

PARISH NEWS

OF

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

JANUARY 2024



This month's cover illustration

By Peter Garratt

CONTENTS

- 3 Contacts in Parishes/ Herefordshire Councillors**
- 4 Magazine Contacts/ Parish Council Contacts**
- 5 Caring for God's Acre**
- 6 Christmas Church Services/ Service Rota January/ Benefice notice**
- 7 Tuesday evening Prayer/ Prescription rota/ Cover Cartoon note**
- 8 Village Pages/ St Weonards News/ Coffee morning**
- 9 Garway News/ Stitches/ Garway Primary School**
- 10 Garway Village Hall news/ New Year's Eve Party/ Coffee Morning**
- 11 Flicks in the Sticks, Garway/ Thank-you to Prescription collectors/ Garway Live**
- 12 Green Garway Book Club/ A Peek in the Bookshop**
- 13 Orcop News/ Craft Workshops**
- 14 Garway Hill Methodist Chapel News**
- 15 Tretire with Michaelchurch and Pencoyd News**
- 16 Garden News**
- 17 Wild Life in our Garden**
- 18 Hydrogen Cars**
- 19 Book Review**
- 20 Chuckle Corner/ Cathedral News**
- 21 Answers to the Book quiz/ Dates for your Diary.**

CONTACTS IN THE ST WEONARDS GROUP OF PARISHES

Churchwardens

St. Weonards	Richard Mynors	01981 580208
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Garway	Tracy Somerville	01981 580263
Tretire & Pencoyd	Elizabeth Malcolm	01989 730201
Hoarwithy	Peter Pember	01432 840254
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Youth Group, Tear Fund	Fay Rowlands	01600 750242
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St Weonards Pre-school	Anna Williams	01981 580352
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Gardening Club	Linda Ashton	01981 540804
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St Weonards Group website		www.stw.org.uk

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCILLORS

Birch Ward	Toni Fagan (Green)	tonifagan@btinternet.com Office hours 01981 540721
Dinedor Hill Ward	David Davies	david.davies2@herefordshire.gov.uk 07931 733336 15 Hever Road, Lower Bullingham, Hereford HR2 6EW

Samaritans	National Helpline Hereford	08457 909090 116 123 free calls 0330 094 5717 local call rates apply or email 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 **10th of the month**:

Magazine Editor	Fiona Mynors	01981 580208
Garway:	Mrs Ruth Maskell Windy Ridge, Garway	01600 750454
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Tretire/Pencoyd:	Mrs Meg Oubridge Tretire Smithy	01981 580233
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PARISH COUNCIL CONTACTS

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

PARISH NEWS

THE ARCHENFIELD GROUP

For enquiries on baptisms, funerals and wedding please contact the Rural Dean: Rev. Sheila Anthony, sheila@saintintraining.co.uk, 07775588716 and your churchwarden

Caring for God's Acre: Winter Moths

When the nights are long and cold, we do not think of seeing insects, but spare a thought for the Winter Moth which can withstand freezing temperatures and can be seen on the wing between October and January.

For many of us, we see the Winter Moth in car headlights when driving in small lanes after dark. It is pale brown in colour and can be seen fluttering. They are attracted to light however, and so will come to a moth trap if you want a closer look. Winter Moths are widespread, occurring in many places with trees and shrubs, so not particularly a churchyard species. However, as with so many other creatures, churchyards will be a haven for them, particularly if they provide a space away from artificial lights which can be so disorientating to insects.

Unusually, females cannot fly. They have small stubby wings and are dark grey, which give them camouflage as they clamber up tree trunks to summon males. The females attract a mate by giving off pheromones, which draw in the flying males. Their eggs are then laid on the bark of the tree and don't hatch until spring, when tiny green caterpillars emerge. The caterpillars feed on tree leaves, eating a range of species including oak, sycamore, beech and willow. Caterpillars can also travel from tree to tree by spinning long threads of silk which act as a sail, carrying them through the air.

In the spring Winter Moth caterpillars are an important food for woodland birds, particularly the tit family. In January there is less food around. These small birds can be seen searching within the crevasses and nooks and crannies of trees for a range of adult invertebrates including Winter Moths, and also the overwintering larvae of other species.

Why not take a torch-lit walk and see if you can see a Winter Moth or even, if you are lucky, a female on a tree trunk. Alternatively wait for spring and look in April or May for the caterpillars chomping leaves, or a bluetit eating a caterpillar! The caterpillars are tiny, green and have a dark stripe on the top of their bodies. If you care for a church or churchyard then please consider the insects when planning outdoor lighting, having dark areas or lights which go off for part of the night can be beneficial to many species.

All the best, *Harriet Carty*

Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor

www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk - individuals and groups in the diocese receive 20% members discount on all CfGA materials. Use the discount code **diomem22**

CHRISTMAS SERVICE REMINDER

Saturday 23rd December 3.00pm Orcop Carols

Sunday 24th December 4.00pm St Weonards, Family Crib Service

11.00pm St Weonards, Midnight Communion

11.00pm Hoarwithy, Midnight Communion

Monday 25th December 9.30am Pencoyd, Christmas Communion

SERVICE ROTA FOR JANUARY

Sunday 7 th January	10.00am	St Weonards, Benefice Holy Communion
Sunday 21 st January	10.00am 6.30pm	Hoarwithy, Holy Communion Tretire, Evening Service
Sunday 28 th January	9.15am 10.00am	Hentland, Holy Communion St Weonards, All Age Service
Sunday 4 th February	10.00am	Orcop, Candlemass Holy Communion

For enquiries about baptisms, weddings or funeral services, please contact the Rural Dean: Rev. Sheila Anthony, sheila@saintintraining.co.uk 07775588716 and the relevant churchwarden.

GARWAY HILL METHODIST CHAPEL

Sunday 14th January 3pm - Rev Paul Arnold (Covenant Service)

Sunday 28th January 3pm - Mr Wilf Prosser

**Sunday January 7th 10.00am Benefice Communion
St Weonards Church**

This is the only service in our parishes on that day. Come and join us!

