

# FECKENHAM

## December 2022 NEWS



Published by Feckenham Church for the village.  
Editor Gilly Cooper - [feckenhamnews@gmail.com](mailto:feckenhamnews@gmail.com)  
(Copy Date 14<sup>th</sup>)

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# Feckenham News in December

## In the Magazine

Look out for some new articles . One charity bike ride which had already taken place and a row across the Atlantic in aid of Acorns Children's Hospice which is at the preparation stage, The crossword is back and there's a new piece about Pete's allotment.

## Dates for your Diary

### December

5th	Parish Meeting
7th	Readers Group S&B Gardening Club
10th	That Snow Joke
13th	History Society
24th	Carols on The Square
26th	Boxing Day Walk
27th	Feckenodeon

### Regular Sessions

Mondays Restorative Yoga  
Thursdays Bridge; Hatha Yoga; Pilates  
First Tuesday of the month:  
Feckenham Sessions and  
Feckenham Forest History Society  
Third Monday of the month: WI

## Production Team

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## Front Cover

Photo : Courtesy of Jackie Berry

Magazine online at [www.feckenham.com](http://www.feckenham.com)

Many articles in Feckenham News are contributed by members of the public. They remain the responsibility of the writers and neither the production team nor the publishers can be held responsible for the views and assertions contained therein.

## Editor's Note

Many people have been telling me how much they enjoy the magazine and it's very welcome feedback. Though I write some of the content, the magazine is a collection of articles from our group of contributors who respond to me each month with their articles, most of which are sent by the deadline, though some need a little nudge. This month we have a couple of new contributions. One, a letter which came handwritten and dropped through my letter box, and that's a perfectly good way to give me copy. I dictate the words into my phone, and out comes text which only needs a little correction perhaps on account of my Scottish accent. The other article is about the success of a charity bike ride in Cyprus. It came with a picture of the team. As the magazine is for all of us and, though I've lived in Feckenham for nearly 40 years, I don't know everyone - especially the newcomers, please don't be shy. If there's something you want to tell us about, perhaps a success of some kind, a family announcement, a suggestion for the community to support - send me information or let me know you have something to say and I'll write it up for you. I have never declined an article though I may have edited a few. My criteria would be that we need to be considerate to others reading - oh, and though I know it's a problem, I don't comment on dog poo!



You may wonder why there's a photo of a humble savoy cabbage. Well it's because, one of the allotment members, Pete Delaney, has sent in the first of a series of articles about his organic veg project. This photo is of this year's first cabbage coming ready.



## Newshound

**Charlotte and Paul Styler** of Mouch Farm announce the arrival of **Posy**, a little sister to Ava & Henry born on the 5th of October.

**Ann and Jeff Matthews** write: "Many of you will have seen the 'for sale' board outside our house and to confirm that we are planning to leave the village mid - March having been living on The Square since 2004. Prior to that we lived in Callow Hill moving there in 1990 and so our move brings to a pause nearly 25 years of being involved in Feckenham life. It's a big wrench, and we will miss very much everyone we have got to know over the years. Yes, we have given of our time to things but we have got back 10 fold that investment, so thank you for your love and kindness, particularly in the rather difficult last couple of years. We are leaving to be near elder daughter Emma, down in Surrey. They are expecting their 2<sup>nd</sup> child in May so we are assuming serious Grandparenting duties, and making a new life while we still have our faculties. We hope to be able to say cheerio to people before we go and are sure we will be back for various events."

### Arthur Roger Hind

Many thanks to all who attended Arthur's funeral and donated so generously to his chosen charities.

The turnout was amazing and he was obviously well loved by all his friends in the village.

The collection raised nearly £300 which will be split equally between Cancer Research and the RNLI.

Thanks again, Mary (sister)

# Village Notices and Letters

## T4U CHRISTMAS SHOEBOX APPEAL 2022

Lin Preece

From all of the children and all of the families that will receive one of your 'Special Shoebox Gifts', this Christmas, thank you so much, for your kindness and generosity !



Hi all,

I thought I would introduce myself and what I am hoping to do next year. My name is George Farmiloe and you may have seen me occasionally propping up the bar in the Rose and Crown or The Lygon – in equal measure of course (no pun intended!) - and I have signed up to row across the Atlantic Ocean in November next year.

Together with a school buddy I am doing this to raise much needed funds for Acorns Hospice as a good friend of my co-rower sadly lost his life aged just 17. Throughout Jack's struggle with cerebral palsy, Acorns Hospice provided an unbelievable lifeline to him and his family.

This is not (yet) a plea for fundraising. Rather I would really like my endeavours to also be part of the Feckenham and Bradley Green Community. I thought it would be encouraging for me, and hopefully for you, to share my progress, spark an ongoing interest in how we are getting on and perhaps give a bit more of an 'in person' presentation nearer the time.

So, with the Editor's blessing, over the next few months I aim to share my story right up until we hit the High Seas – hopefully not too literally. I'll fill in some more blanks about me, why I'm committing myself to this, information about the boat and equipment and of course the lead up to the start.

Local Communities and what people are doing in their lives are part of the glue that binds us all together. I really look forward to taking you on my journey.

George Farmiloe



Many of the children that receive a T4U box have nothing at all to call their own. Some children are so in awe at the box alone, that they need encouragement to open it up to take a look inside, they simply can't believe that someone, somewhere, cares about them ! Your boxes are going to be so special to them this Christmas, not only because they contain lots of lovely goodies for them to enjoy and treasure, but also because each and every box contains so much more. In every box there is love, in every box there is thoughtfulness, and above all every one of our boxes gives these children hope for a better and brighter future !

