tea and coffee |
| Jam/spread | Fruit squash |
| Gluten free products | Nappies/pull ups: size 5 to 7 |

We have a box in church if you want to leave items which are well in date.

Please help if you can.

Fiona Mynors

GARWAY

Garway School and Pre-school

During November the great excitement is the fantastic bonfire event organised by the PSA and enjoyed by so many across our local communities. More than 570 paying visitors came. Many thanks to all involved in this special event.

Pupils also had the opportunity to learn about Remembrance Sunday through the *Poppy Pebbles Project* and took part in the Children in Need *SPOTacular* Tuesday fund raising event by wearing something spotty!

Pre-school shared all the excitement of these special days and also enjoyed sweeping up leaves, colour sorting, scooping out pumpkins, hula hooping, rolling tyres, making potions, making dens in forest school and collecting apples for snack!

If you want to find out more about the many exciting Christmas events, carols, nativity and much more, go to the website and look at the newsletter. You will be astonished at what they all get up to! **Fiona Mynors**

Garway Stitchers



Garway stitching group meets once a fortnight on Wednesday mornings 10.30 – 12.30.

December dates are 14th and 28th . We are working on a series of community embroidery panels depicting life in Garway.

All are welcome to join us and add your own piece to the panels or bring your own project if you prefer.

For more details, contact **Tracy** 01981 580263.

Carol Service

There will be a Carol Service at **Garway Hill Methodist Chapel** on **Sunday 11th December at 3pm**. The service will be led by Adrian Williams, one of our circuit stewards. This is a family service, and everyone is welcome. Come and visit us in our cosy, warm chapel and celebrate the advent of Christmas. Seasonal food and drink will be served after the service. Hope to see you there. **Ruth Maskell**

GARWAY HERITAGE GROUP

Tuesday 20 December 7.30pm

Garway Community Hall

CHRISTMAS PARTY AND QUIZ

Local Quizmaster Mike Brewer will keep us all engaged and bewildered with his sparkling quiz.

Bring and Share Supper – Free to members and £5 for visitors who are very welcome.

Christmas in Garway

Village Christmas Friday December 2nd 5pm

Christmas Coffee Morning in the hall

December 6th, 10.30am

Christmas windowsplease decorate your windows ready for the school village walk on December 12th

Carols on the Common come and join in the singing, eat mince pies, drink mulled wine and meet the festive guests. 4.30pm 23rd December

Look out for more detail on Facebook and leaflets

TUESDAY December 13th
7.30pm GARWAY HALL £5.00
RESPECT PG13



Come away singing and inspired by our December film – *RESPECT*, the story of the Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin. Aretha starts singing as a child at her Baptist chapel, just after the death of her alcoholic mother and her voice marks her out as something very special. She goes 'on the road' with her minister father during his gospel tours, singing to astounded congregations. She is also brought out to perform at her father's dubious parties and this leads to her becoming pregnant and giving birth at the age of just twelve.

Jennifer Hudson plays the adult Franklin or rather she completely enters into the soul of the singer, fully embracing the messiness and tragedy which beset Aretha for much of her life. She plumbs the depth of Aretha's soul and gives her life. In fact, it was Franklin herself who, before her death, chose Hudson to play her in the film. She could not have chosen better – you'll leave with added respect for both Franklin and the wonderful actress who sings her into being.

Doors open at 7pm with the film starting at 7.30pm and, being Christmas, we'll be offering plenty of warming Yule refreshments, including our renowned home-baked cakes. See more on www.facebook.com/GarwayFlicks



Saturday 10th December Salsa Evening!

This month we have an evening of Salsa. You've seen it on 'Strictly', now you can come and try it for yourselves. If you don't know how to do it, don't worry, we can show you. It's going to be an evening of pulsating Latin beats brought to you by Donna Sockett. The best thing is, if you don't have a partner, you just need a sense of humour. This is going to be yet another different genre of music to add to the many that we've brought you. Of course there will be the usual bar and food.

As it's nearly Christmas we're going to give you an early present, it's only £5 to come in, now that's a nice surprise. We accept cards for admission and on the bar but prefer cash for the food.

Date for your diary: Saturday, January 28th *Burns Night*. More details in the next magazine.

Graham Bevan

ORCOP

ORCOP NEWS

Last month we reported with sadness the death of Angus Brymer MBE. His funeral took place at the Hereford Crematorium on 25th October. We are indebted to the Rev. Mark Johnson for forwarding the following brief account of his remarkable life, characterised by modesty, determination and public service, lovingly written by his wife, Regina:

Angus was born in Hereford in 1932 being the oldest of four boys but he grew up in Ewyas Harold after his mother moved there with the family. He left school at 14 and went to work for Smith and Warren, the local grocer's shop, delivering goods via horse and cart around Ewyas Harold and the common. Most of the deliveries were fairly straight forward, but one day there was a little bit of a panic as the horse slipped the reins while he was busy delivering and ambled back to the shop alone. A mad dash ensued as Angus chased the horse back to the shop and had to return it to pick up the cart and continue his deliveries.