Praying for our communities and the wider world

Come along to pray for each other, our communities, and the wider world on the first Tuesday evening each month, at Treago, St. Weonards HR2 8QB 8-9pm.

Just turn up - everyone is welcome.

Any questions, get in touch with Alex on 07890160632.

PRESCRIPTION COLLECTION



2nd January Chris Davies 01981 580129

Magazine News

Applications for small grants for community activities are invited. Please contact Peter Garratt <garratt_peter@hotmail.com> with details of how you want to spend the money before the end of January.

Please send WORD documents as our software cannot copy PDFs. Please keep fonts and presentation as simple as possible! Flyers in wonderful colour really do not work! Articles of general interest are always welcome. Let the inner writer in you flourish!

THE COVER CARTOON

Some really observant readers will have noticed that the 2024 New Year cover cartoon is a retouched version of that which appeared on the January 2022 edition. Those even more observant will have noted the changed punctuation. There is no longer a question mark against the 1.5-degree centigrade global temperature rise.

According to the UN, if current pledges for carbon emissions are met, temperatures will rise to between 2.5 and 2.9 deg. C above pre-industrial levels.

Against this background, it seems futile for the UK to be focussed on early carbon neutrality.

There can be no doubt that global warming is happening, nor can there be any doubt that the UK cannot influence the rate at which this happens, as our contribution to global emissions is insignificant.

We should all be working towards decarbonisation of the economy, but not at any cost.

Surely it would be sensible to invest in mitigating the negative effects of the inevitable, rather than investing in the unachievable?

Peter Garratt

Village Pages

ST WEONARDS

December was a busy, good time at church. We were delighted to be part of the benefice Advent Service at Garway with the bishop's chaplain, Rev Nicol Kinrade. She helped us to reflect on the original meaning of the Advent season in preparation for the celebration of Jesus's birth. The choir sung two anthems so well, encouraged by the wonderful acoustic in Garway Church!

The amazing *Fay's Bingo* raised more than £1400 towards the upkeep of the churchyard! The village hall was packed with players who enjoyed the wonderful array of prizes. As always generous plates of sandwiches and cakes quickly disappeared in the break, and it was an excellent evening all round. Many, many thanks to everyone involved in organising the event, playing, giving prizes, preparing food and washing up. Wonderful!

As I write we are looking forward to our Christmas Services:

Wed 20th Carol Service at 6.00pm.

Sunday 24th December 4.15 Crib Service, particularly for families

Sunday 24th December 11.00pm Midnight Communion led by Dr Bishop David Thomson

As always, we are so grateful to all those who provide flower displays all the year round and especially at festivals such as Christmas. The beautiful wood crib figures, carved by local people, are generously on loan from Clare Gray. They make a very special contribution to our Christmas celebration. If you have not seen them do take a moment to pop into the church to view them.

However before these services, we are excited that at last we have the prospect of the appointment of a vicar. Interviews take place soon and we should know the results before the end of December. We hope you have an excellent Christmas and happy New Year.

Richard Mynors, churchwarden.

Village Hall Coffee Morning

Thursday 12th January. 10 – 12 am

St. Weonards Village Hall Committee

All people interested in the future of the village hall are invited to an open meeting on

Monday, 15th January, 2024 at 7.30 pm

At St. Weonards Village Hall

All welcome.

GARWAY

We were glad to be able to welcome the family and friends of Ernest Francis at his funeral on the 2nd of December, to celebrate his long and active life. The church was overflowing with his family and the many friends, that Ernie had gathered over a lifetime, all wanting to pay their respects to him and his family - which spoke of the high regard in which Ernie was held.

For Advent Sunday it was lovely to have a full church. Rev Nicol Kinrade, the bishop's chaplain took communion for us. The choir sang two anthems which sounded beautiful as the sound resonated around the church. Our thanks to Richard Mynors for playing the organ and leading the choir so expertly.

Afterwards we all enjoyed mulled wine and mince pies, which warmed our hands and hearts in an atmosphere of welcoming friendship.

We hope you and your family and friends have a happy Christmas and New Year.

Tracy Somerville, churchwarden

Garway Stitchers



Join us for a friendly morning, once a fortnight, to stitch together. Garway Stitchers meets every other Wednesday from 10.30 – 12.30. Our dates this month are 10th and 24th January. You are also welcome to drop in for a chat and a cuppa, or maybe even a bit of stitching. As always you are welcome to bring a project of your own, it doesn't have to be embroidery, bring along your knitting/wool crafts or any needlework that can be done by hand!

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

Garway Primary School

School was bustling with activity in the run-up to Christmas. The magazine goes to print before some of these have happened, but, if all goes to plan there will have been: a Christmas Jumper day, a nativity play from Key Stage 1 children, a Christmas crafts day, a Santa and Reindeer Run, a visit from the *Sea Legs Puppet Theatre*, the annual festive walk round the village when the children enjoy the decorated windows as well as hot chocolate on the common, a Christmas lunch for the whole school, a Christmas party, and Carols round the Tree in school. Phew! Full marks to the staff who work tirelessly to make this a special time for the children – as well as keeping up with all their schoolwork!

Hilary Smallwood

Garway Village Hall

A big thank you from the hall trustees to all those in the local communities who have wholeheartedly lent your support to the hall and its new initiatives. The Family Party and the Christmas Market were both huge successes – this can only happen with the enthusiasm and backing of local people – so, many thanks!

Looking forward to seeing a good crowd at the New Year's Eve party – see separate ad.

Why not visit our new website – www.garwayhall.org – and sign up for the newsletter, so as not to miss anything!

Garway Village Hall

NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY!

All welcome to join us from 7pm to 1am

Please bring a plate of food to share

Bar/music

£5 per adult, under 18s free

Contact: christinesdavies@hotmail.co.uk

Garway coffee morning



Tuesday 9th January 10.15am

In Garway Village Hall

As always delicious homemade cakes and beverages

Post Office, library and good company

A chance to unwind after Christmas.