It has been heartwarming to see so many boxes in Church ready to begin their journey. I will be able to tell you numbers and destinations in next months issue.

On behalf of the children and myself we wish you all a 'VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS'. Thank you, for your continued support. Thank you for all the lovely boxes, all the generous donations, and all the beautiful hand knits !



TOGETHER WE CAN CHANGE LIVES  
ONE BOX AT A TIME

## Feckenham Parish Council Allotments and Conservation Garden Society

Interested in having an allotment to grow your own vegetables and soft fruit or flowers? We currently have two half plots available. Cost - £25 per annum including access to a polytunnel for growing seeds, tomatoes, and other tender plants. Also, a full range of gardening tools.

Contact: Gay Bligh, Secretary,  
[m.gbligh49@gmail.com](mailto:m.gbligh49@gmail.com) or Paul  
Bradley, Treasurer,  
[paulbradley007@gmail.com](mailto:paulbradley007@gmail.com)

### A letter from Val Neal

Many years ago Gordon and I went on our first cruise around the Med and one of our stops was Nice together with a trip to Monaco. From Casino Square we walked up the hill passing on the way Prince Caroline's mansion and also visited the church, a little further on, where Grace Kelly's tomb lies. We continued on to the palace at the top, at which point Gordon decided he needed to find a loo as you do!

Whilst he was away I stood with no one else around and admiring all the fabulous cars parked on the square adjoining the front of the palace and to my amazement the palace gate opened and a black limo drove out and as it drove towards me I realise Prince Rainier accompanied by a very official looking lady was sitting in the back. I couldn't believe my eyes they came so close to me standing aghast at what I'm seeing. A wonderful memory I shall never forget. It's a pity Gordon missed out. Perhaps I should have waved but I didn't.

## Feckenham Square Management Committee



The last time the village was able to gather together to sing carols on The Square was on Christmas Eve 2019 (pictured above). In 2020 we were in lockdown, in 2021 it looked as if we might be able to do it.... but a sudden spurt of the Omicron variant put paid to that. Now, in 2022 it seems that it's all systems go again. At the time of writing arrangements are being made for the erection of the village Christmas Tree - complete with new lights. That will happen on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December. (Help from able bodied volunteers would be welcome - please gather on The Square from 10am)

On Christmas Eve you are invited to abandon the turkey stuffing, sprout peeling or present wrapping and join the throng on The Square. We'll sing carols, drink mulled wine and eat mince pies for a happy hour or so as we welcome Christmas to the village. It's all free - a gesture of thanks for the village's support for the Square Management Committee - but there will be a collection in Aid of the County Air Ambulance. This year the singing will be boosted by the vocal chords of All Round Voices - Feckenham's community choir. Everyone's very welcome to enjoy this traditional start to the festivities.

**CAROLS ON THE SQUARE  
CHRISTMAS EVE - from 6.30pm**

## Memories of Arthur Hind Jackie and Dave Berry

Arthur became a firm friend as soon as Jackie and Dave moved to the village about 5 years ago. They met at the Rose and Crown, and from the beginning sat with him most nights. They would give Arthur a call to say they were on their way and many pleasant evenings were had together. People thought that Arthur was Jackie's dad and truth be told he was about the same age as her dad. Others thought that they had moved to the village because he was a close relative but that was wrong too.



They went to lots of events together from shows in the village hall and, sadly some funerals. When Dave was away Jackie and Arthur would have what became known as "date nights". Arthur even muscled in on their wedding anniversary dinner at the pub. They asked him kindly to leave them alone but he simply bought another drink and rejoined them. Dave and Arthur spent hours talking about photography with Arthur helping Dave out photographing items he had for sale and giving him help and advice so he could do all this himself.

When Arthur became ill Jackie and Gracie the dog visited almost every day. Gracie had a special place in his heart she was allowed on his bed and he kept her supplied with toys and treats. The other joy Arthur had at this time was the visits from Nola Jackie and Dave's granddaughter she always managed to get him laughing he got great pleasure from their time together.

Funny things they remember: Arthur loved many things with including skiing, sailing

and golf. The list becomes a little more random. Captain Jack Sparrow was a great favourite – he would only wear a face mask if it was made of Jack Sparrow fabric. Double double Baileys became a tradition. Dave and Arthur would drink whiskey and Baileys together and he would always share his Baileys with the dog!

Arthur bought Billy a Christmas jumper for the Christmas jumper night. Regulars will remember this.

He loved building small boats from kits, and he had a collection of flags for all special occasions which we could see in the small flagpole at his gate.

Jokes – he was a terrible teller of jokes. He would tell you the beginning of the joke the end of the joke go back to the beginning forget the end and then he come to the middle of the joke.

A visual memory is of Arthur in his black BMW wearing his shades, elbow out of the window, cigar in hand, waving at friends

One year he came for Christmas. After the meal, Arthur was left in the room with the partially consumed goose and Gracie the dog. Great commotion was heard from the kitchen and, when Jackie came through she found Gracie running round the room with the goose in her mouth and Arthur in fits of laughter. This has become the stuff of family legend and never fails to bring a smile.

Arthur was a dear friend who will be very sadly missed by so many in the village, not least Jackie and Dave.

### Swansbrook Suite Guest Accommodation

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## Charity Bike Ride



UHCW Robotic Surgery Appeal, Kingsbury SEN Academy, Birmingham Irish Dementia Care Centre, Ladies Fighting Breast Cancer, Teenage Cancer Trust, Craniaa Neuro Rehab/ Newry, and Sinead O'Meara. The Birmingham Irish Cycle Appeal has been raising money for 21 years and hopes to break over the 1 million pound marker this year. To achieve this each of the 20 cyclists needs to raise a minimum of £1000.

