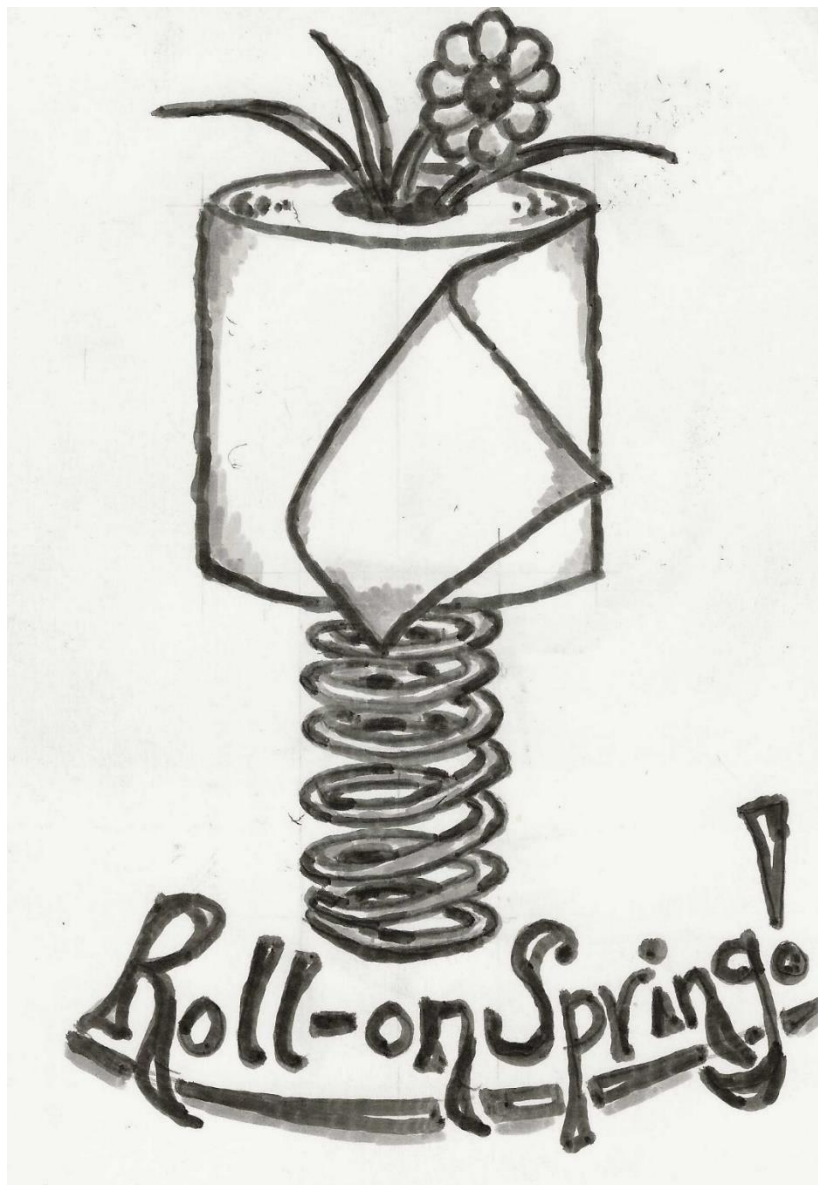


PARISH NEWS

OF

ST WEONARDS, GARWAY, ORCOP,
PENCOYD, TRETIRE, MICHAELCHURCH,
HENTLAND AND HOARWITHY

APRIL 2023



PETER GARRATT

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Orcop	Margaret Fletcher.....	01981 540790
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St Weonards Hall Booking	Anna Williams.....	07779 006994
St Weonards Pre-school	Anna Williams.....	01981 580352
Singing Tree Choir	Hilary Smallwood	01600 614012
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Flicks in the Sticks	Claire Adamson.....	01600 750465
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OWL Good Neighbours	Jane Rigler.....	07940 308696
Dore Community Transport	0345 2020144
St Weonards Group website	www.stw.org.uk

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCILLORS

Birch Ward:	Toni Fagan (Green)	tonifagan@btinternet.com
		office hours 01981 540721
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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

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Hentland/Hoarwithy:	Mr and Mrs Pember One Eleven, Hoarwithy	01432 840254
Orcop:	Mrs M Fletcher 3 Wilkes Row, Orcop	01981 540790
Tretire/Pencoyd:	Margaret Oubridge Tretire Smithy	01981 580233
St. Weonards:	Mrs P Craig 8 Mount Way, St Weonards	01981 580433

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St Weonards:	Mark Hearne clerk@stweonardsparishcouncil.org	01981 251887
Llanwarne:	Mark Hearne clerk@llanwarnegrouppc.co.uk	01981 251887
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.

Letter from Bishop Richard

Dear Friends

I have been delighted to see how many people have already engaged with events in our year of prayer. Not only that, but parishes across the diocese are organising their own programmes. It has felt a welcome going back to basics of why the church is here. We are too often overwhelmed by our obvious challenges and forget that prayer connects us with the one who holds the future in his hands.

Prayer is confusing! If God is all powerful and all knowing, why do we need to ask him anything? Wouldn't he unfold his purposes in spite of us? What about those prayers that must be in his will, but seem to remain unanswered? But Jesus clearly taught us to ask for things. What are the requests in the Lord's prayer for God's will to be done on earth as in heaven and for daily bread, if not prayers for God's intervention to sustain us and even change our circumstances? Paul advised the Philippian Church 'in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, to present our requests to God'.