The chance came at 16, to join the railway and Angus went to work for British Rail in Hereford, starting out as a cleaner before moving up to be a fireman – there were still many steam trains in those days. At 18 he was called up to do his National Service in Germany with the Army, before returning to British Rail, passing the exam to become a driver and then an inspector. He was finally promoted to be in charge of the Hereford Depot. During his time as a driver he drove the royal train from Hereford to Cardiff This included the slightly worrying message that came into the cab, asking if he could drive slowly and not go over any bumps as the Royal party was about to start their evening meal! He also had the chance to drive the Flying Scotsman, something which he relished.

The rather romantic story of Angus and Regina starts with a 16-year-old Angus on the bus from Ewyas Harold to Little Birch to go to one of the local dances. As it happened, Regina's uncle was the bus driver and owner, and Regina was on for the ride and a night out with her friends. She spotted Angus and was very taken with him when he got on the bus. At the village hall, she was so excited when Angus asked her to dance that her legs turned to jelly. It didn't seem to put Angus off, though, for he asked for another dance later in the evening and Regina knew that her luck was in. They soon became a couple and after Angus had returned from his National Service they were married at Orcop Church on 28th March 1959. They celebrated their 63rd wedding anniversary earlier this year.

Regina worked for a number of years in Hereford, at Chrystal Ware Products and then at the Water Board, and once married they settled into life at The Stars, Orcop. The Stars was Regina's parents' home, a small holding which her parents worked, along with other jobs, and, for those of you of a certain vintage, included trips to Orcop's Holy Thorn on Christmas Eve, a big local event.

Angus went to work on his motorbike, which was a bit hairy during the winter, but then bought a car, which made things much more pleasant as he had to be up for an early shift at Hereford on many occasions.

Beside his work for British Rail, Angus became a local magistrate, serving the court system for 28 years. This meant that he sat, not only on the licensing committee but also worked on childcare cases, which left a big impression on him.

In 1995, Angus was awarded the MBE for his services to British Rail and the community. It meant a trip for the two of them down to Buckingham Palace. He was so proud to receive his award from the late Queen, and as a nice little treat, the hotel where they stayed, bent over backwards to make sure they had the best possible time. Having your tea poured for you was one of Regina's favourite memories!

Angus also served as Chairman of St. Weonards' British Legion for two years, a role he thoroughly enjoyed. When the branch was wound up a few years ago, he and Regina were at Christ Church, Llanwarne, to see the laying up of the Standard.

Angus retired from British Rail at 63 and continued, for many years, to work the small holding that had now become theirs after the site came up for sale. However, it is never easy work, and so they gradually decreased the animal numbers and then stopped altogether in the last few years, just renting out the ground.

Although Angus loved living at The Stars, in the last few months it became clear that he needed more nursing care than Regina could provide, and he went into Hampton Grange. The nursing home was very good and cared for him and were always open for Regina to visit. This was supported by their many friends and neighbours and by Dore Community Transport.

Unfortunately, as Angus's condition deteriorated, he needed to go into the County Hospital. It was there that he passed away, peacefully, after a week's stay.

We turn now to church matters: There will be three events in Orcop Church in December, an 11am communion service on the 11th, a carol service at 3pm on the 17th and the "Shepherds' Play" on the 22nd at 3.30 pm. The carol service will be based on the traditional format of lessons and carols but with an informal twist and mince pies and mulled wine to follow. Please bring and share mince pies if you can. Mulled wine will be provided. The Shepherds' Play will be, in modern parlance "something else", as you will see from the separate advert! **We are working hard to keep the church alive and active at this time, in the absence of a parish priest, so please do make every effort to support at least one, but preferably all, of these!!**

As we look forward to 2023, we need to prepare a monthly rota of cleaners and flower arrangers. Many visitors to the church comment on its cleanliness and on the flower arrangements, but some of our cleaners have worked faithfully for many years and are now reaching an age at which it is unreasonable to expect them to continue. So, if you are willing to undertake this modest, quiet and pleasant task once a year, please let me know. It would be good to see the church decked-out for the Christmas Season and all are invited to participate in this task.

We are pleased to publish this message from the family of the late Rose Morgan:

Viv, Thelm and family would like to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, attendance at Rose's funeral and everyone's kind donations towards the upkeep of the chapel, which has come to £435.

Finally, we wish all of our parishioners a very Happy Christmas and a New Year free of turbulence, an end to the war in Ukraine and positive steps towards resolving the various challenges that we face as 2022 draws to a close.

Church cleaning and flowers: Rosey Wilson

Margaret Fletcher Churchwarden

"THE SHEPHERDS PLAY" ORCOP'S PLAY FOR CHRISTMAS!



Lasting about fifty minutes, with processional singing, a moving German medieval re-enactment of the Christmas story and a good dose of shepherds' knockabout humour, the play was revived in the late 1800s and translated from the German, with music specially composed at that time. It was probably first performed as Orcop Church was under construction. So, what better place in which to perform it!

**Come and enjoy it on Thursday 22 December at 3pm.
Entry is free with a retiring collection to be shared
between the church and a charity of the cast's
choosing.**

Magazine Distributor Vacancy

A vacancy has arisen for a distributor to deliver magazines each month along the lower road of Garway Hill.

The round includes 20 properties, extending from Stoney House and Stoney Barn to Upper Moors Barn, near Bagwyllydiart. It is a pleasant job, depending on the weather of course, providing a couple of hours of exercise (if done on foot!) with numerous opportunities on the way to chat with subscribers.

If you are interested in taking this on, please email me: garratt_peter@hotmail.com

or ring on 01981 580418.