To be able to cycle around a country like Cyprus with my Father(Brett), Brother(Robbie), and Sister (Kivah) was an amazing, once-in-a-lifetime experience. However, the ride wouldn't have been possible without the support from my Mother Sharon, my Nanny Annie and the rest of the wonderful backup team who kept us fueled throughout the ride.

I have attached our Facebook page so that you can view our progress throughout the ride (<https://www.facebook.com/BICAIrish/>)

I have also attached our giving page to view our campaign. Any donations would be greatly appreciated. (<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/bica-2022-cyprus-lavins?fbclid=IwAR1oa3KmbgD3hWo6V1saHXLsG1Aj66RnmeQE7YO7sTlhXOG5Qbd9Mz72hiY>).

Aidan Lavin

### **What's On at Stock & Bradley Village Hall? (sbvh.org.uk)**

The Perfect Venue for wedding receptions, parties & 'socialising'

#### **Village Hall Natters—Rural Crime**

The next talk (currently only provisionally booked) is on **RURAL CRIME** and is scheduled for Jan 10th.

Subject to their diary confirmation we hope to have a presentation from West Mercia Police and from NFU Insurance covering all aspects of Rural Crime and the impact it is having on insurance.

#### **Burns Night Party**

Again provisional, but we hope to hold a Burn's Night party at the end of January to help drive out those Post-Xmas Blues. Watch for details.

**All tickets on-line at [sbvh.org.uk/shop](http://sbvh.org.uk/shop) or phone 07976165191 for details**

## **Important News**

**regarding a proposal for a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with a capacity of 200MW on land north of Astwood Lane, Feckenham.**

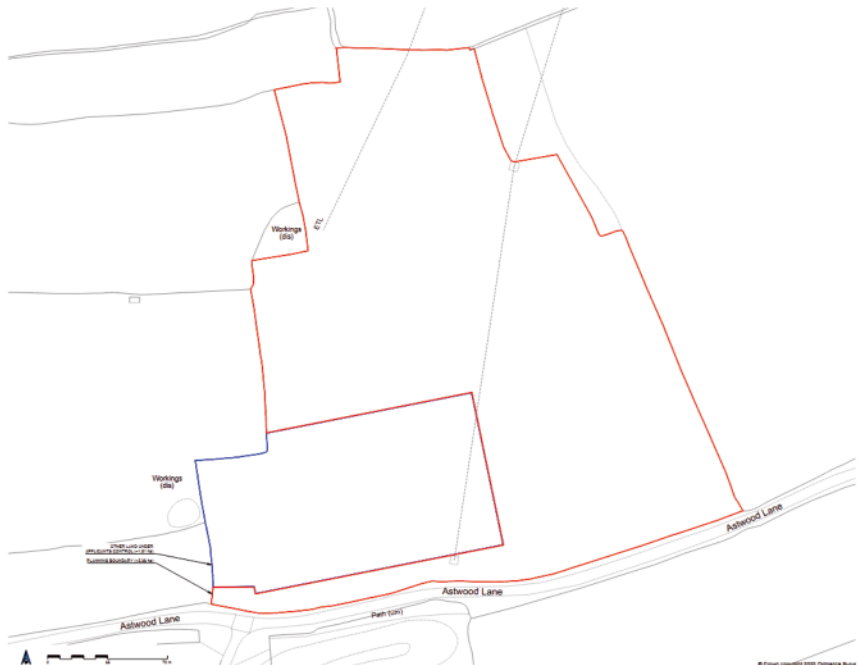
**The Parish Council have organised a Parish Meeting for Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December at 7pm at the Back Room, Feckenham Village Hall to discuss the application.**

The following is a statement issued by the developer:

“Immersa Limited work in the energy sector and have appointed RCA Regeneration Limited to manage a planning application on their behalf. The proposed development will be for a Battery

Energy Storage System (BESS) with a capacity of 200MW on land north of Astwood Lane, Feckenham. The site is situated just to the north of the existing Feckenham Substation and is crossed by 2 overhead lines. These projects are essential in the transition to renewable energy because the peaks of renewable energy generation do not often overlap with peak energy demand. Without sufficient storage capacity, this energy is wasted and not utilised. These developments therefore provide critical grid capacity and flexibility improvements. Work is ongoing as part of the preparation of the application, which involves drainage, heritage, transport and ecological input. At the meeting, we will provide a short presentation and there will be an opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions to inform the proposals. We look forward to the opportunity.”

Please contact the clerk with any queries on tel 01527 892522 or email [clerk@feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk)



# CHURCH SERVICES



## PARISH CHURCH of ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Priest-in-charge: Fr Glenn Reading 01527 894436

Church Warden: Ann Mathews 892180

Please contact Ann for Weddings at [ann@the-madison-group.co.uk](mailto:ann@the-madison-group.co.uk)

Glen for Baptisms & Funerals at [glenn.reading@googlemail.com](mailto:glenn.reading@googlemail.com)

Website: <http://feckenhamchurch.org.uk/>

Email: [info@feckenhamchurch.org.uk](mailto:info@feckenhamchurch.org.uk)



PARISH CHURCH  
OF  
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST  
FECKENHAM

## Services for December 2022

4 <sup>th</sup> December	10.30am	Eucharist	Revd B. Wheatley
11 <sup>th</sup> December	9.00am	BCP Eucharist	Revd B. Wheatley
18 <sup>th</sup> December	6.30pm	Lessons and Carols	Fr Glenn Reading
24 <sup>th</sup> December	4.00pm 11.00pm	Crib Service Midnight Eucharist	Fr Glenn Reading Fr Glenn Reading
25 <sup>th</sup> December	10.30am	Christmas Day Eucharist	Fr Glenn Reading

## FECKENHAM ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH St John Fisher & Thomas More

Due to illness, Mass will not be held at St John Fisher and Thomas More until further notice.