Perhaps our quandary is because we mistake correlation with causation. If we could really twist God's arm, then it would be about formulas and patterns, with God sitting inactive until the right prayers were offered. Correlation is rather more mysterious. As Archbishop William Temple said, when challenged whether prayer had a point, "When I pray co-incidences happen; when I don't, they don't!" In the Lord's prayer, your will be done follows hallowed be your name. Worship re-orientates the mind to think God's thoughts after him. A mind so formed is more likely to ask for the things that are on God's heart. More importantly, such a heart may find itself the answer to its own prayers. A prayer for justice might lead to actions to bring justice. A prayer for more people to come to know Jesus may raise the courage to tell people about him.

I hope the Year of Prayer may lead to a lasting change in our own praying and an increase in the spiritual temperature and our missional fruitfulness. If you haven't done so already, do join in.

You can find resources to help your church and a list of all our key events on the Year of Prayer web page.

+Richard

Easter Day Communion Services Sunday April 9th

10.00 am Hoarwithy Church and St Weonards Church

11.00 am Pencoyd

All welcome!

Annual Parochial Church Meeting 26th April

Orcop Village Hall 7.00pm

All are welcome to attend this important event to hear the review of the churches' activities and share some fellowship and ideas for our future.

SERVICE ROTA FOR APRIL

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

Sunday 2 nd Palm Sunday	10.00/10.15 am 11.00am Communion 3.00pm	Walk Pencoyd to Llanwarne Hentland PAX Service
Good Friday 7 th	2.00 pm	St Weonards Last Hour Reflection
Easter Sunday 9 th	10.00 am 10.00 am 11.00 am	Hoarwithy, Communion St Weonards, Communion Pencoyd
Sunday 16 th Mothering Sunday	10.00 am	Hoarwithy, Holy Communion
Sunday 23 rd	9.15 am 10.00 am 6.30 pm	Hentland, Holy Communion St Weonards, All Age Service Tretire, Evening Prayer

For enquiries about baptisms, weddings or funeral services, please contact the relevant church warden. If you would like to receive the link to a Zoom service which you have not previously attended, please contact the relevant church warden.

APCM

Wednesday 26th April Orcop Village Hall 7.00/7.30 pm

Garway Hill Methodist Chapel Services

Easter Sunday 9th April 3pm Revd. Paul Arnold

Sunday 23rd April 3pm Mr Wilf Prosser

PRESCRIPTION COLLECTION



25th April Christine Davies 01981 580129

!!! Magazine News !!!

***Please send WORD documents
as our software cannot copy PDFs.***

Many thanks for all those who have subscribed to the magazine for 2023. If you have not quite managed it yet please do or you will not receive your copy!

Subs for 2023 should have been paid please. £7.00.
Please pay via BACS transfer if possible.

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

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

You can pay by cash or cheque given to your distributor.
Cheques to **St. Weonards Group Magazine.**

Magazine grants have been made to: St Weonards
Benefice Parishes. Dore Community Transport. Garway
School. Garway Youth Group. Orcop Warm Space

VILLAGE PAGES

ST WEONARDS

As part of our preparation for Easter, we have some special events in preparation. On **Palm Sunday 2nd April** in commemoration of Jesus's entry into Jerusalem we meet at Pencoyd at 10.00am and walk to Llanwarne Church. There is a communion service at 11.00 if people wish. It's not a long walk, and it gives us the opportunity to meet others across our community and share fellowship. Do come!

On **Wednesday 5th April** from 12.00 to Lent 2.00pm we are holding a Lent Lunch at Treago HR2 8QB, courtesy of the Herbert family. This is a simple meal of soup, bread and cheese. Donations for Hereford Food Bank.

On **Good Friday 7th April** for the Last Hour from 2.00 to 3.00pm, Alex Herbert will lead us in a time of reflection, music and prayers.

On **9th April**, we are most grateful to Bishop David who is coming to celebrate our Easter Sunday Communion for us.

On **Wednesday 26th April** at 7.00pm in Orcop Village Hall, we shall be holding the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. This is open to anyone in our communities. It is an opportunity to review what has been happening in our parishes, to elect our church officers and consider future developments. We shall start with some light refreshments.

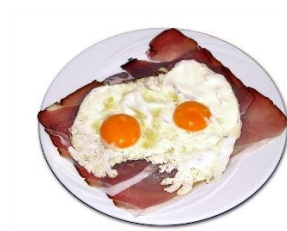
To celebrate the King's coronation, we plan to have a Bring and Share lunch at Treago, as we did for the Queen's Jubilee. More details next month.

As most people know, sadly nobody applied to be our vicar. There was interest in the post, although rural ministry with multiple parishes and churches can seem challenging. For the future, we need to seek ways to work even more closely together, possibly by some sort of parish administrative amalgamation, to reduce these challenges. After re-advertising we hope to have more interviews in May.

Richard Mynors, churchwarden.

BIG BREAKFAST

Sunday 16th APRIL 9.30-12.30



ST WEONARDS VILLAGE HALL

For more information ring

Pam Craig 01981 580433/Richard Williams 01981 580442

In aid of St Weonards Village Hall



Sunday 7th May

Coronation Celebration

Bring and Share Lunch Treago

12.00 to 2.00pm

to discuss what you would like to bring and for planning for numbers

Please contact Fiona

fionamynors@btinternet 01981580

GARWAY

Garway Stitchers



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

Our next dates are 5th and 19th April. At the Community Centre. 10:30 am – 12:30 pm.

It has been some time since there has been an update on how we are progressing with the panels. We are still working on the three that I wrote about a while ago. The first we started was the Village Hall panel, which is very nearly finished. The second one depicts all the happenings on Garway Common, and the third, is the one about Garway Hill. All are progressing very well, and we are working on the components of each panel simultaneously, so there are some very busy needles amongst all the lovely chat on a Wednesday morning!