Peter Garratt



**Orcop Parish Hall Christmas Bazaar
Saturday 3rd December from 2 pm**

Stalls to include crafts, preserves, antique tools, books, homemade cakes, raffle, and refreshments.
Everyone welcome.

You can book a stall for £10 per table. To book please email petamary@hotmail.co.uk.

OWL Good Neighbours Christmas Lunch Wednesday 7th December



This year the lunch will be held in Orcop Parish Hall.
The menu is a traditional Christmas lunch with a vegetarian option.

If you have other requirements such a gluten free
please let me know 01981 241 310.

All are welcome to join us
whether you are a regular at the Owl Community lunch or not.

The cost this year will be £15 (reduction for children)
and includes a seasonal drink.

We are looking forward to being entertained by the choir from Garway
School .

There will be no community lunch in January
the next lunch being 1st of February 2023

Jane Rigler

TRETIRE WITH MICHAELCHURCH AND PENCOYD

I cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, call this "News from Pencoed and Tretire" because, apart from a very small gathering at Tretire Church on the evening of Sunday, Oct 23rd, all six of us sitting up in the choir with Rev Tiffany Jackson, I know of no other newsworthy activity for the whole of the month of October!

However, having just received a cryptic email from our Editor, Fiona Mynors, "Any offerings for the Mag?" I feel honour bound to compose something for our parish page.....

I am working on a little idea suggested by Sue Pope when I visited her in Fownhope this morning, (she sends best wishes to any who remember her.)

She was reminiscing, as we do, on life at Treberon with David, and remembering all the different people who used to live in our villages, but are no longer with us, for one reason or another. This was sparked in some degree by a visit she had had the previous week, from Lally Hampson, daughter of Arthur and Kit Miller, whom several of you will remember. She had been tending her mother's grave at Pencoyd, as she regularly does. That reminded me that we recently had a visit from much more recent Tretire dwellers, Peter and Liz Everall from Little Treberon.

On a slightly different tack, but still in reminiscent mood, we recently had a request for any photos denoting community activities to include in the Parish Profile being prepared for applicants for a future vicar's post in our benefice. Well, that really did take me on a trip down memory lane!

Now we have only been here 20 years, so I know that my memories will not seem very distant compared with many of yours, but they may trigger others that you might like to write about in a future magazine.....?

So, we had the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in the grounds of Pencoyd Court, home of Marsha Jackson, in June 2012: lots of familiar old faces in those pictures! As indeed there are in pictures of various Summer Fetes, in the Snow's Garden and the Everall's garden; how many "children" remember taking their teddies to the Teddy Bear's Picnic organised by Liz Everall?!



Do you remember what was in fact a second China Sale, (the first two at Treberon several years earlier), in Tretire Church in the spring of 2017. The china and glass was all displayed on covered boards laid across the pews, sparkling in the sun streaming through the lovely clear windows of St Mary's?

In that same year, Linda Miles opened her arboretum to the public, and refreshments were served in her garage; there is a lovely photo of us and the Everalls standing under a big sign saying "Linda's Cafe"!

In July 2019 we held afternoon teas at an Open Garden Day at Tom and Sarah Vaughan's home, and Peter Everall and his Giovedi Trio of clarinetists entertained us.

In the autumn of that year, we had a play reading from a company from Abergavenny, of a Murder Mystery, in Much Birch Village Hall. John thinks we asked them back for a second similar event. However, John and I also went on to perform one with other local people such as the Everalls, and Mark Evans, and quite a lot of other thespians from around the benefice joined in; Peter Garlick, David Thornley, Andrew Lewis, Fiona Mynors and Julie from St Weonards Post Office. We also performed with their help at least two readings of the Christmas Play, Crisp and Even Brightly when we were joined by Elaine Goddard, our then vicar as King Wenceslas' page!

I've looked at the photos of some familiar faces, sadly no longer with us; Kathy Dew, Beryl Davies, David Pope, David Dixon. There are others who have moved away, such as John and Sheila Pursey, Sue Pope, and of course the Everalls. Some of you will have many more memories of people and events, which folk like us relative newcomers would love to read, and Fiona I'm sure would be pleased to include in future editions of this magazine.

How Covid has changed our lives! All community events had to stop due to that pandemic, and we seem now to have forgotten how to gather and celebrate life together. I wonder whether there is the will and the energy to rekindle a community life in these three villages? I do hope so, for all our sakes.

Meg Oubridge

WYE WORRY??

Most of our readers will be aware of the deep concern about the state of the River Wye. Some are working as volunteers for one of the agencies undertaking “citizen science” monitoring on the tributaries of the Wye and Lugg. There are several agencies involved, including the Environment Agency (EA), Welsh Water, Friends of the Upper Wye, The Wye and Usk Foundation, The Wye Salmon Association and CPRE (Campaign for the Protection of Rural England). I am working with the CPRE management team for their programme on the Upper Lugg catchment, and I monitor each week three sites on the River Teme, south of Bromyard.



On 27th October at Pengethly Manor, there was a meeting of the agencies involved to discuss a cooperative approach in gathering data for analysis by EA. One of the speakers was Andrew McRobb, leader of the CPRE programme. His address included some interesting background to the problem.

Firstly, there is great urgency. If nothing is done to curb current levels of pollution, the river will reach complete eutrophication in about two years. This means there will be no oxygen in the water to sustain plant, animal and fish life, and the river will be effectively dead.