ALL WELCOME – YOUNG AND OLD



TUESDAY JANUARY 9TH
7.30pm GARWAY HALL £5.0
LUNANA: A YAK IN THE CLASSROOM

To make this Oscar Nominated film, first-time director Pawo Choyning Dorji had to load 65 mules with cameras, lights, solar panels, batteries and sound equipment to trek with his crew for eight days to one of the remotest villages in the world. Beat that Spielberg! Shot in Bhutan, the country which rates its success, not in terms of GDP but Gross National Happiness, A YAK IN THE CLASSROOM is the film the audience rated the highest at last year's Borderlines film festival. It tells the story of Ugyen, a young man who rather wantonly is working through his compulsory five years' service as a teacher in Bhutan's capital. What he really wants to do is to leave the country of his birth and travel to Australia to become a singer in a nightclub. Fate decrees otherwise when the government posts him to the remotest school in the world, teaching the children of yak herders in a classroom heated by dung provided by the classroom yak. Ugyen's dismissive attitude gradually crumbles when faced with the utter warmth and open heartedness of the people of Lunana who revere him as a teacher - someone who has the privilege of enriching the lives of others. It's a tale which pits the shallowness of the individual dream against the richness of community. Gentle, funny and wise it takes the audience on a breathtaking journey into the high mountains of Bhutan. It's blessed too by the natural unaffectedness of the actors, most of whom were actual residents of Lunana. I haven't read one bad review of this film and if you're looking for an evening which will set your heart in the right direction in 2024, this is it. Flicks cakes and refreshments aren't a bad way to start a new year either and Garway hall won't be burning any yak dung to keep you warm. More details on www.facebook.com/GarwayFlicks

PRESCRIPTION COLLECTION

The residents of Garway would like to express their sincere thanks to all the volunteers, who throughout the year collect and deliver the prescription medication from Ewyas Harold Surgery. It is much appreciated.

Garway Live

Happy New Year everybody. Well we at Garway Live are going to do our best to make it one. We're lining up a wonderful selection of musicians for your entertainment this year, starting off on Friday January 26th with a relaxed evening of mellow jazz sounds from our own Chris Egan with his band "Nuadha". The band also features his son Mayu so it's going to be a village family evening. We'll have the usual bar and food on offer and still at the usual price of £12 and £6 for under 18's.

Doors open at 7.30 with the band on stage at 8.

Why not come along and see how we've transformed our very versatile hall into a Jazz Club.

Graham Bevan

Green Garway Book Group

Our review of Gerald Durrell's My Family and Other Animals

A greatly enjoyed book, 'I didn't want it to end'. The amazingly vivid descriptions of Corfu, the landscape, the sea and the animals were admired, reminding people of their own wonderful holidays and childhoods. The author is very effective in conveying the wonder of an intelligent child being left to roam free (too free? by being allowed to go fishing with a convict!)

Perhaps this was a time after the war when children were allowed freedoms that their parents never had. There are magical accounts of family holidays that were comforting whilst also being very funny and super description of the great relationships within the family. The individual characters were outlandish and hysterical, but still relatable and we enjoyed the *laugh out loud* episodes with scorpions in a match box and Roger the dog and the two puppies. Also there were lovely descriptions of the local characters on the island eg the neighbouring peasants and the rose beetle man.

The only criticisms related to how the book has dated/is of its time eg with the need to collect eggs and cage animals.

But any irritation was far outweighed by the quality of the writing and the warm, fuzzy feeling that one was left with on a dark and rainy winter's night.

The audio book version was praised as being amazing to listen to.

4 out of 5.

Thanks to **Juliette Close** for the review.

A Peek in the Bookshop

Let's round off the last Peek in the Bookshop this year with a book quiz.

Can you work out the titles of these books, all published in some form this year, from their cryptic clues?

Answers at the end of this magazine.

- 1 Final baddie kicks the bucket
- 2 The bird part nearly got a medal position
- 3 A fast moving place for the dead
- 4 Sounds like parrot marking school work as correct is apprehensive
- 5 He likes a long walk
- 6 Three procrastinators' timescales
- 7 Cowardly visage
- 8 Two goes to get all the pins down in bowling
- 9 Evil red-headed snake
- 10 Little bits of glass
- 11 Liverpool mayor is by the small forest
- 12 Disorderly mob
- 13 Animals are being hard to reason with
- 14 49
- 15 Lots of going in and out of this home
- 16 Sounds like the tune is making money
- 17 Super relative is footballer Mr Kane
- 18 Painful insect attack
- 19 Broad and haphazard
- 20 Tenant playwright

Wishing you a happy and healthy festive period and hope to see you in the shop in 2024!

Julie, Bookseller at Rossiter Books

ORCOP

ORCOP NEWS: January 2024

The annual act of remembrance at the crossroads war memorial on Sunday 12th November was well-attended, with 33 gathered to remember the fallen and over £200 raised for the Royal British Legion. The annual gathering had added poignancy in 2023, given the conflicts raging in Ukraine and Palestine. When will we ever learn.

Little Orcop's Autumn Frolics (LOAF) was well received by an audience of about 45. We must consider advertising more widely next time as the show was worthy of a bigger audience! It is pleasing to report that the Parish Hall remains intact after the ritual explosion of the loaf and that the event raised about £350 towards the churchyard wall repairs.

The main wall repairs have now been completed very competently by our contractors, Prosser and Tippins. Ironically, on the day they completed the work another section of wall collapsed. The maintenance of the churchyard wall begins to look a bit like repainting the Forth Bridge!

Our loyal congregation may or may not be relieved to know that there will be no second Sunday communion at Orcop Church in January.

Margaret Fletcher, Churchwarden

Flower and Cleaning Rota: Mrs. L. Wilkinson

Orcop Hall Craft Workshops

♦ Try Something New in 2024 ♦ Unleash Your Creativity ♦

(small groups with the guidance of excellent, friendly professionals)

Pewter Casting ♦ Saturday 17th February ♦ 10 – 4.30 ♦ with Mandy Nash ♦ cost £55

Discover the art of casting pewter - from carving the mould, in plaster or cuttlefish - to finishing off the shiny treasures. The possibilities are endless, eg pendants, keyrings, brooches, earrings etc. Each participant will be able to make at least two finished pieces.