At present, one of the things we are doing is using a stumpwork technique - which is a bit like 3D embroidery - to create the leaves and fruits/blossoms of the various trees that inhabit the common. These will frame the panel and bring a three-dimensional element to the embroideries.

Please do come along either for the chat, or even to do a bit of stitching.

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.

In Memory of Audrey Dowdeswell, aged 93yrs, who passed away peacefully on 11th February 2023 at The Orchard Care Home, Ganarew.

Audrey (Mam) lived for most of her life in Newport, South Wales, being the 13th child in the Edwards household.

Marrying Phillip in 1951, and being widowed at an early age, she became a single parent over many years bringing up her six children. She became a grafter extraordinaire to support her children, working as a cook in a Nursing Home, a carer, a cleaner and finally as a Nursing Auxiliary. She worked for several years on night duty on the Intensive Care Unit at the Royal Gwent Hospital. In time to come, as her family grew up, Audrey enjoyed her passion for ballroom dancing, singing and acting which she became famous for within her friendship group.

In 2000, Audrey's life changed and she moved into her beloved little flat in Garway opposite Sue's bungalow. Here she quickly settled into village life and, embracing all that it offered and made many friends as time went on.

Over the years Audrey became involved with the WI, Orcop Evergreens, Denise's Wednesday Lunch Club, Janet's Tuesday Club to name but a few. She was frequently found on the bus into Hereford, on which she gained another circle of friends with whom to chat. Some of her other passions were her garden, which she loved to show off with pride, her pickle and jam making, or her famous Welsh Cakes which tempted passers-by as the aromas wafted through her kitchen window.

Mam was a charismatic, witty, fun loving lady, a real pocket rocket, who had a care and fondness for everyone she met whether young or old. Once you met Little Aud, as she came to be known, she wasn't easy to forget and this became evident when her acting talents were transferred to the Garway Pantomime Stage. Here she rocked the hall, encouraged by a very willing, raucous audience and cast. There are many stories to tell, some of which have become entwined in the fabric of Garway Panto history and the village itself for ever. Always willing to volunteer at village functions, she would be found behind the counter or washing up, with her twinkling eyes, ready wit and magnetic smile beaming out.

Garway was Mam's second home and she loved every minute of her life here, having become enveloped by the love and friendship given to her by village folk and friends. She was very settled and content as time passed by.

I would like to thank you for the many cards, telephone messages and offers of support given to me and my family both before and since Mam's passing. You have wrapped us up and cared for us for which I am so grateful. "Little Aud" will rest easy now, and I think she will be remembered fondly by many, for a long time to come.

Sue, Ellie and all of Audrey's family

Easter Sunday 9th April 3pm

Garway Hill Methodist Chapel warmly invites you to join us on Easter Sunday to celebrate the resurrection. The service, with Holy Communion (you need only partake in Holy Communion if you wish), will be followed by light refreshments of tea and biscuits/cake.

Everyone welcome! **Ruth Maskell**



Garway Coffee Morning

**All the usual fun good company,
home-made cake, library, Post Office.**

And an Easter theme.

Tuesday 4th April 10.15 onwards

We look forward to welcoming everyone.



TUESDAY APRIL 11TH 7.30pm GARWAY HALL £5.00

LION PG13

Lion is based on the true story of Saroo Brierly, now an Australian writer and businessman but once a lost child in a Kolkata orphanage. This beautifully shot first feature from director Garth Davis, tells how the five-year-old Saroo got separated from his brother at an Indian railway station and mistakenly boarded a train which took him 900 miles away from home. He had to survive on the Kolkata streets until he was taken in by the authorities and was subsequently adopted by a couple in Tasmania.

Flash forward twenty years and Saroo feels an overwhelming longing to find his old home and family, although he has no idea where, in India, they are. This is where Google Earth becomes one of the stars of the movie as Saroo, painstakingly, uses the app to try to find the train station which has become so fixed in

his memory. Dev Patel plays the adult Saroo with great emotional depth and Nicole Kidman is his Australian mother, struggling to accept that Saroo has such deep feelings for his lost family.

Bring a hankie for this one but also enjoy the breath-taking views of India afforded by Google earth which are just wonderful when seen on a big screen. As usual, we'll have delicious cakes, wines, teas and coffees, served before the film and during the interval. And why not become one of our Facebook followers.

Green Garway Book Group



In February we held our second Green Garway Book Group and discussed *The Book of Trespass* by Nick Hayes. An amazing amount of research has gone into this book and the author is truly passionate and writes very engagingly about land ownership in the UK and crossing boundaries. We all had our eyes opened and felt quite enraged at the systemic enclosure of land, barring access to swathes of the countryside and waterways. Shockingly only 3% of rivers are legally accessible to the public and a third of British land is owned (still) by the aristocracy.

There are some fantastic descriptions of nature - my particular favourite being his description of pheasants: " .. like an adulterous duke escaping the paparazzi with his trousers round his ankles".

Interestingly all the trespassing he does in the book would be legal in Scotland, being subject to the Land Reform (Scotland) Act. Scotland's land rights statement seems to have it about right: "Land should be used to contribute to public interest and wellbeing. Land is an asset of the country."

We did recognise though the right to everyone's privacy and that people need to be educated in the countryside code to ensure that the land we all have access to is respected and not harmed.

Rating: 4/5

If you're interested in joining the book group you can either join our Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/489872936450081> or send an email to greenarwaybg@gmail.com. We read books about the outdoor world, nature, social issues, travel, fiction and non-fiction. Everyone is welcome.