As a result of budget cuts, the EA has been unable to properly address the problem because of lack of data on water quality throughout the catchment. A widely dispersed and long-term database is needed to understand the nature and sources of pollution so that a mitigation strategy can be worked out with all the stakeholders. The citizen science project recruits volunteers to address this problem, with almost 1000 now deployed by the agencies involved. The volunteers monitor their allotted sites, usually weekly, and the data are uploaded onto a smartphone app called “Epicollect”. The data are then quality checked and submitted to the EA for analysis. The monitoring involves a number of simple tests. The main focus is on phosphates, but the programme also includes measuring water levels and temperatures, testing for nitrates, turbidity and electrical conductivity (an indicator of total dissolved solids).

Although the complex cocktail of pollutants entering the Wye is not fully understood, it is well known that phosphorus is probably the main contributor to the formation of algal blooms that starve the water of sunlight and ultimately of oxygen. It is estimated that 60-70% of phosphates enter the river from dispersed agricultural sources and about 25% come from sewage works overflow discharges. Welsh Water is well aware of the problem and is investing £60,000,000 per annum in tackling it. We are fortunate in that Welsh Water is a “not for profit” company, so does not have to pay out dividends each year to shareholders (unlike many of the water companies that are privately owned, often by foreign investors).

The agricultural sources of phosphates are more difficult to understand and address. Over 22000ha of pasture and orchard has been lost in Herefordshire over the past six years, mainly to potatoes and maize. A combination of fine soils and steep topography leads to high levels of erosion and runoff from these crops, depositing silt and phosphates into the Wye tributaries. It is estimated that 3000t of phosphates are applied each year in fertilizer, in excess of need, and also there has been a massive investment on the catchment, both in England and in Wales, in large free-range chicken units. Chicken manure is four to five times richer in phosphates than cow manure, and the phosphate output from a unit of 100,000 chickens is about the same as that from the human population of Ross on Wye.

The farmers are not to be blamed for taking up government incentives to apply fertilizer, invest in maize for bio-digestion, or in chicken farms. They will naturally pursue profitable market opportunities as they arise, and indeed most are aware of the sickness of the Wye and keen to co-operate in finding and implementing solutions. The aim of the Environment Agency and the other agencies involved is not to apportion blame, but to engage with the water industry, agriculture and other polluters to understand the problem and find solutions. There is little time remaining if we are to save the river from eutrophication and restore its former rich biodiversity.

CPRE is planning to expand its monitoring programme. If you are interested in volunteering to participate, please let me know (garratt_peter@hotmail.com). **Peter Garratt**

Wildlife in our Garden

I must start by making two corrections to my article for November:

First, collar doves arrived in this country far earlier than I was aware, in the 1950s apparently, according to a book we bought in 1975. The fact that I didn't notice them till 50 years later, embarrassingly says rather a lot about how little attention I really pay to what is going on around me!

Second: That little vole didn't make a round trip of 24 miles, of course, but 24 metres!

As Peter Garratt remarked in his article Tales of Birds and Fungi, it has been a good year for fungi, for their fruiting bodies anyway. We have had a superb variety of species appearing in lawn, flower beds, wild areas and especially on odd bits of wood lying around. Over the years I have made several attempts to learn the names of some, by looking in books and by going on fungus forays, but I never seem to retain anything much for more than a few days, so I am quite unable to tell you the names of the ones I have seen here this autumn, except.....

The Honey Fungus! I did learn a bit about this one because it played havoc for a while in the garden of our previous home in Cambridgeshire. It started next door by very suddenly killing a magnificent old walnut tree (they had even named their house "Burr House" after it!). Then it visited us and killed a birch, some roses and a mature willow in quick succession. We were terrified by its reputation "Once you've got it, you'll never be rid of it." We were told how its hyphae would quickly spread many metres underground, and there was absolutely no cure!



So when in this garden, about four years ago, we suddenly lost a row of roses, a fir tree and another big willow I was very worried. I was having a tree surgeon round anyway, so I asked him about it. He agreed it probably was Honey Fungus because of the story and because of the white filaments creeping up under the bark from the base, the typical smell and the clumps of brown fruiting bodies. To my surprise he said I should feed it! He explained that it is endemic in all our woodlands but only occasionally kills a tree, usually an old,

weak one. It actually prefers dead wood, and usually has lots of twigs, old branches and leaf litter to eat, so leaves the stronger trees alone. As is typical of most predators in nature, it only kills to eat when it is hungry!

Since then I have been sure to leave plenty of leaves and woody debris lying about, anywhere other than where lawns are mown. Of course, we are now being told that this practice is good for wildlife generally. As we have not had any more trouble since the tree surgeon came, I reckon he gave me good advice.

John Oubridge, 4th November 2022

Book Review

A Man at the Helm by Nina Stibbe

Set in Leicestershire during the late 1960s, *A Man at the Helm* is a semi-autobiographical first novel from Nina Stibbe. It is full of outlandish humour, that conceals a deep well of sadness.