Mount Carmel 6 pm Sunday Mass is now the Live Streamed Mass.

Link: [www.eventcast.uk/live](http://www.eventcast.uk/live) (Type the link into the browser)

Fr. Anthony Rohan, The Presbytery, Redditch. Tel 63096

Local contact: Phylis Mott, Feckenham. Tel 893898

## Fr Glen writes

As I sit in my study in the middle of a very wet and windy November I know that Christmas is coming and here at church we are making our Christmas plans

Christmas is a time of joy and celebration, although I appreciate that for some it is a hard time of year for many different reasons. Christmas is a time of joy and celebration as we look to celebrate the goodness of God and his giving of the greatest gift, the birth of his Son and our Saviour Jesus. The birth of Jesus heralds a new chapter in the history of the world, a time of expectation and joy, and a time of hope.

The Christmas story is a magical story of journeys. Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem to register for a census and on the way both Mary and Joseph were on a spiritual journey, discerning God's plans for them. The young girl Mary pondered on what the angel Gabriel had told her regarding what was going to happen. Joseph pondered on what he saw and heard in a dream and the enormity of the responsibility he had been given; to care for God's Son! Then we have the journeys of the Shepherds and Kings, the lowliest and most magnificent men who would come to worship and pay homage to this baby which they knew to be special and destined to change the world.

As we continued to prepare for Christmas and all the celebrations, it is my prayer that you will also be on your own journey to re-live the Christmas story in a new way and allow God to be a part of your celebrations this Christmas. And

remember that we will be re-telling and celebrating God's greatest gift to us in church this year. Our celebrations will start on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December at 6.30pm with our service of Lessons and Carols. Then on Christmas Eve there will be two services: at 4pm there will be the Crib Service and then there will be a service of Holy Communion at 11pm. You are most welcome to all these services.

Whatever your plans, may I wish you and your loved ones a happy Christmas and may you know the peace of the Christ child in your homes and hearts this Christmas tide.

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Tuesday, 6th December - 8pm  
**TRADITIONAL MUSIC**  
Until 22nd December: **Christmas Fayre Menu**  
Bookings and pre-orders essential. 2 courses £21.50, 3 courses £24  
Wednesday, 14th December  
**CHRISTMAS JUMPER NIGHT**  
Turkey dinner and pudding for £15  
**NEW YEAR'S EVE** (Open until 00.30)  
**SPECIAL SPARKLES MENU**  
£25 per person (Evening only)  
**Christmas Opening Hours: Open all day (12 to 11) 22nd**  
Dec through to 2nd Jan; **Xmas Day 12 - 1pm (no food);**  
**Boxing Day 12-7pm (no food)**

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[www.roseandcrownfeckenham.co.uk](http://www.roseandcrownfeckenham.co.uk)

## Church Clock

Many readers will be aware that the church clock has been out of action for some time now. The mechanism is currently being repaired in the workshops of Cumbria Clocks. On Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> November an engineer arrived to work on the clock face and the machinery that links the face and the clock mechanism. John Eaton writes: "Monday was interesting... having managed to organise the cherry picker and the Clock Engineer from Cumbria Clocks to arrive at the same time, I had not realised that in order to remove and clean the linkage inside the tower you have first to remove the hands that are attached to the ends of the linkage that protrudes from the clock face. The hands were indeed bent and obviously something hard had hit them but that was easily remedied with tools that beat them back into shape.

The opportunity was then taken to remove and clean the linkage that is inside the tower before re assembly and replacing the hands. There is a rod inside a tube, and both rod and tube revolve to operate the hands. Inside the tube there was a lot of sticky stuff that Feckenham beekeeper Paul Furey identified as black honey. There was also some hard substance probably the work of the bees. There was no other evidence of a bees' nest. It is thought that this could all have contributed to the clock's irregular performance.

We are expecting the clock to be returned later in December. We are still about £1500 short in our fund raising for the clock repair".

If you'd like to contribute to the repair fund or would like further information, you can contact John Eaton on 01527 89427



## Feckenham Village Hall



### THAT SNOW JOKE!

Jez Lowe's annual Christmas tour has become quite a tradition in recent years, striking out from his native North East England to entertain audiences across the whole of the UK - and he's coming to Feckenham Village Hall on 10<sup>th</sup> December. Jez will be joined by his intrepid touring band, the Bad Pennies, so expect a musical feast - and this year, the band invites special guest Benny Graham - actor and balladeer- to share the music, merriment and mirth of Christmas in the North-East. Part folk concert, part music-hall revue. Sing along, laugh along, and drive the cold winter away.

**Jez Lowe** is an award winning singer/songwriter who has also written several novels. He's a founder member of The Pitman Poets, he's director of Badapple Theatre Co and co-wrote and presented several series of ballad-operas for BBC Radio 4. He writes songs for leading bands including Fairport Convention, The Dubliners and The Unthanks. He recently won the prestigious Sony Academy Award.

*Enjoy an early start to the festive season in the company of fine musicians!*

**Jez Lowe's "THAT SNOW JOKE"**  
**Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30pm**

Tickets for shows at Feckenham Village Hall are on sale at The Village Shop and The Rose & Crown.

You can also book by phone (through TicketSource) on 0333 666 3366 or online at [www.feckhall.org](http://www.feckhall.org)

Feckenham's Own...