Basket Weaving ♦ Friday 1st or 15th March ♦ 9.30 – 5 ♦ with Frances Keenan ♦ cost £60

Learn how to weave a beautiful round, willow basket – with, or without, a handle.

Felting ♦ Saturday 13th April ♦ 10 -4.30 ♦ with Mandy Nash ♦ cost £55

Learn the basics of felting. Create a unique, and colourful, hand-crafted piece.

Weaving – we are hoping to offer a two-day workshop in May.

Please contact **Gill Bannerman** – gill.bannerman@outlook.com – to book, or for more info.

We are planning to hold a Jumble Sale on **Saturday 10th February**, so if you are having a clear out in the new year, we'd be glad of your surplus. Please can you bring the items down on the morning of Saturday 10th February to the Hall.

Coffee Mornings / warm space. The first coffee morning of the new year will be on **Thursday 11th January** and will continue to be held every Thursday on a weekly basis until March. It's an informal social gathering to meet up, have a cuppa, slice of cake and a chat. Everyone is welcome to come along.

Many thanks, **Peta**

Garway Hill Methodist Chapel

Another year has gone by and fortunately, again, a year where we have managed to stay open all year. The memories of COVID restrictions are thankfully starting to fade and we are grateful (if not a little surprised) that we have managed yet another year of worshipping in our little chapel. COVID may be behind us, but the after-waves of the epidemic coupled with the current financial situation has left many houses of worship, including ours, in dire straits. As in all old buildings, especially ones that aren't lived in, maintenance is a costly affair, and unfortunately our windows have seen better days. It's a constant concern but we will see what the future brings.

As we are unable to finance the grounds maintenance as we have done in the past, we are grateful for the occasional grass cutting and strimming by local people and families attending the graves. We pass on our thanks to the Sayce Family for all the voluntary ground maintenance. Thanks also to Mark Preece for tackling the long grass with the annual cut.

This year we have held two celebratory services and as I write this, we are preparing for our Carol Service which is always a wonderful celebration in the build up to Christmas. The congregation on Easter Sunday and at the Harvest Festival sang traditional hymns and joined together afterwards in the fellowship of refreshments and chat - Methodists do like to sing and eat! We are a friendly bunch and at our celebratory services there is always tea and coffee and plenty to eat! Of course, everyone is welcome to attend any service, whatever denomination, faith or no faith. Everybody is welcome. Our service times are 3pm every other Sunday (first service is January 14th) and can be found in the Parish News centre pages and on the chapel notice board. The chapel is kept locked during the week, but we would love people to visit. If anyone would like to have a look around give me a call on the number below and I will give you the key Safe number or, if I am able, I will come and open up.

The graveyard is also an interesting and peaceful place to visit and for the weary walker, visitor or 'passer-by' there is a bench just inside the gate to while away a moment or two and enjoy the beautiful view. Please feel free to use it.

Ruth Maskell 07908 122478

TRETIRE WITH MICHAELCHURCH AND PENCOYD

I am writing this on the first weekend in December as the printers want our copy in really early. So there is no news to report, as nothing has happened yet! In fact Christmas plans for our parish are still to be decided.

But so that something appears on these pages to keep our editor happy, I hope you will accept a little reminiscing in these December days leading up to Christmas, on my childhood Christmases, as a child of the Vicarage.

I was the youngest and only girl of four children, and my father was a Vicar. My mother had been brought up in an Anglo-Catholic household, and my Father was at this time vicar of a parish that might be called "middle churchmanship," in a busy market town in Lincolnshire. So the season of Advent, (which is what we are in now at the beginning of December, up until Christmas Day) was observed in a similar way to Lent; a period of austerity . So my Mother, who usually produced two or three cakes for afternoon tea, only baked one a week in Advent, which my brother tells me was usually Parkin.. Christmas did not start until Christmas Day and Christmas Eve was a "fast" day, so fish for lunch!

We didn't sing any carols in Church services through Advent; not until Christmas Day. Our carol service was the Sunday after, and on the four Sundays of Epiphany we had carols about the Kings, or Wise Men. We had a very simple card board Nativity Set which was put out in the last week before Christmas, but the Baby Jesus didn't go in to the scene until Christmas morning.

We made "lick and stick" paper chains, which went up on Christmas Eve, as did the Christmas Tree. Decorating the tree was special, as many of the ornaments had been my father's when he was a child. So we had to handle them with great care. Another tradition, also dating back to my father's childhood, were tea lights on saucers covered with beautiful patterned and moulded glass domes with holes in the top. Two of them were like rose flowers with delicate petals, (with the odd chip out of them) which I loved as the glass petals sparkled as the candlelight came through them. But our favourite was a green one with the face of an owl on it. These lights went on the meal table and the mantelpiece and other surfaces, and were lit at mealtimes over Christmas.

Christmas Day was a very busy day for my father, and we didn't see him until lunch time. He had no curate, so he took all the services himself, starting with the Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, then a "said" early morning communion at 8.00 am followed by full Sung Communion with the choir at 9.30am. Then a brief break for a thermos of coffee, before another service of Mattins at 11.00 followed by a shortened form of said communion at 12.00.

When he finally arrived home, my mother sat him down in an easy chair in the drawing room with a glass of sherry, and we children were forbidden to go in and disturb him!

But we all came together for Christmas dinner, a roast chicken, quite a treat in those days, (and probably donated by a generous parishioner) which my father carved. This would be followed by Christmas Pudding, with the chance of a sixpence in our portion, but the excitement was short lived, as we were expected to put the sixpence into a box for charity!!

The weeks leading up to Christmas were very busy ones for clergy, as a lot more people went to church in those days, and there were weekday services as well as several each Sunday. There were sick people to visit at home too, and elderly people on their own. I remember visiting some of them with my mother who was the "unpaid curate"!

So another less happy, but fascinating feature of those hectic weeks for my father around Christmas, was watching my mother dress the boils that erupted on his neck each year! Our GP lived next door to us, and

was very friendly, and one year he “prescribed” and dispensed a bottle of red wine as treatment for my father being “run down”!