Here we have a divorced mother with three children, two daughters and one son, who are forced to move from city to village, as they fall on hard times in the face of the parental split. They struggle to find acceptance in the village, hampered as they are by their glamorous and other-worldly mother's penchant for alcohol and her further addiction to writing play scripts of highly dubious quality – it is her go-to activity when life gets tough. The narrative is written from the point of view of the children, whose lives are disorganized and chaotic, with meals thrown in as a bit of an afterthought. They put their heads together and make the decision to solve all their problem at one fell swoop by finding a man to be at the helm of their family. And their route to achieving this is by means of The List that contains the names of random men who drift into their lives, however unsuitable they might be. And they are very unsuitable. Much of the humour in this book derives from the children's naïve approach to acquiring a man for their mother, whom they treat almost like a child to be placated.

Men are lured in by the children writing to them in the guise of their mother with invitations based on contrived excuses to visit them at home. How it is that the mother fails to spot what is going on is a puzzle, but the choices are random and indiscriminate, and the outcomes are both hilarious and deeply sad. And always food is involved. As one of the daughters confidently observes: *"If there was one thing I knew for definite about men it was that they cannot perform sex if hungry."*

Their efforts to muscle their way into the local community are completely wide of the mark, as a family containing a Divorced Woman (shock, horror). They decide to make an impression on the village by taking part in the Easter Fancy Dress Parade – costumes to be "timely and home-made." *"An inspired costume, based on the newly-introduced decimal coinage, was constructed, our narrator going as a 50 pence piece. Seeking another suitably timely theme, their mother suggests a costume based on the Divorce Reform Act – not a popular choice."*

Definitely worth a read – lots of laughs to be had.

Hilary Smallwood

Garden Notes

The plant catalogues are starting to arrive which means that I can enjoy dreaming about next year's garden. My favourite is from *Plants of Distinction*, and I always find something to tempt me. Here are the seeds that are on my list so far:

Angelica archangelica does so well here that I will be ordering *Angelica gigas*, confident that it will be just as happy; that's the one with the rich ruby red flowers and purple stems - stunning. I love my snapdragons but generally choose a single colour – dark red or tangerine or, this past year, pure white. Next year, I am



tempted to choose a mixture and I have spotted which was bred for the cut flower market, has very straight stems and is pretty mixture of rose, white, burgundy and apricot. I am pleased to see there are no yellow ones in the mix; I have an aversion to mixed packets of seeds that are just too, too colourful.

Back in the spring my husband rebuilt a low drystone wall in the front garden so that we could remove the ivy roots that were growing through all the joints. He fancies growing aubrietia on the top and so I will be adding a pack of Aubrietia 'Audrey Deep Blue' to my order. This variety has extra-large flowers. If we can get it to establish in the joints of the wall, I will have a very happy husband and some lovely spring colour outside the dining room window.

Probably because I love snapdragons, I also love all the varieties of Linaria, which have flowers like miniature snapdragons. I am tempted to buy several varieties. The common toadflax or *Linaria vulgaris* is a native wildflower but its dainty primrose flowers look very pretty at the front of a border and will flower all summer long. *Linaria maroccana* 'Fairy Bouquet' grows 10 inches tall, is just as dainty and is a pretty mixture of white, lemon, lilac and purple. *Linaria triornithophora* is taller (around 3 feet) and has purple flowers in groups of three around the long straight stems. With their long spurs and yellow lips, they look just like groups of tiny budgerigars. It is an unusual plant that you don't see very often but is well worth growing.

In a previous garden I grew *Morina longifolia* which is an unusual and stunning perennial from Nepal. Although I am not convinced that it will like our soil, I am willing to try it here. Coming from the Himalayas, it can obviously stand the cold, but it doesn't like wet winter conditions. It's not a pleasant plant to weed around as the rosettes of thistle-like leaves are extremely prickly but the spires of white tubular flower are unusual and very attractive. The flowers are long-lasting and after they have been pollinated, turn pink, then red. Despite requiring sturdy gardening gloves to go anywhere near it, I am happy to grow it again.



I've grown a variety of *Penstemon* from seed in the past; next year I will grow *Penstemon* 'Electric Blue' again. The photographs in the seed catalogues don't do it justice; this has to be my favourite penstemon, it really is electric blue and is very easy from seed.

Finally, I am a sucker for buying seeds and plants for no other reason than I like the name. Tomato 'Cherokee Purple' is an heirloom variety from North Carolina. I've no idea how good they will be, but the catalogue says they have an extremely sweet flavour and masses of 12oz fruit. As our honeymoon was just outside Cherokee, I simply must try them. **Julie Davies**

A peek in the bookshop



Twelve Books of Christmas

On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me

The **Private Eye Annual 2022** - where to start, this year has had plenty of ammunition.

On the second day of Christmas my true love gave to me ...

The Golden Mole and Other Living Treasure by Katherine Rundell - a beautifully designed book with gold edging.

On the third day of Christmas my true love gave to me ...

We Wish You a Merry Christmas - a highly illustrated poetry collection containing classic and modern Christmas poems chosen and illustrated by Chris Riddell.

On the fourth day of Christmas my true love gave to me ...

Night Sky Almanac 2023 - finally a book that rhymes!

On the fifth day of Christmas my true love gave to me ...

Five Little Penguins by Lily Murray - a lift-the-flap Christmas picture book.

On the sixth day of Christmas my true love gave to me ...

The BBC Puzzle Book - test your knowledge of the history of the BBC and all your favourite programmes with this official puzzle book.

On the seventh day of Christmas my true love gave to me ...

Christmas is Murder - a collection of intriguing short stories written by Val McDermid.