## MERRY SWANS

The first sighting of tinsel this year will be in the Classical Swansbrook studio where Chris Fletcher has been assembling a suitably festive hour of comfort and joy - all requested by listeners. There are traditional carols, catchy festive ditties and even a bit of folk rock - an ideal mixture to stir the pud to. **Christmas Classical Swansbrook can be heard from the first Monday in December.**

Our other programmes are still open for requests until about 10 days before Christmas - so email, post or employ a carrier pigeon to get those messages and greetings to us.

If your musical taste is of a vintage nature - 1950s, 60s and 70s - Colin James will be pleased to oblige. Happy Hour, presented by Ian Bellion, will play anything you suggest (if it's legal) - and, if it's obscure, we welcome a challenge. We have unfettered access to one of the world's biggest music libraries so ask for whatever you like - we're rarely stumped!

Our special Christmas programmes will be available throughout the festivities so you can listen to us while you wait for Santa, stuff the turkey or burn the sprouts. Send your greetings, requests or rude messages to [radio@swansbrook.com](mailto:radio@swansbrook.com) - we'd love to hear from you.

## LISTEN TO THE SWANS

Go to [www.swansbrook.com](http://www.swansbrook.com) and follow the instructions you'll find there. Our programmes are available for you to play ON DEMAND - listen when and where you like - as often as you like.

**FECKENHAM'S OWN Local Radio**  
[www.swansbrook.com](http://www.swansbrook.com)

# WHAT'S ON in

## FECKENHAM VILLAGE HALL

### Jez Lowe's That Snow Joke!

with The Bad Pennies  
& special guest  
Benny Graham

LIVE  
& LOCAL

SATURDAY 10th DECEMBER - 7.30PM

Tickets from The Village Shop and The Rose & Crown

Book online at [www.feckhall.org](http://www.feckhall.org)

Phone bookings: 0333 666 3366

Fight the Christmas FLAB!  
Join us for our 46th Annual

## BOXING DAY WALK

Monday,  
26th December



Meet on The Square at 1.45pm -  
Walk starts at 2pm prompt

Stout, waterproof footwear  
essential - Dogs on leads please  
Tea stop half way round

# CAROLS

round the CHRISTMAS TREE

On Christmas Eve

Saturday, 24th December

6.30pm on The Square

Hot Punch - Mince Pies - Everything FREE

Collection in aid of County Air Ambulance

Send details of events for FREE listing to:

# Feckenham



THE  
FECKENHAM  
SESSIONS  
TRADITIONAL  
MUSICMAKING  
at THE ROSE & CROWN

First Tuesday of every month from 8pm  
NEXT SESSION: Tuesday, 6th December

## Feckenham Parish Council PARISH MEETING

Monday, 5th December at 7 pm  
Feckenham Village Hall, Back Room

The meeting will hear about a new 200MW  
Battery Energy Storage Facility proposed  
for a site off Astwood Lane. There will be a  
chance to put questions to the developer.

A Parish Council Meeting will follow.  
*All welcome.*

## Feckenham READERS GROUP

Meets on  
Wednesday, 7th December - 7.45  
This month's book:

## AMERICAN DIRT

By Jeanine Cummings

Details: 892285



## THE FECKENODEON CINEMA SOCIETY

# CHRISTMAS & GO

A JOYEUX  
YULETIDE  
COMEDY

## SANTA & CIE



FeckenOdeon 2 Friday, 9th December at 8pm

NOT a children's film!

*Pauline Collins as*

# Shirley Valentine

*A breath of Summer  
at Christmas*

*There's more to life  
than chips and egg!*

FeckenOdeon 1 Tuesday, 27th December at 7.30pm

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\*Booking Fee applies to Phone and Online Bookings

\*Phone calls answered by Ticketsource and charged at standard rates - NOT a premium line

## The Feckenham Forest History Society

### SONGS AND DITTIES for CHRISTMAS

with Alan Benjamin

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Feckenham Village Hall

[whatson@feckenham.f9.co.uk](mailto:whatson@feckenham.f9.co.uk) or call 892130

## Introducing... Philip and his Window

There can't be any villagers who haven't paused outside the window at 45 High Street to admire the series of displays. I was curious to find out what the motivation was for making something which brings such pleasure. Off I went to find out over a pleasant glass of wine one evening.

Philip and his partner Annie have lived in Feckenham since 2011 and in their current house since 2013. They chose Feckenham as it was equidistant from their workplaces at the time. Annie, originally from Coventry works for Age UK in Solihull while Philip now works for Cransley Hospice Trust in Kettering.

Philip has many talents: a sportsman all his life with a cabinet full of his trophies, he now umpires hockey around the West Midlands.

What else do they do in the village? They run the Duck race at the Wake each year. Another example of bringing some happiness to children and those adults in touch with their inner child.

Philip, from a young age has loved the magic of shop windows, recalling Christmas displays at Binns, a department store in Newcastle. He also loves dioramas which are scenes with three-dimensional figures, either in miniature or as large-scale museum exhibits. His inspiration comes from a desire to "spread niceness, encourage children to use their imagination and to be impressionist" as he told me.

He began the displays about 6 years ago in order to amuse his grandchildren when they came to visit. The first used his father's collection of sports ties. They were enjoyed so much that he continued to develop more and more scenes - usually following the calendar.

Each display takes weeks of planning and a



couple of days to set up. During lockdown, Finn, from further up the High Street would come to see the window. He was tiny then - just learning to talk. He became a regular visitor. The children from the nursery group would be brought along to see his window during their term time.