Today, John and I have been over to Llangarron Church to see the magnificent collection of Nativity Sets which are lent to Gill Drayton for the weekend each year, (over 100 this year) and displayed throughout the church. Most have a little printed story as to their provenance, and many have come from countries all over the world. I find it so heartening that still today, so many people find their Christmas preparations need to include setting up their nativity scene.. And I noted that one or two have remarked on the fact that the Baby Jesus doesn't join the scene till Christmas morning. My parents would approve!

Margaret Oubridge.

Garden Notes

I have a fridge magnet which is a quotation from Cicero: ‘If you have a garden and a library you have everything you need’. It is only relatively recently that I have combined my two loves by listening to audio books, mostly nature writing, when I am pottering in the greenhouse, or weeding or deadheading.

I have just finished ***My Garden World*** written and read by **Monty Don**, in which he tells us about all the living things that share his garden. Who wouldn't want to spend a few hours listening to his soft, soothing voice describing, month by month, the birds, insects, wildflowers and trees in his garden and on his mid-Wales farm? Apart from being very interesting, it makes you feel that all is well with the world. Combine that with the enjoyment of working in the garden and I can't think of a better way to spend a few hours. It is as if the man himself is there in the garden with you, chatting about the things he has seen in his own.

I am currently listening to ***On the Marsh*** written and read by nature and sportswriter **Simon Barnes**. He was able to buy eight acres of marshland next to his garden in Norfolk; this book describes the wildlife – marsh harriers, Cetti's warblers, otters, Chinese water deer - that he and his son Eddie, who has Down's Syndrome, observe over a year. It's not perfectly read, but it is read with such enthusiasm and such charm that it is immensely enjoyable.

I enjoyed ***The Treeline*** by **Ben Rawlence**, a fascinating mixture of nature, travel and science writing. The title refers to the Arctic Treeline or the northernmost limit of the boreal forest, which, due to climate change over the last 50 years has been creeping nearer to the north pole. The author looks at six species (larch, spruce, mountain ash, downy birch, balsam poplar and Scots pine) and visits Scotland, Northern Scandinavia, Siberia, Alaska, Canada and Greenland, to examine how the forests are changing and how the people who live there relate to and use those trees and what they tell us about climate change and the future of the planet. It is not all doom and gloom as he also finds reasons for hope. Humans have always evolved with trees, and he wonders where our co-evolution might take us next.

I am reasonably good at recognising the birds that visit our bird feeders but not so good at recognising their songs, so I listened to ***A Complete Guide to British Birds*** by **Brett Westwood** and **Stephen Moss**, sound recordist **Christ Watson**. This is a compilation of Radio 4's guides to the birds of Great Britain, their habitats and their sounds. Presenter Brett Westwood and naturalist Stephen Moss visit six different habitats – Somerset, the Forest of Dean, Devon, the Marlborough Downs and Shropshire's Long Mynd - introducing us to the birds that live there. I don't know that I am any better at recognising the different bird songs, but I enjoyed listening to it all the same and learning all sorts of fascinating facts about bird identification and behaviour.

I am looking forward to *Skylarks with Rosie* by naturalist **Stephen Moss** which he wrote while the country was in lockdown. He was no longer able to go on his travels to find wildlife, so he records the wildlife that he encountered on his walks with Rosie, his fox red Labrador - the chiffchaffs, wrens, buzzards and ravens, the bumblebees and butterflies.

I enjoyed reading *The Butterfly Isles* by **Patrick Barkham** so much that I am looking forward to listening to it too. The author spends all his spare time one summer seeking out and photographing all 59 species of butterfly found in the British Isles; it is a fascinating and entertaining read.

When I have listened to those two, I can't wait to listen to *Goshawk Summer* by wildlife cameraman **James Aldred**, who was commissioned to film the lives of a family of goshawks in the New Forest. Just as he was planning his treetop hide, lockdown started, which gave him a unique opportunity to film the goshawks, curlew and fox cubs in woods empty of people.

Julie Davies

Wildlife in the garden

At last we've had some frost, three or four nights in a row at the end of November and the start of December. I've heard, in connection with gardening, that some wildflowers need a period of frost in order to germinate (and gardeners sometimes put seeds in the fridge). But I have only the vaguest idea about which seeds need frost and even less of an idea about how long for, or how cold it needs to be. I would expect that plants from warmer climes would not need this treatment, while those native to our shores or colder would be the ones that do. No doubt there will be other factors, so it will not be as clear cut as that. Now I come to think of it, fridges do not actually go down as far as freezing, more like +4C, so that muddles me even more!

One thing about frost that has been very apparent to Margaret and me over those years we have been putting out seeds and nuts in feeders, is how much hungrier the birds become. And it's not just that they eat faster because the days are shorter; they also eat more in 24 hours. The harder their bodies need to work in order to keep their body temperature up, they more fuel they need to do so. Obvious, when you come to think about it! Even so it always surprises us, how much more we spend on wild bird food in the winter.

There has been no great change to the birds we are seeing each day. Basically they are the same as last month, but we're pleased to see that there is now a male greater spotted woodpecker as well as a female one, though they do not both appear together.

Our single squirrel has been joined by another. When the second one arrived, they were very excited and playful, chasing one another up and down the trees. Now with the colder weather, they're too busy just finding food. As with birds, if books about mammals say, "Sexes alike", then we don't know whether they are two males, two females or one of each. Of course, we tend to assume they are a male and female pair.

There is little else to see in the garden now, though the cold has driven some mice back inside!

John Oubridge, 3rd December 2023

Hydrogen Cars – the Future?

You may have noticed an unusual orange car driving around Garway recently. I was delighted to have been offered a three-week beta trial in a Riversimple Rasa, an electric car fuelled by hydrogen.

About a year ago I spotted a Riversimple Rasa at St Weonards and its unusual shape and futuristic doors sent me straight back home to look up Riversimple and find out more.



Based in Llandindrod Wells, Riversimple's mission is "to pursue, systematically, the elimination of the environmental impact of personal transport". They have been developing cars powered by hydrogen for nearly 20 years. There are currently a handful of cars on the road in trials with the public, and preparations are being made for volume production. The only emission from the car is water, the whole car is lighter than an electric car battery, so less impact on roads, recycled materials are used where possible and the only critical material that the fuel cell uses is a small amount of platinum that can be reused in future fuel cell production.