We meet at 7.30pm on the second Monday of each month in the Garway Moon. Upcoming meetings are as follows:

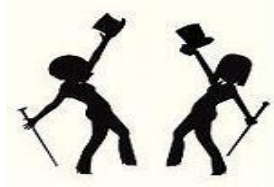
Mon 17 April – *Field Work* by Bella Bathurst - with special guest Bella herself to talk with us about her book. **Julie Hudson**



This month sees the return of "The Roving Crows" on April 15th to Garway Live. The band last played here in the old hall and brought the roof down (almost actually). They can really whip up an audience with their hand clapping, foot stomping Irish folk/rock. This will be a great evening for everybody and will be at the usual time of 7.30 opening, with the band on stage at 8.00pm. We also have Mark's Bar for drinks, alcoholic and soft.

May will not see any bands because of other happenings during the month, but we will be back in June with a vengeance, with the incredible James Oliver Band. Our own Danny Chang has recorded the band and has described James as probably the hardest working guitarist in Britain. The only days off last year were when he was travelling to the States and Europe. We are extremely lucky to get James as he is in great demand all over the country. If you like virtuoso guitar playing that will get your jaw dropping and your feet tapping, then this will be your night. More details to follow. **Graham Bevan**

THE GREAT 'AVE A GO VARIETY SHOW!



**Performances will be on Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd April at 7.30 pm in
Garway Hall**

Including tantalising tributes from local artists to:

CHARLES AND CAMILLA, LAUREL AND HARVEY

JOYCE GRENFELL, PETER COOK (as E L Wisty),

St Trinians

With the amazing:

Singing Cats Singing Tree

PLUS:

Songs, stories and more.....!

Tickets £10 (Under 16s £5)

From St Weonards shop, Broad Oak Garage or on the door

NOT TO BE MISSED!

Archenfield Arts Festival Day May 20th, 11am-5pm Garway Church



This is your chance to have a go..... sing, play, read, recite in front of a small friendly audience. All ages, all standards, experienced and beginners. solos or groups. Come along and perform, or sit back for a day's entertainment from neighbours and friends. Refreshments, hopefully out in the sun, so come and make a day of it! Accompanist available. **Hilary Smallwood** 01600 614012, hilarysmallwood5@gmail.com

SAVING GARWAY OLD SCHOOL FROM DEMOLITION

The planning application to demolish the Old School in Garway was approved by Herefordshire Council despite there being 104 objections (in a population of 430).

In July 2022 Ben Oakley of SAVE Britain's Heritage, the national conservation charity based in London, agreed to take up our case and submitted a Judicial Review. This was a full court appearance with both sides needing to appoint a barrister. SAVE are fighting this case because they feel very strongly about saving special and unique buildings such as the Old School, Garway. We were dismayed when the High Court ruled in favour of Herefordshire Council.

On 1st March 2023 we received the good news that SAVE has been granted leave to challenge the High Court ruling at the Court of Appeal, scheduled in the Spring. The Court of Appeal responded saying that the arguments put forward in our case stand a realistic prospect of success and the issues raised have a wider public importance which provides a compelling reason to allow the appeal.

Save Britain's Heritage has led the legal battle to save the school's demolition which was approved without correct process. If our appeal is successful, we hope to set a legal precedent that could help save thousands of other unprotected historic buildings across the country.

We need to raise funds to cover the legal costs which could be as much as £15,000. A JustGiving page has been set up so that as many people as possible can donate whatever they can.

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/savegarwayschool>

Fighting appeals is an expensive business and we need your help to halt these destructive plans!

Joan Thomas

ORCOP

Sadly, the first round of advertising for a new vicar drew no positive responses. The position will be advertised again in May. Apparently, it is not unusual for a rural benefice like ours to be less favoured than an urban posting, but repeated advertising is often successful. However, this means that our period of interregnum uncertainty continues, and we remain hopeful that a worthy candidate will come forward.

The Benefice service at Orcop on Sunday 5th March, led by Bishop Anthony Priddis (former Bishop of Hereford) was moving and well attended, not least because of the choir ably assembled, rehearsed and conducted by Richard Mynors. Our thanks go to Richard for adding this crucial musical ingredient to the service.

A reminder that Jane Rigler is kindly hosting the Orcop Lent Lunch on 29th March, advertised last month, Please support this if you can, especially as the proceeds will go to those in desperate need in Ukraine.

Looking ahead, there will not be an Easter service in Orcop this year and those wishing to celebrate Easter are urged to go to St. Weonards.

The monthly Orcop communion service, at 11am on the second Sunday, will resume from May. Bishop Anthony and the Revd, Crispen Pemberton have kindly agreed to take these services until further notice, and you are urged to support them as we strive to keep the church alive until such time as we have an incumbent vicar.

There are a number of important events coming up this month.

Firstly, the annual "Churchyard Bingo" will be held on 21st April.

Secondly, there will be a "Spring Awakening" poetry and cello recital on April 22nd (advertised separately). Thirdly the Garway "Ave a Go Panto" team are staging a variety show on April 21st and 22nd. This too is advertised separately.

The church "APCM", in effect the AGM of the Benefice, will be held on 26th April at 7.00pm in Orcop Parish Hall. All are welcome to attend this annual event, which has added importance in this year of uncertainty and transition.

Margaret Fletcher Churchwarden

Church Cleaning Rota: Mrs W Dudfield



A Spring Awakening

from Winter to Spring in Poetry and Music

Orcop Church, Sunday 23 April at 3pm.

**'Poems of celebration and immersion in the seasonal round'
by David Donaldson with cellist Joris Boon.**

Many of the poems are set in and around Orcop as well as from David's time living in Dorset. Joris is a professional cellist, member of the Weidler Quartet, who has given many recitals in Herefordshire. The programme will last about an hour.

