

# FECKENHAM

April 2021

News



Published by Feckenham Church for the Village

Editor: Gilly Cooper and Sasha Furey

[feckenhamnews@gmail.com](mailto:feckenhamnews@gmail.com)

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# Feckenham News in April

## Editor's Note

Villagers, I hope that you will bear with me as your new editor. I want the magazine to be relevant to as many as possible. You may gradually note a few changes. This month as we tentatively move from lockdown, there's lots to report, many articles have been sent in, so we have more pages for you to dip into. We are changing to colour throughout as well as trying a new printer. I hope this goes smoothly. For now Sasha Furey is there in the background being very helpful.

Please contact me if you have anything you'd like to have included in the magazine the more people that are involved, the better it will be.

Good luck to all as more are vaccinated and we begin a look forward to a more normal summer.

Gilly

## Dates for your diary

April 8th Book Club  
15th Parish Council Meeting

June 26th Horse Show

August 7-14th "Wake up Feckenham Festival"  
More details next month

## Production Team

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## Front Cover

The church seen from Mill Lane by the editor

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.

# April Church Services

## PARISH CHURCH of ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Priest-in-charge: Rev Wyn Beynon 07595313035

Church Warden: Ann Mathews 892180

Please contact Wyn for Weddings, Baptisms & Funerals at [wynbeynon@gmail.com](mailto:wynbeynon@gmail.com) or Ann at [ann@the-madison-group.co.uk](mailto:ann@the-madison-group.co.uk)

Church Website: [achurchnearyou.com/church/18729](http://achurchnearyou.com/church/18729) Email: [info@feckenhamchurch.org.uk](mailto:info@feckenhamchurch.org.uk)

Wychbrook Website: <http://www.wychebrook.co.uk>

There will be a service on zoom every Sunday at 11.00am. Please phone Ann Mathews for details 892180 or e-mail [ann@the-madison-group.co.uk](mailto:ann@the-madison-group.co.uk) for the link to join.



Due to the ongoing pandemic we are still not able to say whether there will be any services in church in April. Up-to-date information can be found on the church noticeboard at the end of Church Walk and on the church website [www.achurchnearyou.com/church/18729](http://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/18729)



If you would like to be kept up to date on events in the church and would like to join our email mailing list please send your details to [jeff@the-madison-group.co.uk](mailto:jeff@the-madison-group.co.uk)

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

There is a live-streamed Mass on Sundays at 4.30pm. Fr. Tony Rohan will officiate. The link is: [www.eventcast.uk/live](http://www.eventcast.uk/live)

Note: Type the link into your browser on your computer.



Fr. Anthony Rohan, The Presbytery, Redditch. Tel 63096  
Local contact: Phylis Mott, Feckenham. Tel 893898

# Newshound

Jen Cary



Welcoming some more new arrivals to our village

Chris and Claire Loxton, along with their trusty Collie, Fly, moved into The Bird House on the Droitwich Road back in September. Their tenancy at a cottage in Tardebigge was coming to an end and they were thrilled when this house in Feckenham became available. They have been overwhelmed by the friendly welcome they received.

Chris, at 67, is happily retired, having been gainfully employed since a mere lad. His big passion is music and he spends many hours singing and playing guitar to an imaginary audience in the kitchen!

Claire, a tad younger at 55, is a postwoman in Bromsgrove. When not pounding the streets she can usually be found pottering around the garden and is excited about putting her 'stamp' on their new plot!

Being inherently nosy, Fly likes watching passersby through the gate but is equally content inspecting her eyelids and dreaming of gravy bones!

Some of you regularly see Chris out and about with Fly though they are both really looking forward to socialising with

you all at the local hostelryes and much anticipated events.

Emily and Jonathan Peters moved from Hertfordshire to Berrow Hill Lane in October.

Emily is a diagnostic medical professional and Jonathan has worked in the IT & publishing sectors, taught in secondary education, and, more recently, in national politics & chemistry. Their daughters, Harriet and Eleanor, work in the veterinary and forensic sectors. They enter their horses in competitions and are happy to have found a home for them on Berrow Hill Lane.

Sophie & Will, are in their early thirties and moved into Old Berrowhill Farm (Stuart and Val Mobberley's old house) at the end of last year. Will is originally from the local area and used to play for the juniors at Feckenham CC. Sophie is from North Yorkshire.

They said, "We moved into the village at the end of last year and we're so happy to be here! We've spent the last few years living in the Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham. It's fantastic to be surrounded by such beautiful countryside and we can't wait for the Summer! We look forward to meeting more people in the village as the lockdown starts to lift."

## Thought for the Month

Rev. Wyn Beynon

Dear Friends,

Happy Easter! Easter is right at the start of the month so I can safely start with that.

Spring has sprung and change is in the air. Little by little we are edging toward the Covid end-game, unless something really catastrophic happens. But something catastrophic has happened. We have damaged the environment of our planet to point where unless huge and drastic changes are made the damage is irreversible.

We cannot return to normal. Normal has left the building, and we need to be thinking about what a new normal might look like in the view of what we experienced over the past year. We have worked through a pandemic. But at the same time we have been reminded from time time (but not nearly enough) that climate change is set to kill human beings in tens of millions over the next 20 years. It will start slowly.

The Church of England has set itself the target of being a net zero carbon emitter by 2030. It is ambitious, though for church buildings it is achievable. But simply being carbon zero is not nearly enough. We have to change the whole way we look at the world, what we expect from life and how we understand beside things like the acquisition of material things. At a

recent debate about this I heard older people say that we need to get young people to step up. But that's a cop-out. Nobody under 25 has any financial clout at all, as my generation of 60+ has ensured that the financial power remains with us in our index linked pension pots. It's up to the oldies to change, and not think we can leave it to the next generation.