Riversimple will not be selling cars, they will be offered to customers on a subscription basis. They will make cars to last as it is in their interest to do so and because the subscription includes fuel it is also in their interest to make them as efficient as possible.

So how was it to drive? A lot of fun! Its acceleration speed is 0-60 in 9 seconds, and because it is low you feel like you're going a lot faster than you are. The current trial models allow you to drive around 200 miles before needing to refuel. All trials are based around Abergavenny as that is the only Riversimple hydrogen refuelling station. I was much more conscious of driving economically rather than speedily to squeeze as much as I could without having to refuel. The refuelling took less than 5 minutes. I paid £12 per day for the subscription and 22p per mile for fuel.

I do hope they get a hydrogen manufacturer with whom to collaborate. If there was a refuelling point nearer, I would definitely be interested in subscribing in the future. Their next stage is for scaling up production.

The company have a waiting list for trialists so if you're interested in taking part or what to find out more, their website is www.riversimple.com

Julie Hudson

Book Review

War Doctor by David Nott

Welsh surgeon David Nott's book is extraordinary – firstly because he is not an ordinary person, despite his claims to the contrary, and secondly because it forces the reader to confront the absolute worst of man's inhumanity to man in a direct and shocking way. Who could believe that snipers in a war zone play a game of body parts: today is leg day, tomorrow is head?

In many ways he is an ordinary person, having spent his early years with his grandparents in Wales, growing up with a real sense of love and community: *"My main memory from those early years is of fun and laughter and love – and also a deep connection with Wales The sense of belonging and being surrounded by family love made us very secure. And the simplicity of the way we lived – not in luxury, by any means, but not hankering after things we couldn't have, or being led astray or feeling we were missing out on anything – was deeply ingrained.*

It was a very Welsh childhood, and to me completely magical. It was the mould I came from, by which I have always been indelibly marked. It was the making of me."

But we then move to the extraordinary: *"I have travelled the world for 25 years in search of trouble. It is a kind of addiction, a pull I find hard to resist. It stems partly from the desire to use my knowledge as a surgeon to help people who are experiencing the worst that humanity can throw at them, and partly from the thrill of just being in those terrible places, of living in a liminal zone where most people have neither been nor want to go: Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Chad, Liberia, Iraq, Libya, Haiti, Gaza and Syria, to mention a few."*

He is disarmingly honest in admitting that the altruistic desire to help others is only one aspect of his motivation – he also gets a real buzz from being at the heart of a war zone, a spark first ignited as a young man while watching the film *The Killing Fields*.

There are so many occasions in his career when he has been a hairsbreadth from death and has known real terror; but this does not deter him.

As a prelude to each new mission, Nott provides a précis of the scenario he is to face – a potted history of the development of the conflict. These brief summaries illuminate all that we are used to hearing on the news, and that we puzzle about. Religion and historical Western interference are worryingly prevalent as causal factors; and the futility of the western world's attempts to police and solve the problems of alien cultures is depressingly apparent.

There are passages in this book that are far too shocking to quote here; unimaginable injuries and heroic surgical interventions that are unknown in the developed world - and caused by weapons that are deliberately designed to maim as well as to kill. And the many references to the child victims is unbearable, and nearly the breaking of Nott himself.

But I am pleased to have read the book – it puts into sharp perspective the trivia we regard as important. And indeed, Nott himself is driven to despair by a patient, back home in his NHS job, who is making strident demands about the thread veins on her legs. There is a huge positive that emerges near the end of the book: the establishment of the David Nott Foundation which is *"dedicated to delivering the specialist training that surgeons need to save lives in countries affected by conflict and catastrophe."* Thousands of young surgeons have acquired the skills to help their fellows in their own countries. A proud legacy of Nott's work.

Hilary Smallwood

Chuckle Corner

From Peter Garratt:

There was a Frenchman in England learning English. Yesterday I met him and asked how he was getting on. He said he had decided to give up and go home, as he could never learn how to pronounce English. He said, I was passing Orcop Hall this morning and outside there was a notice " LOAF PRONOUNCED SUCCESS!"

A FEW AMUSING CONVERSATIONS THAT MIGHT RAISE A NEW YEAR CHUCKLE OR TWO

- 1. Parent to friend:** Have you met my daughter Beth?
Friend: And what's Beth short for?
Parent. Because she's only four.
- 2. Wife to husband:** Why do you never take me out to dinner?
Husband: I don't go out with married women.
Wife: But I'm your wife!
Husband: I make no exceptions.
- 3. Waiter to customer:** Sir, I see your glass is empty. Would you like another?
Customer: Why would I want two empty glasses?
- 4. Man phoning police:** Officer, a storm just blew away 25% of my roof.
Officer: Oof!
- 5. Police officer to Parents:** I'm sorry to tell you this, but your son has set fire to the school.
Parents: Was it arson?
Officer: Yes, definitely your son.

Hereford Cathedral Events.

On Saturday 27 January 2024, 7.00pm Hereford Cathedral Choir, together with Marches Baroque and an international line-up of soloists, will be performing J S Bach's Christmas Oratorio in its entirety (sung in German). *Hereford Cathedral Choir, Marches Baroque, Geraint Bowen director*

Tickets £25 (Front Nave), £18 (Rear Nave) or £10 for Under 25s in Rear Nave are available to purchase online or via the Cathedral Shop (01432 374 210).