Free entry.

Retiring collection in aid of the Church.

**Sunday May 7th Orcop Village Hall
invite you to
"Toast the King"**



We would love you to come and celebrate this historic occasion with us at this FREE event. We are planning a 'Royal Ramble' follow the route, finding the clues along the way. Starting point, Orcop Village Hall from 2:00pm Meet back at the Hall for a complimentary Cream Tea. (If you don't fancy the walk, just come for the cream tea and toast) To finish, we toast the new King with fizz!

Peta Long

Orcop Parish Hall

Warm Space at Orcop Parish Hall with Coffee & Cakes in collaboration with OWLS
Every Thursday morning 10.30 – 12.30
Transport by arrangement - call Gill or Tim Bannerman 01981 580685



Made Decision Document. Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2012. Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

On the 17 February 2023 Herefordshire Council decided to make the Neighbourhood Plan under 38A(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

The Orcop Neighbourhood Plan now forms part of the Development Plan for Herefordshire Council. Notices will also be placed on Hereford Council website and Orcop Parish Council website and Noticeboards.

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/24890/made-site-notice>

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/24889/made-decision-document>

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/24891/council-report>

For any questions please contact Mark Hearne. clerk@orcopparishcouncil.org

HENTLAND AND HOARWITHY

Palm Sunday 2nd April Pax Service

The annual Pax Service at Hentland will be Evensong at 3pm, on Palm Sunday 2nd April followed by the traditional distribution of Pax Cakes with the shaking of hands and exchange of the greeting 'Peace and Good Neighbourhood'. Before the service we gather at the lych gate and proceed into church singing '*Ride on, ride on in Majesty*', accompanied by a trumpet, pausing to face the churchyard cross for a prayer. The Reverend Tiffany Jackson will be preaching.

Wildlife in our Garden

While the things I usually report on are so quiet and the birdlife around the feeders has been so unvarying (apart from a brief visit on 25th February of a mistle thrush), I thought I would tell you a bit about the 1 acre of paddock we own which is separated from our house by a stream, and which we reach using a small wooden bridge.



This small field, much longer than wide, bounded on the stream side by a strip of woodland, mostly alder and willow, was one of the features which attracted me to this place when we first came here. I had high hopes of turning it into a wildflower meadow. I had read up about it and consulted the Wildlife Trust, so knew that I was supposed to mow it between July and September, rake off all the grass cuttings to make the soil less fertile, then leave it un-mown, especially in the spring and summer when wildflowers were pollinating and seeding. So, I bought an Allen Scythe (a big version of the reciprocating shears that hairdressers use to cut long hairs very short) and set to work.

But I had not bargained for the exceedingly tough and thuggish grasses which had become established there. Not only was it hard work to mow and rake, but any wildflowers had far too much competition from the grasses and also from a very vigorous perennial Water Hemlock. I suppose it would have been possible to dig up the whole site and sow anew, but that seemed like a far too expensive and disruptive process. When I had had no effect after a couple of years, a friend said I should sow some Yellow Rattle seeds which he would provide me with. (Yellow Rattle parasitises on the roots of grasses, thus weakening them.) The following spring up came lots of little Rattle plants which duly seeded themselves. I was delighted. But the year after that there

were fewer, and the year after that none. The grass seemed to be just too tough even for them.



After about ten years I had become quite discouraged. The only wildflowers to be seen were the occasional Ragged Robin, some Marsh Marigolds down by the stream and a dainty little flower called (amongst many other names) Lady's Smock. The latter is the only one to have apparently thrived from my management, but it is also down to the fact that it likes damp places, and our paddock certainly is damp for most of the year.

The moral of all this is that it's very difficult to compromise with nature. You can turn your land into a cultivated garden and keep it filled with plants of your choice with hard work like digging, weeding, sowing, planting, pruning and composting, plus an occasional dollop of artificial chemicals. Or you can hand it back to nature to do its own thing. As I get older, I am increasingly attracted to the latter. There is a patch of ground underneath a Beech tree which (apart from a failed attempt to grow Rhododendrons there) Margaret and I have never really got around to doing anything with. Left to itself, it has spontaneously produced, over a few years in succession, amongst the ubiquitous Primroses, some patches of Cowslips, Red Campion, Oxeye Daisies and now British Bluebells. All charming. Plants know where they like to live and are remarkably good at finding their own way there.

John Oubridge 5th March 2023

Book Review

***Some Kids I taught and What They Taught Me*, by Kate Clanchy**

This is an intriguing book, most beautifully written as befits its poet author, but also deeply challenging. It is not just education that is under the microscope. Here we are asked to contemplate the British class system, the challenges of assimilating refugee families who have experienced unimaginable trauma and the intractable presence of poverty despite the welfare state. *Poverty is stronger than plumbing, stronger than medicine, stronger than art. It is stamped through Cheyenne like letters in a stick of rock, manifesting in her rotting 19th century mouth.* – this of a 15-year-old who must have all her teeth removed because she has never been taken to a dentist.

Clanchy is unashamedly middle class and realizes she could be seen as “a posh do-gooder, a Victorian lady on a mission who has not noticed that her message is obscured by her person, and the injustices of class which she embodies.” But she is not blind to how this impinges on her role in a challenging comprehensive school – indeed in a somewhat ironically named Inclusion Unit (for pupils who are excluded from normal classes). We cannot avoid the fact that education is based on middle class values and public school mores of study and delayed gratification; and is overseen at a governmental level by Oxbridge graduates - non-educationalists who, knowing nothing of the real world of education and, ignoring the advice of experts, are nonetheless uninhibited and unabashed in their meddling.