On the eighth day of Christmas my true love gave to me ...

The Christmas Bookshop - a cosy, festive romance by Jenny Colgan.

On the ninth day of Christmas my true love gave to me ...

Under Milk Wood - a stunning retelling of the Dylan Thomas classic by Cerys Matthews.

On the tenth day of Christmas my true love gave to me ...

The Climate Book - Greta Thunberg has gathered the wisdom of over one hundred experts to equip us with the knowledge we need to combat climate disaster.

On the eleventh day of Christmas my true love gave to me ...

Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2023 - a coffee table book of the top 100 photographs from this year's competition.

On the twelfth day of Christmas my true love gave to me ...

The Twelve Days of Christmas by Alex T Smith - a witty new take on the festive classic - a perfect Christmas present for any child.

Wishing everyone a healthy and happy festive time - do come and see us in Rossiter book shop soon!

Julie Hudson

Safety on our Roads

There have been significant changes to the Highway Code this year, which affect everyone. These changes, introduced under the title of 'A *Hierarchy of Road Users*' are not just new rules for motorists, but have significant implications for all. Unfortunately, there has been a lack of communication and currently it is estimated that less than 20% of motorists and 2% of pedestrians are aware of these changes.

Everyone is entitled to use our roads except where there are specific exemptions e.g., motorways. This means everyone, whether on foot, on a horse or bicycle or in a vehicle, has an equal right to be there. However, (contrary to what many motorists believe!) there has not been a hierarchy - until now.

The reason behind these changes is to safeguard the most vulnerable road users, so priority is given to pedestrians. When walking on the road, we should face oncoming traffic. The rules now require the motorist, when passing someone walking, to leave a safe gap of at least 2m when travelling at up to 30mph, and more if at a higher speed. In rural areas with narrow lanes, this is often impossible, so consider carefully what is a safe and appropriate speed. It is often safer for large vehicles, such as tractors, to stop and let the walker pass them.

Drivers, motorcyclists, and cyclists should give way to pedestrians who are crossing or waiting to cross a road into which or from which they are turning. They should also give way to pedestrians waiting at a zebra crossing and to pedestrians and cyclists waiting to cross at a parallel crossing.

Give horses, whether ridden or led, a 2m gap and pass at less than 10mph. You should not sound your horn as a warning of your approach.



There are significant changes relating to cyclists, some controversial. When passing at speeds of up to 30mph, leave at least a 1.5m gap, and more at higher speeds. In towns and on quiet roads, they are encouraged to ride in the centre of their lane to be easily seen, but move to the left to allow motorists to pass, when it is safe to do so. They may also ride two abreast. In slow moving or queuing traffic, they may pass vehicles on either side. (Drivers beware! Use your mirrors regularly, to identify cyclists around you).

Car users, both drivers and passengers, are encouraged to use the Dutch Reach method of opening doors. This involves operating the door catch with your hand furthest from the door, whilst holding the door with the other hand so that it cannot swing open until you have checked that it is safe to do so. Using this technique, your body will naturally turn towards the opening door, making it easier to see anyone in proximity. It will also enable control of the door in high or gusty wind conditions. Please note that this applies to passengers and not just the driver.

It is important to realise that in the event of an incident, these changes place the onus on the motorist to prove they acted safely.

If it is some years since you acquainted yourself with the Highway Code - and there have been changes on a regular basis over the last 10 years – either buy a copy, or better still consider attending a Driver Refresher Day, run by Herefordshire Advanced Drivers.

(group-contact@advanced-drivers.org.uk) **David Williams**

Gardening for Good

Plant three rows of peas:
Peace of mind
Peace of heart
Peace of soul.

Plant four rows of squash:
Squash gossip
Squash indifference
Squash grumbling
Squash selfishness.

Plant four rows of lettuce:
Lettuce be faithful
Lettuce be kind
Lettuce be patient
Lettuce really love on another.

Plant three rows of turnips:
Turnip for meetings
Turnip for service
Turnip to help one another.

Water freely with patience
Cultivate with love
There is much fruit in your garden
Because you reap what you sow.

To conclude our garden.. we must have thyme
Thyme for each other
Thyme for family
Thyme for friends and especially
Thyme for GOD.

Editor's comment: Apologies to the writer but I do not have the source of this poem which I found in my magazine folder. I can publish your name next time.

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Chuckle Corner

Sign in a French hotel: Attention Peinture Fraiche....Careful Wait Paint.

What do you call it when it rains ducks and geese? Foul (fowl) weather.

What is a king's favourite kind of precipitation? Hail!

What do you call a wet bear? A drizzly bear.

Hereford Cathedral Events

Waste Not, Want Not: Mon 12 September to Saturday 31 December Mondays to Saturdays, 10am – 5pm

The exhibition this autumn in the Mappa Mundi and Chained Library will showcase items from the collections that have reused or repurposed older materials and given them a new lease of life. From old books and archives to the careful use of parchment, to reframing stained glass fragments and the reuse of silver and gems – there are many ways that the cathedral of the past 'wasted not'. **Normal admission charges apply**

Christmas Sparkle Organ Concert: Sat 3 December, 1.15 pm. Lunchtime organ recital of Advent and Christmas favourites given by Peter Dyke, with large screen projection. **Admission is free with a retiring collection in support of Hereford Cathedral Perpetual Trust.**

Family Nativity Trail: Monday 5 December – Tuesday 3 January Pick up a free leaflet at the Welcome Desk and follow the trail around the cathedral to find the different parts of the nativity story. Answer the questions as you go around, take the highlighted letters from your answers and you will be able make a festive word at the end of the trail! Once you've found the answer, take your sheet to the Cathedral Shop or Welcome Desk to claim your sticker!