Supported by the William A Cadbury Charitable Trust and Hereford Cathedral Perpetual Trust

Answers to the book Quiz

- 1 Final baddie kicks the bucket – Last Devil to Die / Richard Osman
- 2 The bird part nearly got a medal position – Fourth Wing / Rebecca Yarros
- 3 Three procrastinators' timescales – Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow / Gabrielle Zevin
- 4 Cowardly visage – Yellowface / R F Kuang
- 5 Two goes to get all the pins down in bowling - Spare / Prince Harry
- 6 Evil red-headed snake – Demon Copperhead / Barbara Kingsolver
- 7 Little bits of glass – The Shards / Bret Easton Ellis
- 8 Liverpool mayor is by the small forest - Birnam Wood / Eleanor Catton
- 9 Disorderly mob – Unruly / David Mitchell
- 10 Animals are being hard to reason with – Impossible Creatures / Katherine Rundell
- 11 49 – The Square of Sevens / Laura Shepherd Robinson
- 12 Lots of going in and out of this home – The House of Doors / Tan Twang Eng
- 13 Sounds like the tune is making money – Prophet Song / Paul Lynch
- 14 Super relative is footballer Mr Kane – Great Uncle Harry / Michael Palin
- 15 Painful insect attack – The Bee Sting / Paul Murray
- 16 Broad and haphazard – Scattershot / Bernie Taupin
- 17 Tenant playwright – Shakespeare (The Man Who Pays the Rent) / Dame Judi Dench

January Dates for the diary

- | | | |
|-----------|------------|---|
| 7 | Sun | Benefice Communion Service |
| 9 | Tue | Garway Hall Coffee Morning |
| 9 | Tue | Garway Flicks in the Sticks |
| 10 | Wed | Garway Stitches |
| 11 | Thu | Coffee Morning, Orcop Hall |
| 12 | Fri | Coffee Morning, St. Weonards |
| 15 | Mon | St Weonards Village Hall Committee Meeting |
| 24 | Wed | Garway Stitches |
| 26 | Fri | Garway Live – Nuadha Jazz evening |

Future events for your diary

February

- | | | |
|-----------|------------|------------------------------------|
| 10 | Sat | Jumble Sale Orcop Hall |
| 13 | Tue | Flicks in the Sticks Garway |
| 17 | Sat | Craft workshop, Orcop |

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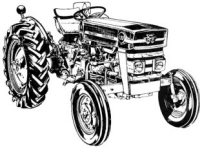
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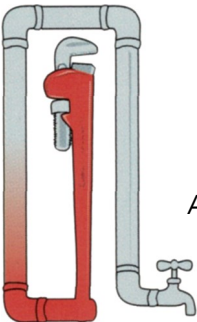
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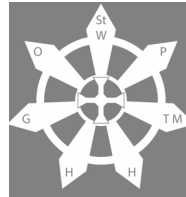


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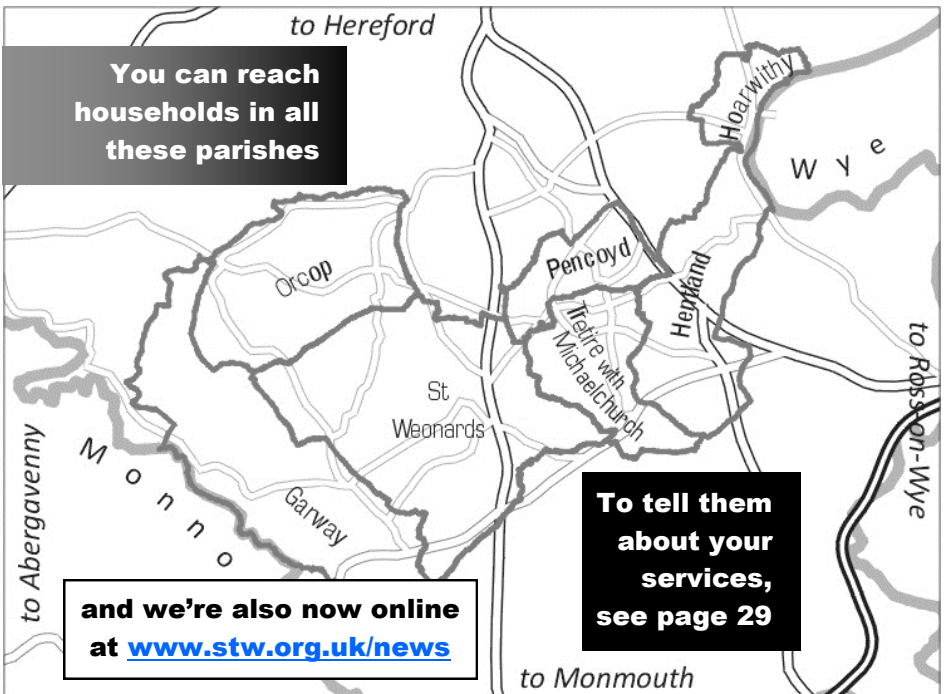
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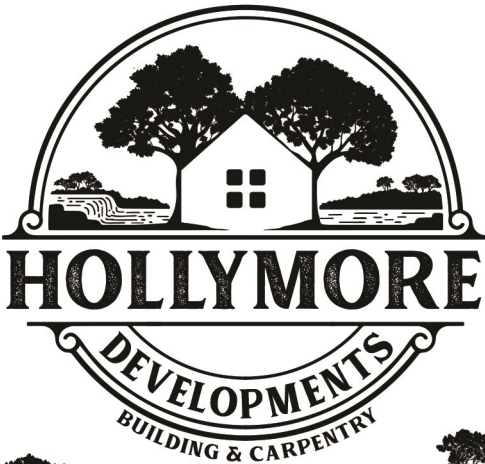
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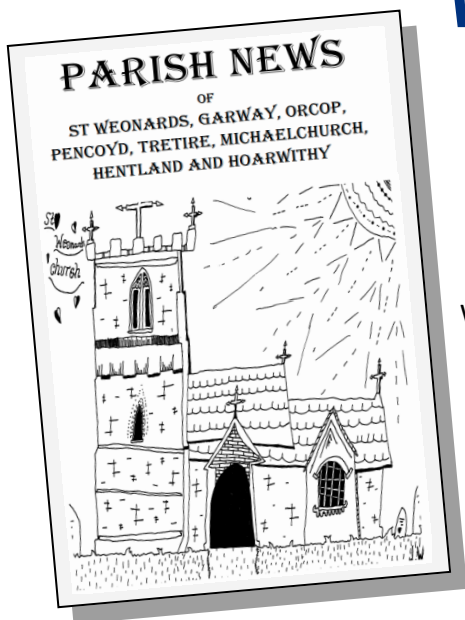
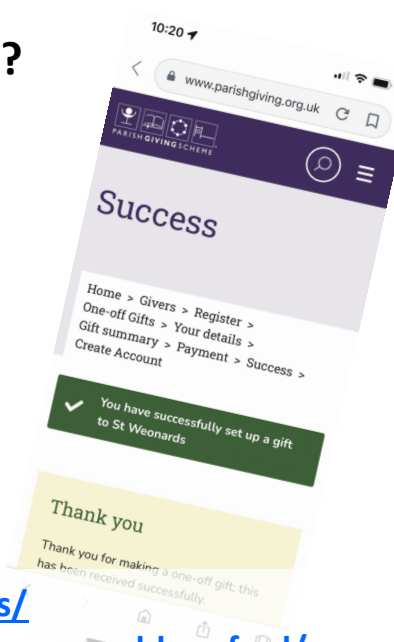
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Advertisers index