As people pause to see the display Annie and Philip listen for the 'wow' factor. The house, which used to be to a sweet shop, (and Philip has been told by those in the know, that a cat always used to sit on the sweets in those days), is single-glazed so comments can be heard indoors. It seems the favourite is his Christmas scene - highlights also include the jigsaws displayed during lockdown. and anything with a train. He has stores in the cellar of items collected for the window and is now looking for a smaller gauge railway which will fit more easily.

Philip comments that the display never comes out as he expects saying, "It's even a surprise to me." Well, it certainly gives surprise and joy to all of the passersby. Thank you, Philip and Annie.



Having been unable to find a suitably seasonal photo from the archive this month, here is a photo (courtesy of Cyril Warrilow) of the original saddlers which was demolished to make way for what is now Winfields store on Astwood Lane. I certainly remember coming out to the saddlers from Birmingham in about 1962 and I think the demolition took place in 1963.

Remember that we are always on the lookout for old photos and documents that relate to life in Feckenham.



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# FeckenCrossword

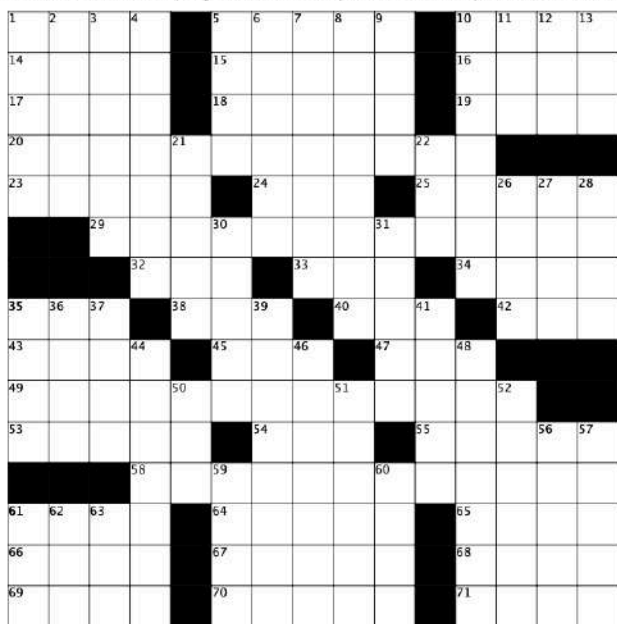
## Totally Fecked

Jamie Hubball

Look out for the themed clues at 20, 29, 49 and 59-across. Once you get one it should help with the rest. Merry Christmas from Chicago.

### ACROSS

1. 1/8 fluid ounce
5. "Out of bed!"
10. Turn toward
14. 1944 Nobel physicist  
Isidor
15. Make up
16. Killer whale
17. Slanted type: Abbr.
18. Oil source
19. "Give it a \_\_\_!"
20. Utterance after getting tired of string up Christmas decorations between rooms
23. Armistice
24. Opposite of yep
25. Shoestrings
29. Parting remark to the playwright after Waiting too long For Godot
32. After-afterthought on a letter: Abbr.
33. Spot for a soak
34. Dame \_\_\_ Everage
35. \_\_\_ Lock (PC key)
38. South, in Brazil
40. Apt rhyme for chop and crop
42. Either side of a beaming grin, in a phrase
43. The "A" of U.A.E.
45. It's mostly nitrogen on Earth, but carbon dioxide on Mars
47. Western treaty grp.
49. Yearly visits to the doctor where they always seem to give me the wrong test results
53. "Bye Bye Bye" boy band
54. Author LeShan
55. Confiscate
58. Unkind comment to the overweight rock and roll singer performing The Twist
61. Cry of frustration
64. Actress Rapace of The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo and Prometheus



© Christmas 2022

65. Company that uses about 1% of the world's wood supply annually
66. "Shall I compare \_\_\_ to a summer's day?"
67. Venice thoroughfare
68. Word before "Nobody" or "No Sunshine" in R&B titles
69. It may be broken by a maverick
70. Shorthand writer, for short
71. "OMG, that's so funny!"
7. How some cars screech
8. Illegal
9. Bit of kitchen waste
10. Abandon
11. "\_\_\_ You Experienced" (Jimi Hendrix album)
12. Syringe amts.
13. Polish off
21. Workers just for the day
22. Business name ender
26. Give up, as land
27. Sicilian stratovolcano
28. The sun, for one
30. Habitual customer's order, with "the"
31. Kindle download
35. Bread with a palindromic name
36. Sights in a funeral home
37. Umpteenth
39. One of 20 on the Titanic
41. Play's counterpart
44. Clumped
46. Band with the 1974 hit "Come and Get Your Love"
48. Off-menu offering
50. German cry
51. The Caribbean's \_\_\_ Islands
52. Northeastern Indian state, bordering Tibet, Bhutan and Nepal
56. Ethan Frome's sickly wife
57. Muse of love poetry
59. Aunties' husbands, affectionately
60. Dough in baklava
61. PIN point?
62. Letter after pi
63. Work well together

### DOWN

1. Catch my \_\_\_?
2. One using Yelp or TripAdvisor, perhaps
3. You can count on it
4. Toadstool that exudes latex when cut
5. Deep cut
6. Hydrocarbon gas



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## Kathy's Collection

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October.