In passing, she slots in an excoriating critique of state funding of faith-based schools and their perpetuation of educational division – the children who go there have parents who can play the game, “ring the bells” to achieve their aim.

She believes in the transformative power of poetry – of writing it, of living it - and has firm views on the stultifying dead hand of grammatical parsing of which the DfE is so enamoured. In what other endeavour do we learn by tearing apart rather than by creating? – art is taught by absorption in the creative process, so why not English? And she also argues that writing poetry is not therapy and teachers should not aspire for it to be so, although this assertion skates on slightly thin ice given the troubled lives of her students.

The success of her poetry classes is manifest in the sense of achievement her pupils experience in finding a way to express the inexpressible – how does a child make sense of seeing their family slaughtered before

their eyes in Afghanistan? - and to have their work validated whatever its intrinsic “quality.” Some of these poems have won awards and have been published – a new book is out soon: *Friend: Poems by Young People*.

Now, here’s the rub. I did not discover until afterwards that this book, in spite of winning the 2022 Orwell Prize, was ditched by its original publisher under pressure from a barrage of social media criticism: “*I would hope that Kate (and people who read this book without criticism) can take some time to reflect on the racism, xenophobia, antisemitism, fatphobia, transphobia, and classism which run through the book.*”

Clanchy certainly tells it like it is and does not shrink from describing the problems she sees before her; but I hear love in the realism, care in the candid narrative, sadness and empathy in her gentle poetic writing, and pride in her pupils. How can you make something better if you are not to own it, describe it, make it real? Hearing it, as I did, from the author’s own mouth on an audio book may have highlighted the nuances of tone and feeling.

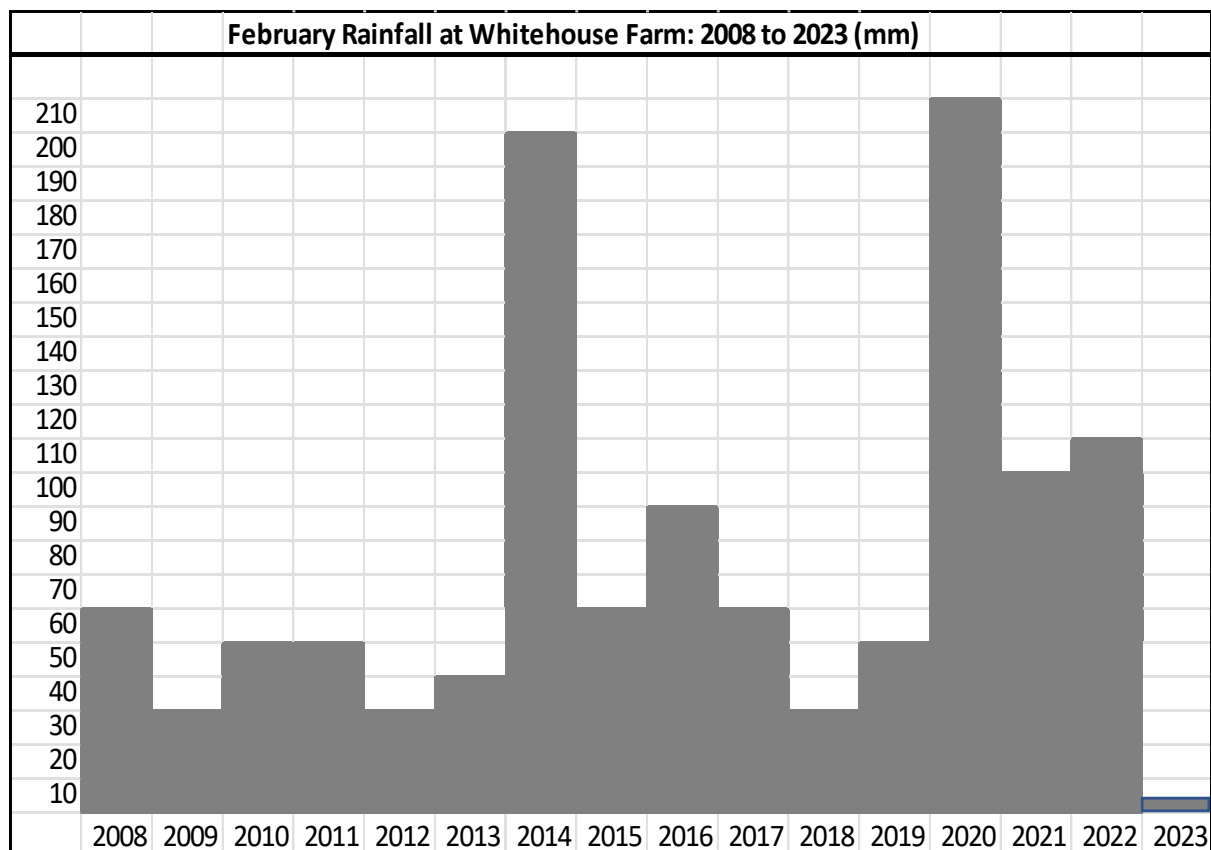
As another social media contributor put it: “*This book is uplifting. It is heart-breaking. And, most importantly, it is framed entirely on the young people whose lives are being shaped - through the lens of a teacher that loves them, fears for them, and respects them in equal measure.*”

There is no denying that Clanchy has dedicated her life to bringing the enrichment of poetry and literature to young people whose lives so far have been fraught with disadvantage, when her education and talents would have made her a prime candidate for a “cushy” number in a private school, teaching highly motivated children with supportive parents.