Ex Cathedra: Christmas Music By Candlelight: Wednesday 7 December, 7.30 pm These popular concerts seek out the heart of Christmas. A seamless blend of seasonal favourites, little-known gems and inspiring new music create a deeply atmospheric celebration at this special time of. **Tickets: Birmingham Symphony Hall Box Office 0121 780 3333, Courtyard Hereford 01432 340 555 or Cathedral Shop 01432 374 210.**

Hereford Choral Society: Handel's Messiah: Sat 10 December, 7.30 pm A special candlelit performance by Hereford Choral Society with Marches Baroque. **Tickets available from: herefordchoralsociety.org/tickets**

ABF The Soldiers' Charity Christmas Concert: Wednesday 14 December, 7 pm ABF's annual Christmas concert returns in all its glory, with school choirs and bands. **Tickets will be available from the Cathedral Shop, Tel 01432 374 210 and The Courtyard Box Office www.courtyard.org.uk/abf.**

Hereford Cathedral Christmas Fair: Sat 17 December, 9.30 am – 4 pm. Join us for our annual Christmas Fair with over forty stalls selling a range of festive produce. Please join us in the Cathedral Close at 12 noon for carol singing. **Admission free, with a collection to support the work of Hereford Cathedral.**

St Michael's Hospice 'Light Up A Life' Service: Sun 18 Dec, 5 pm Everyone welcome. Please visit st-michaels-hospice.org.uk for more information.

Christmas Capers: Monday 19 December, 7 pm Join cathedral staff and volunteers for a fast-paced evening uncovering festive facts from the cathedral's archives and around the building. **Tickets cost £12 and can be purchased from the cathedral website.**

Christmas Messy Church: Tuesday 20 December, 11.30 am – 3 pm. Make a selection of seasonal crafts to take home! Messy Church is Christ-centred, for all ages, based on creativity, hospitality and celebration. We will have craft activities, food and fun - all centred around the teaching of the Bible. This is a free drop-in event with no pre-booking required. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

Christmas Lego Club: Wednesday 21 December, 12 - 3 pm Test your skills at creating crazy constructions with a Christmas twist with Lego! Enjoy this freestyle Lego session in the South Transept with thousands of bricks and hundreds of mini figures, learn building techniques and make new friends. Spaces are free but limited, booking essential via the cathedral website.

Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols: Thursday 22 & Friday 23 December, 7pm

Everyone is welcome to join us for our Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols. Admission by ticket only, to apply for your free ticket please download an application form from the cathedral website.

Wednesday 28 December, 3.30 pm : A quiet service of remembrance for parents and families who have suffered the loss of a child, whether recently or long ago. All welcome.

La nativité du Seigneur: Saturday 28 January, 7 pm Peter Dyke, assistant director of music at Hereford Cathedral, performs Olivier Messiaen's organ masterpiece La nativité du Seigneur, which consists of nine movements or 'meditations' inspired by the birth and life of Christ. **Tickets to be available via the cathedral website.**

Ross-on-Wye Choral Society

Christmas Concert

Gounod - St Cecilia Mass

Vaughan Williams - Fantasia on Christmas Carols

Holst - Christmas Day

Selection of other Carols

Conductor - Adrian Taylor

Soprano - Freya Holliman

Tenor - Osian Wyn Bowen

Bass - Nicholas Perfect

Saturday December 17th 7.30pm

St Mary's Parish Church, Ross-on-Wye

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or on the door

Feeling overwhelmed by the energy crisis? Support is available

Funded by Herefordshire Council, Keep Herefordshire Warm is here to help.

For residents across the county, this winter will be a time of considerable stress and anxiety. With rising energy costs and the cost of living on everyone's mind, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. However, we have support available to help you deal with the crisis.

Keep Herefordshire Warm's advice line is staffed by a team of expert advisors, who can offer advice on a range of energy subjects, and if they can't answer your question there and then, they'll always get back to you. **Call for free on 0800 677 1432, Monday to Friday, 9-5pm.**

If you need some extra support to get back in control of your energy, that's where our Energy Advocates come in. They can help you if your relationship with your supplier has broken down, you're managing a large energy debt, or need to access emergency support.

Keep Herefordshire Warm also administers funding schemes aimed at improving home energy efficiency, saving costs and energy now and in the long term. Subject to eligibility, funding is available for a wide range of measures, including insulation, high heat retention storage heaters, and air source heat pumps.

Call the advice line on 0800 677 1432 or visit keepherefordshirewarm.co.uk to find out more.

Don't forget

The Energy Price Guarantee (which is being reported as a £2,500 limit on energy bills) is actually just another price cap. The unit price is capped (34p per kWh for electricity and 10.3p per kWh for gas), which means if you use more than £2,500 worth of units, you'll pay more.