Second, from the beautifully, newly cleared  
bank of the earthwork



To what is growing on it. “Dog vomit  
slime mould [which] moves about like  
an amoeba, slithering slowly at night  
so that on any given morning it’s  
never quite where it was the day  
before, nor is it in exactly the same  
shape” (The Laid Back Gardener)



## Crossword Solution

D	R	A	M		G	E	T	U	P		F	A	C	E
R	A	B	I		A	T	O	N	E		O	R	C	A
I	T	A	L		S	H	A	L	E		R	E	S	T
F	E	C	K	T	H	E	H	A	L	L	S			
T	R	U	C	E		N	A	W		L	A	C	E	S
		S	A	M	U	E	L	F	E	C	K	E	T	T
		P	P	S		T	U	B		E	D	N	A	
N	U	M		S	U	L		L	O	P		E	A	R
A	R	A	B		A	I	R		O	A	S			
A	N	N	A	L	F	E	C	K	U	P	S			
N	S	Y	N	C		E	D	A		S	E	I	Z	E
		C	H	U	B	B	Y	F	E	C	K	E	R	
A	R	G	H		N	O	O	M	I		I	K	E	A
T	H	E		C	A	N	A	L		A	I	N	T	
M	O	L	D		S	T	E	N	O		L	M	A	O

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## An Organic Allotment: Winter Plotting by Pete Delaney

In the spring of 2020, as lockdown began, unsure as to how it would all turn out, I decided I ought to learn about growing our own vegetables. Being vegetarians and environmentalists, my wife, Rachel and myself decided we would try to be organic growers. Having acquired an allotment we began our organic veg project.

Last year we specifically targeted winter produce with some reasonable success that I have continued and expanded on this autumn. This November I'm pleased to see that we are still eating and growing 17 different items of produce from our plot. 12 of which are still growing in the ground with the rest in storage.

In store we have garlic: dried and hanging in the shed; courgette: okay to grow many as they store very well; runner beans: keep the beans from the last ones growing dry them, and use them to add to stews and as seed for next year. Squashes: this year, we grew pumpkins, Turkish Turbans and butternut squash, cured in a dry light environment to keep for a good time. We also make a courgette chutney (It is a delight to eat your summer produce in midwinter) along with pickled beetroot and shallot onions. Potatoes: we grew plenty this year but are nearing the bottom of the sack now.

Still growing: we have salad that we sowed in cloches, lettuce, rocket and mustard. We are now eating the thinnings, leaving the rest to grow on harvesting outside leaves as we need them. Radicchio that has grown into nice tight heads and chard which goes on and on. It's great to be picking fresh leaves in mid winter and is really good for you. Winter cabbages: plant them in June/July to be ready in winter, cabbages do you the favour of not all coming ready at the same time. They build heads slow, but are tight and as big as a football. I also sowed some spring cabbage at the same time, a fast grower called Greyhound that we are already eating now.

Most green leaf veg needs protection from slugs who love a cabbage or a lettuce to hide in for the winter. I use a product called Slug Gone which is natural pellets, which slugs hate crawling over, although the best slug stop is to search the plants for slugs and remove them. I place them on a large leaf that I throw into the compost heap.

Also still in the ground are carrots, parsnips and winter radish. I harvest all a root veg as we need them, but again, so go on a slug patrol as often as possible. Leeks, we sowed autumn and winter types that are building nicely to be ready in January/February, they must be planted early in the year.

We are also still harvesting three banana pepper plants that we grew in a poly tunnel, they produce a good 15 or so peppers each, that keep well on the plant or in store. Also out of the poly tunnel we are still harvesting the last few tomatoes.

At this time of year, we plant out garlic for next year and broad beans for an early summer crop.

During the winter months, I start feeding the ground in our plot. In recent times, there is a trend towards 'no dig' methods. I prefer to create our own compost and fork it into the existing earth. Vegetable peelings and greenery from the plot transforming over a few months into lovely compost/soil has been as much of a revelation as growing veg. I regularly add horse muck and ashes to the compost heap. I believe a good balance compost is the organic growers most important tool.

All green leaf veg, I feed every couple of weeks or so with comfy water. This has proved through all seasons to be an excellent feed. I make it by steeping the comfrey plant in half a barrel of water to stop it from stinking you off the plot. You must let air get to it to oxidise it. Once it has turned from a dirty purple to clean brown colour, it stinks much less and is ready to use. Poor the liquid feed into a watering can to about the fifth and then fill up with clear water to dilute.

Targeting this season with well timed planting and a good storage, along with chutneys and pickles helped us to keep eating our own organic vegetables throughout last winter, and it's looking good so far for this one.

I hope our allotment experiences help and inform anyone who grows or is thinking of growing their own organic, veg. The reward of taste, health and satisfaction opens a door to a very fulfilling dimension in life.

# Rob Cole's Gardening Tips

## Composting in a Small Garden

It is now two years since we left Meadow Farm in Feckenham and moved to Priors Crescent in Salford Priors. The move has been very successful and rewarding, and we are enjoying the many advantages of a much smaller garden.



There is a downside, however, when it comes to building a compost heap. At Meadow Farm there was a constant supply of material from the one acre garden, all of which was supplemented by the waste material from the nursery. As a result we were able to fill and empty three large compost bays with ease and they yielded useable compost in about three months. Now that we have a small garden and no nursery, finding enough material to fill our two compost bays is a constant challenge. We have risen to the challenge, however, and are again producing good compost.

The lawn at Meadow Farm took one and a half hours to cut and yielded lots of clippings. The lawn at Priors Crescent takes five minutes and yields very little. Our next door neighbours, however,

don't have a compost heap and are more than happy to give us their mowings. But it is still not enough!

So we also now add lots of paper and cardboard to the compost heap. We have bought an office paper shredder which cuts up the paper into small pieces. Every bit of mail and junk mail gets shredded, along with envelopes, (remove the cellophane 'window' first), newspapers, egg boxes, food packaging, magazines, etc. and it all gets added to the compost heap where it rots down very quickly if it is kept moist (as a compost heap should be kept - nothing rots if it is dry).