Maybe read this elegantly written book and decide for yourself whether it is written with concern and empathy or is an unacceptable manifestation of every “ism” you can think of?

Hilary Smallwood

Whatever happened to “February Fill-ditch”?



The month of February has traditionally been known as a very wet month, referred to in rural areas as “February Fill-ditch” or “February Fill-dyke”. It has certainly not lived up to its title this year. There has been no significant rain since mid-January and only 4mm in the whole of February. This means there has been virtually no runoff over this period and aquifer storage will be much lower than is normal for early spring.

It is interesting to look at the pattern of February rainfall over the past 16 years, being the period for which I have records. This shows clearly not only how exceptionally dry February 2023 has been, but also how exceptionally wet were 2014 and 2020. These were real “fill-ditch” years when the February rainfall led to serious flooding. Perhaps we should re-christen the month as “Fickle-February”.

Let’s hope we have some significant rainfall soon, otherwise our farmers and gardeners will become worried about the growing season ahead. **Peter Garratt**

A Peek in the Bookshop

I thought each month I’d highlight one new fiction, one new non-fiction, one new children’s and one event so here goes ... a look at what’s coming up in April.

New Fiction – *Homecoming* by Kate Morton

Covering three generations between 1959 and 2018 in Australia and London, this intriguing epic is both mysterious and moving. We meet grandmother, mother and daughter as a dark family secret unfolds.

New Non-Fiction – *Ravenous* by Henry Dimbleby

Son of David Dimbleby, Henry is the founder of the Leon restaurant chain and food campaigner and his new book *Ravenous* takes us behind the scenes to reveal the mechanisms that act together to shape the modern diet - and therefore the world. He explains not just why the food system is leading us into disaster, but what can be done about it.

New Children – *Bear and Bird* by Jarvis

A brand new chapter book series for 5+, *Bear and Bird* are best friends who have funny mix-ups and misunderstandings. This is so beautifully illustrated and incredibly charming, I’m sure this is the first of many sweet stories to come.

Event – Matthew Engel, 7pm, Wednesday 28th April at St Mary’s Church, Ross on Wye

Matthew Engel will be talking about his new book, *The Reign Part One* which is the first part of his sweeping social history of modern Britain during the reign of Elizabeth II.

While the late Queen is the motif for this book, the story Engel tells is not about her – it is primarily about the British. Through original research, interviews with people who were there and his own memories of the time, Matthew Engel traces the transformation of life in Britain as never before.

All books and tickets for the event are available through Rossiter Books. Hope to see you in store soon!

Julie Hudson, Bookseller at Rossiter Books

Garden Notes

One of my favourite pastimes at this time of year is the daily peep inside the propagator to see if any tiny seedlings have popped up overnight and to check that nothing needs watering. My propagator is in a warm studio so seedlings such as tomatoes can emerge in just two days. If I accidentally miss a day, I am quite likely to have leggy seedlings. Today’s seed sowing included sweet peppers, tomatoes, snapdragons, rudbeckia, amaranthus and lupins.

In sorting through my seed packets to decide which seeds are still usable, I came across a dozen packets which must be 20 years old - I am tempted to sow them to see if any are still viable – aquilegia, angelica, heuchera etc. I know that some people find parsley tricky to germinate but I have always found that soaking the seed in warm water for a day (or two, or three if I forget about them) then sowing them in a propagator is always successful. The ones that I find far trickier are those that need to spend a week or two in the fridge

before going into the propagator – I am inevitably disappointed, but I still keep trying! I have a packet of *Eryngium leavenworthii* 'Purple Sheen' which requires this treatment. I hope I am successful as the seed catalogue describes it as having 'purple blue flowers with a reddish-purple Prince of Wales feather emerging from the head. A rare flower arranging introduction.' Sounds interesting, doesn't it?

Haven't the snowdrops been wonderful this year? The cold dry weather has meant that we have enjoyed them for several weeks. The handful of aconites that we have under the lilac tree have also lasted well – I always forget they are there and am surprised and delighted to see them every winter. They emerge before the snowdrops and their cheerful yellow is always uplifting.

The winter was so cold that I fear I may have lost some plants, so I am watching for new shoots on the more tender ones. I lost a couple of pelargoniums that were in the greenhouse, and I may have lost fuchsias that I left outside. I planted a *Eucryphia* three years ago and I am not sure yet if it has survived.

The old greenhouse has been washed and tidied, but the new greenhouse is yet to be built. I have been waiting for a couple of warm sunny days so that I can enjoy the task but so far I haven't deemed it to be warm enough.

Elsewhere in the garden, chaos reigns supreme. We finally decided what to do with our pathetic excuse of a lawn, dug it into turves and stacked them neatly behind the summerhouse out of sight, where, covered with a tarpaulin, they can rot down into a lovely pile of very useful loam. It is not a large area – only a 12 ft diameter circle – so we chose light grey granite setts to replace the lawn. They are being laid right now – not an easy task given the shape. I look forward to it being finished, if only because I will be able to rescue my borders which, inevitably, are getting trampled and used as short cuts. I have been covering emerging shoots with upturned wire hanging baskets and moving primroses which are in bud to prevent large work boots squashing them. It will be a great relief when the work is finished, the bags of sand and cement used up, all the tools cleared away and I can reclaim the borders.

Julie Davies

Chuckle Corner

What did the classmate say when asked why they kept walking next to the same person at school?

"I was told I'm supposed to walk by Faith!"

What did Adam say when he was asked his favourite holiday?

"It's Christmas, Eve."

Thanks to Caroline Penn for these:

'I'm giving up drinking for a month.

Sorry, bad punctuation.