Here are some top tips to get you started on your energy saving journey:

- Changing your behaviour is one of the most important things you can do. Turn appliances and gadgets off at the wall, learn how to use your heating programmer effectively and turn your heating on half an hour later than usual.
- Insulate, insulate, insulate. Make sure you're not losing heat to draughts. If you can, top up your loft insulation. Check for draughts and block them up (for a quick and easy fix, you can use waste paper).
- If you have a condensing boiler (most modern combi boilers are condensing), set the flow temperature as low as it can be, whilst still heating the space. For most, this is around the 45°C to 47°C mark. Head to keepherefordshirewarm.co.uk/flow to find out more.



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keepherefordshirewarm.co.uk/home-improvements



Dates for the diary:

December

1 COPY DATE

2 Garway Village Christmas

2 St Weonards Bingo

4 Advent Communion Garway

3 Orcop Bazaar

6 Garway Coffee Morning

7 Owl Christmas Lunch

9 Orcop Quiz Night

10 Garway Live

13 Flicks in the sticks

14 Garway Stitchers

16 St Weonards Carols

17 Orcop Carols

18 Hoarwithy Carols

20 Garway Heritage Group

22 Orcop 'Play for Christmas'

23 Garway Carols on the common

24 St Weonards Crib Service

24 Hoarwithy Midnight Communion

25 Tretire Christmas Communion

28 Garway Stitchers

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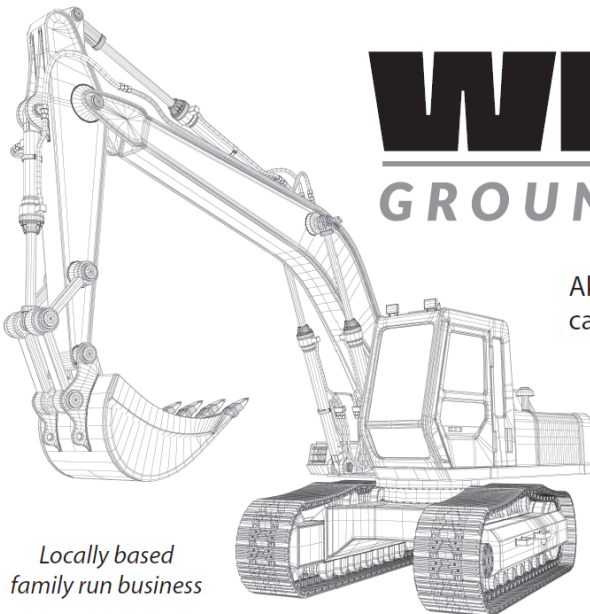
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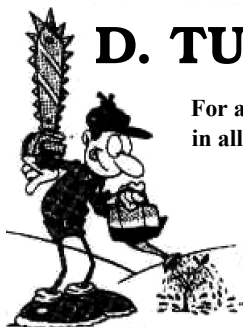
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Advance Joinery	3	J P Mower Services	16
Aquassist	6	Jane Bovell (Singing Lessons)	16
Barbara Garlick	15	Jon Winder (Chimney Sweep)	17
Bill McGinley (Maths Tutoring)	16	Juliet Ablett Homeopathy	15
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Brian Colwell	1	Kinesis Sports Therapy	12
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Certainlywood	17	Lynne Bradley (Piano Lessons)	16
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Coley's	14	Nigel Payne (Tree Pruning)	10
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Dennis Walker & Son (Tree Services) ..	12	Pengethley Farm Shop	11
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Eve Lomas Therapies	17	Powells Land & Estate Agents	18
FarmFlock	12	Ross Vincent	4
Fiona Furnishings	9	Ryeland (Rural Bookkeeping)	17
Frameworks	22	Sarah L Hope (Osteopath)	17
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Home Choice Flooring	2	Yogaskies	13
Inti Electrical Solutions	5		

for Advertisers Services index see ...p24

Index of Advertisers' Services

for an advertisers' name index see p26

Agas, heating & plumbing services	3,4	Hedge cutting	9,10
Architectural services.....	21	Ice Cream & Milk	6
Blacksmith	3	Kindling.....	17
Blinds.....	9	Lawn Care	11
Bookkeeping, accountants & office services.....	5,7,17	Llama Trekking	1
Bridge Club.....	13	Legal Services	5
Builders & Construction	11,14,15,19	Machinery services	2,16
Car sales and repairs	8	Maths tutoring.....	16
Carpentry.....	3,11,13,15	Oven cleaning.....	22
Cleaning services	15	Owl Community Support.....	19
Coatings	14	Painters & Decorators.....	1,4
Computing & tech support	5,9	Pest Control services.....	7
Counselling.....	19	Picture Framing	22
Dental care	20	Piano lessons	16
Dowsing.....	1	Poetry	10
Electricians	3,5,15	Pre-school/Toddler	4,21
Estate Agents	18	Roofing	11,15
Farm shop	11	Septic Tank emptying	6
Firewood.....	17	Shepherding services	12
Flooring.....	2	Singing lessons.....	1,16
Florist.....	15	Skip Hire, recycling etc	6
Foot care	7	Small bale hay	17
Fruit juice	17	Soft furnishings.....	9
Funeral services	1,19	Sports Therapy	12,20
Garages.....	8	Sweeps.....	10,17
Gardening.....	9	Tools wanted	16
Groundwork	9,14,19	Tree services	10,12,13,16
Health	1,3,13,15,17,20	Window cleaning.....	15
		Village Halls & Community Centres	2,10,12
		Yoga	13