Thick cardboard packaging is much more of a problem, being too solid to go through the paper shredder. So for this, we tear it into small pieces (watching television at the same time makes it less boring), soak it in a bucket of water for a day, and then add the whole lot to the compost heap. We have been really surprised at the way in which paper and cardboard adds effectively to the volume of the heap - and reduces the content of our recycling bin. Every bit of cardboard, from anything, gets used. We have always kept a bin under the sink for fruit and vegetable peelings, tea bags, coffee grounds, used paper towels etc. and this all gets added to the mixture too.

In the first year after planting the garden did not provide much for the compost heap, but now that the new planting is getting established, there is also now a better supply of prunings, deadheadings, fallen leaves, and the results of Chelsea-chopping. Come the winter, and the cutting back of perennials, there will be plenty to add to the compost heap along with the grass clippings, paper and cardboard. All of the green material is chopped up using our Jakoti shears, and this helps significantly in speeding up the rotting process - and all of the woody prunings go through our Bosch electric shredder.

The secret to an effective compost heap is plenty of variety and a good volume of ingredients - very hard to achieve in a small garden. We have had to adapt our methods, but seem to have found a way to maximise the very real benefits.



Our 2nd of November event was a talk by Nigel Hopes who gave us an illustrated talk on 'Winter in Bloom'. Nigel is Head Gardener at John Massey's garden at Ashwood Nurseries, and he showed a wide range of plants which can be used to enhance the appearance of a garden in winter.

### **NEXT CLUB EVENT - Wednesday 7th December 2022 at 7:30pm**

Following a brief AGM, our speaker for the December meeting is Adrian James who will give us a talk entitled 'Folklore and More'. Adrian is a skilled photographer, and with his wife Sheila, he has created a beautiful garden in Offchurch, packed with interesting and unusual plants.

The subject for the monthly competition is 'Berries' and will be judged by our speaker.

Membership of the Gardening Club is currently by £5.00 annual subscription which becomes due on 1st January each year. Please make cheques payable to 'Stock and Bradley Gardening Club'. We welcome new members to join us at any time throughout the year.

*Club meetings are normally held on the first Wednesday of each month at the Village Hall, Church Road, Bradley Green starting at 7.30pm, and are free to members for an annual subscription of £5.00 for 2022. Visitors are made very welcome and may attend for £3.00 per meeting.*

*If you require any further information, ring Dinny Pynsent (Secretary) on 01527 821355 or Rob Cole (Chairman) on 07544 832052.*

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## Feckenham Village Shop - Alan Slater

Let's start with some seasonal good news. Within two weeks of our Feckenham Christmas Card going on sale, we've already sold well over half of the initial stock and we may have to place another order if demand continues. The card can only be purchased at the Shop and if you haven't seen it, it depicts the Village in a lovely festive setting with a view of the High Street and the Square. It is ideal for sending to distant friends and relatives as it illustrates the attractiveness of our village so I'll be sending mine to my close family in New York and Indiana.

Also selling well are the beautiful hand knitted, hats, socks and gloves made by one of our Volunteers, Margaret Green. If knitting ever becomes an Olympic Sport then Margaret would certainly win a gold medal! Every year she produces an array of items for sale with all the proceeds being sent to Project Morogoro in East Africa to provide children with some of the basics of life such as clean water and an education.

Although we have enjoyed an excellent half year of trading (April – October) the Shop is experiencing some difficulties with the availability of product supplies and rising wholesale costs. We are endeavouring to absorb the product increases as much as possible but it is inevitable that some these increases will have to be passed on if the Shop is to remain in a profitable and therefore viable position. You can, however, be assured that any increases will be kept to an absolute minimum. The Board is very aware that your shop exists not only to provide the Village with a retail facility but also to act as a social hub that invests heavily in community events and organisations. There's no doubt that 2023 will be a challenging year for us as we anticipate a massive increase in overheads, but with your continued support and custom I am confident that we will be able to successfully manage the twelve months ahead.

Anyhow that's for next year so let me finish on a more upbeat note. By the time you read this, we will have the Shop ready for Christmas. Although I can't



guarantee any baked beans being in stock (apparently there is a national shortage) we will have plenty of cards, wrapping paper, delicious deli items and of course an excellent range of alcoholic beverages. We are finalising our holiday opening hours but there will be no need for you to make an emergency dash to the supermarket should you run out of supplies. Come and see us first. Alternatively escape any unwanted visitors and join us for a delicious hot chocolate and a chat with our lovely Volunteers.



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## Feckenham Cricket Club - Bob Gordon

The club was visited by a representative of the company that has been selected as the preferred supplier of twin-lane artificial practice nets at the top of the field. Groundworks and security options were discussed.

An inspection by a firm of tree surgeons has advised that the ash tree adjacent to the clubhouse on the car park side has die-back and should be removed, Redditch Borough Council has confirmed that there is no preservation order and that they have no objection to this taking place. Plans are being drawn up and it is believed that the work can be largely carried out from the club's car park area.

On that visit, there was discussion regarding a large bough from a second ash tree (by the pedestrian entrance) which is now crossing Mill Lane and descending into a neighbour's garden. It was agreed that this should be cut back and this will take place in the same day, probably in early December.

The annual Firework Night took place on November 5<sup>th</sup> on mild and dry(ish) conditions after earlier rain. A good crowd turned out and enjoyed both the huge bonfire and

the rather splendid firework display, which was expertly delivered by a returning Lewis Stacey and his sons Sam and Josh.

Thanks are extended to Tom Edwards for his permission to use an adjacent field for parking.

New grass is developing well on the renovated square and it received its first cut in early November.

The soccer World Cup starts imminently and the club will be open for all home nation matches and for many others – view our Facebook page for more information.

Finally, a quiz night is being planned for January.



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