I'm giving up.

Drinking for a month.'

I bought a dog from a blacksmith today.

As soon as I got home it made a bolt for the door!

(Any contributions most welcome. Editor)

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April Dates for the diary:

- 4 Coffee morning Garway
- 5 Stitching Garway
- 5 Lent Lunch St Weonards
- 11 Flicks in the Sticks
- 15 Garway Live
- 16 St Weonards Big Breakfast
- 17 Garway Green Book Club
- 19 Stitching Garway
- 21 Orcop Churchyard Bingo
- 21 & 22 Variety Show Garway
- 23 Poetry and music Orcop
- 26 APCM Orcop

Future events for your diary

- 7 Orcop Toast the King
- 7 St Weonards Bring and Share lunch
- 20 May Archenfield Arts
- 11 June St Weonards Fete
- 23 June Garway Midsummer Medieval Fayre
- 13 July Opera Arias at Treago
- 21 and 22 October Open Aboretum, Netherton Pencoyd

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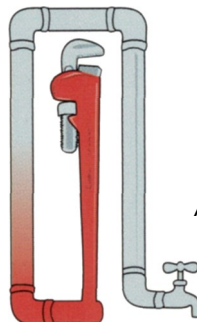


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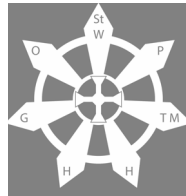
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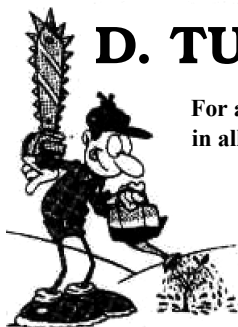
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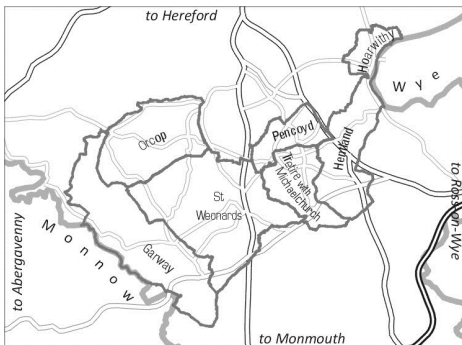
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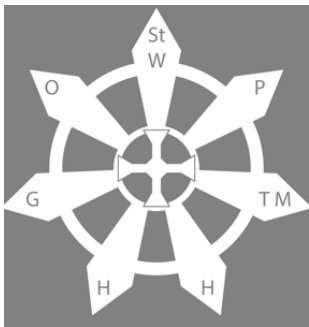
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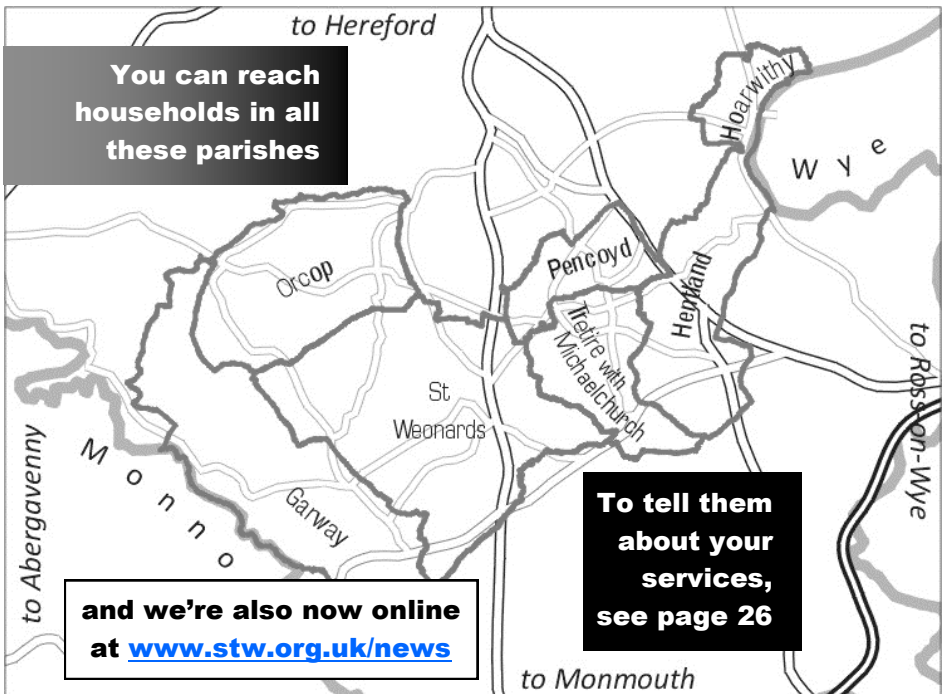
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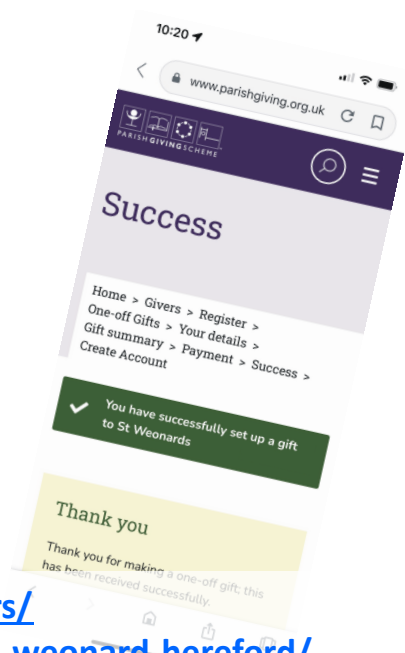
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