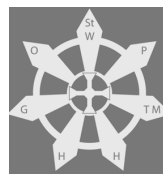
<u>Advertiser</u>	<u>page</u>	<u>Advertiser</u>	<u>page</u>
A & G Machinery Services	3	Gerald Benjamin	
Aquassist	6	(Electrical Services).....	15
Barbara Garlick.....	15	Gleam Clean	15
Birches Bridge Club	4	Golden Valley Construction	9
Broad Oak Garage.....	8	Golden Valley Funeral Services	1
Catherine King	1	Golden Valley Tree Services	15
Certainlywood	17	Greenleaf Architecture.....	21
Cherished Funerals	19	GSM Ltd	24
Chris Strange		Hereford Coatings	13
(Building & Carpentry)	10	Hillman's Florist	15
Coley's	13	Hollow Ash	17
Colin (Garden Maintenance).....	10	Hollymore	25
Creative Kinesiology	2	Home Choice Flooring.....	3
Deborah Cronshaw.....	7	Howats Chimney Sweeps.....	22
Dennis Walker & Son		Inti Electrical Solutions	5
(Tree Services)	12	Iyengar Yoga	11
ElectricsFixed	23	J P Mower Services.....	16
Ethan Mitchell	5	James Robson (Building)	14
Eve Lomas Therapies.....	17	James Walter (Building Services)....	9
FarmFlock.....	12	Jane Bovell (Singing Lessons)	16
Flora Designs.....	23	Juliet Ablett Homeopathy.....	15
Frameworks	23	Kelsmor Dairy	6
Franklin Plumbing & Heating	2	Kemble at Home.....	5
Garway Hall & Community Centre .	12	Kinesis Sports Therapy	12
Garway Pre-school	4	Llama Trekking.....	1
Geolec Electrician Services	2	Lynne Bradley (Piano Lessons).....	15

Advertisers index *(Continued)*

<u>Advertiser</u>	<u>page</u>	<u>Advertiser</u>	<u>page</u>
Mark Serle (Tools wanted)	11	Sarah L Hope (Osteopath)	17
N R Evans & Co	5	Savoy Theatre	27
New Harp Inn	26	Shining Stars Pre-school	21
Nigel Payne (Tree Pruning)	10	Shire Lawns.....	23
Oldfield Forge.....	2	South Herefordshire Dowsers.....	1
Orcop Parish Hall	10	St Weonards Village Hall.....	3
Oven Wizards.....	23	STS Chimney & Stove.....	2
Owl Good Neighbour.....	19	Tolley Home Services.....	16
P G M & Son	7	Town & Country Plastering & Decorating.....	14
P Muldowney & Sons	14	Vivien Ray craniosacral therapy	1
Parr Plumbing & Heating Services ..	4	Webb Groundworks.....	9
Paul Ackerman (Carpenter).....	10	Wellington Consulting.....	7
Pengethley Farm Shop.....	11	Williams Dental Care	20
Pigsty Studio & Art Gallery	25	Women's Singing Circle	19
Powells Land & Estate Agents	18	Wormelow Filling Station	8
Ross Vincent.....	1	Wye Electrical Services	5
Ryeland (Rural Bookkeeping).....	17	Wye Valley Group.....	6

for Advertisers' Services index see p32

Notes



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Index of Advertisers' Services

for an advertisers' index see pages 30/31

Agas, heating & plumbing services	2,4,16	Health	1,2,11,15,17
Architectural services.....	21	Hedge cutting	10
Art gallery & studio	25	Home / live-in care	5
Blacksmith	2	Ice Cream & Milk	6,11
Bookkeeping, accountants & office services.....	5,7,17	Kindling.....	11,17
Bridge Club.....	4	Lawn Care	23
Builders & Construction	9,10,13,14,25	Llama Trekking	1
Car sales, servicing, MOT and repairs.....	8	Machinery services	3,16
Carpentry.....	10,14,25	Music theory lessons	16
Chimney Sweeps.....	2,16,22	Oven cleaning.....	23
Cleaning services	15	Owl Community Support.....	19
Coatings	13	Painters & Decorators.....	1,9,14
Computing & tech support	5	Pest Control services.....	7
Counselling.....	19	Picture Framing	23
Dental care	20	Piano lessons	15,16
Dowsing.....	1	Plasterers & Damp-proofing ..	14
Electricians	2,5,15	Pre-school/Toddler	4,21
Entertainment	26,27	Property maintenance.....	14,16
Estate Agents	18	Pubs	26
Farm shop	11	Renewable Energy	24
Firewood.....	17	Roofing	10,14
Flooring.....	3	Septic Tank emptying	6
Florist.....	15	Shepherding services	12
Foot care	7	Singing.....	1,16,19
Fruit juice	17	Skip Hire, recycling etc	6
Funeral services	1,19	Small bale hay	17
Garden Design	23	Sports Therapy	12
Gardening Services	10	Tools wanted	11
Groundwork	9,13	Tree services	10,12,15
Guttering.....	14,16	Window fitting	14,16
		Window cleaning.....	15
		Village Halls & Community Centres	3,10,12
		Yoga	11