And it is not just about recycling and green energy, important as those things are. It is about a complete change of mind.

Am I hopeful that we will? No. What follows from that is unthinkable, but it's time to think the unthinkable because those of us who are over 55 have left our children and grandchildren an earth sized mess. Are we sorry? No, because it wasn't our fault. We are the generation who have never shouldered the responsibility for anything. That was the real result of the liberal 1960s and Thatcherite self interest. They turned out to have been identical. "Look after number 1" has been the real national anthem of the UK for a very long time. And once again the wheels turn and Good Friday confronts us with the cost of walking away from hard choices. Thankfully the Good News is that God loves even so. And we start, all over again, from there.

Best wishes,

Wyn

## The Village Shop Alan Slater



Hurrah!! at last some good lockdown news.

We are looking forward to the Glorious Twelfth, no NOT the start of the grouse shooting season but April 12<sup>th</sup> when we can resume our outdoor café service. So we will soon putting out the tables and chairs again and hoping for some decent weather. No doubt there will be some April showers to contend with but the new canopy will keep you dry. Wrap up warm, come along and enjoy a leisurely cup of freshly ground coffee and a slice of delicious home made cake .

We are expecting to be busy during the next few months so we are on the lookout for additional help to add to our existing team of friendly volunteers. Helping out at the Shop is a great way to become involved in the Village and make a positive contribution to our Community. It's also good fun being part of a team and takes only two to three hours of your time each week. If you would like to know a little more about what is involved just drop by for a chat. We would love to see you .

Apart from being an essential amenity , the Shop also makes a substantial contribution towards the continued enhancement of our village. I recently reported that as a result of our healthy balance sheet we were able to commit a substantial amount towards the funding of the forthcoming Feckenham Bio-Diversity Project. This month we

have been able to financially assist the Parish Council with the cost of replacing three large floral planters at the junction of the High St and Droitwich Road. We will also be providing ongoing sponsorship for their maintenance to ensure that they remain an attractive feature that can be enjoyed by villagers and visitors all year round .

As you may already be aware, it's the Board's policy to provide financial support wherever practically possible for projects and events that enhance our village but none of this would be possible without your continued support for the Shop. Hopefully I will be able to announce more good news regarding some further developments next month. In the meantime, however, don't forget that we have in stock a range of Easter goodies as well as everything to meet most of your daily household needs.

Remember to Shop Safe by Supporting your Village Shop .



## WREN & BRAMBLE

Taking orders for Easter  
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## Feckenham Village Hall Ian Bellion

### COMING SOON?

As we go to press it appears that the Hall will remain completely closed until mid-April. At that time it is hoped that the new Nursery will open on a limited basis. Other activities will not be permitted until May 17th when limited indoor activities with social distancing may be able to restart. This all depends on the Government's "roadmap" remaining on schedule - things may change at short notice.

To enquire about activities and booking at the Hall please contact Liz Teisen, our Booking Secretary, on 01527 891233. There will also be updated information on the Hall's website at [www.feckhall.org](http://www.feckhall.org)

### DRAW

The Village Hall's Improvement Fund Draw for March 2021 was made at the meeting of The Trustees on 2nd February.

### Winners:

183	Penny Swinson	£25
154	Mark & Lisa Hackett	£15
109	Susan Lisle	£10

## Square Management Committee



### TREE SAFETY

Contractors have now completed tree safety works on The Square. Checks were carried out last autumn to identify any problems that might have been a threat to public safety. Minor issues were found and these have now been dealt with. The next inspection will take place in three years' time.

### FREE RIDES

The Square is maintained by volunteers. One of the jobs the volunteers undertake is the mowing of the grass during the summer. The Committee has a snazzy ride-on mower for the purpose and is happy to offer anyone who can spare the time a free ride on this souped up machine....and the opportunity to keep our village green spruced up as an added bonus. If you'd like to take up this exceptional offer please contact Ian Ridley on 01527 894010.

## Book Club



Gabriel Garcia Marquez's short stories, *Strange Pilgrims*, went down pretty well, enjoyed largely for their strangeness and prose. Those who found it didn't hit the spot were more dissatisfied with short story form and maybe the strangeness didn't work.

Next meeting is 8th April to discuss Sebastian Barry's - *Days Without End*

### **HELP FOR YOU if you are self-isolating**

**From Volunteers Co-ordinated by Feckenham Facebook Group & Parish Council**

A group of local volunteers from the village are available to assist you with PICKING UP SHOPPING, or POSTING MAIL, picking up URGENT SUPPLIES (including medications) or just having a FRIENDLY PHONE CALL during this challenging time when many people are being advised to self-isolate if they are either vulnerable or ill.

If you would like some help then please contact JANE BULL, Clerk to Feckenham Parish Council either on **892522** or [clerk.feckenhamp@feckenham.com](mailto:clerk.feckenhamp@feckenham.com) and we will be in touch (& the help is free!). Any goods will be left on your doorstep. More updates on our local radio: [swansbrook.com](http://swansbrook.com)

NOTE: Coronavirus is contagious. Please take every precaution to ensure you are spreading only kindness - Avoid physical contact (keep at least 2m distance from others) and Wash your hands regularly

## Village Notices

### Possible Village Tennis Club

I would like to gauge interest in establishing a tennis club in the village. If you like the idea please email [FeckenhamTennis@Gmail.com](mailto:FeckenhamTennis@Gmail.com) to express your interest.

If you could say whether you are interested in helping set up a club or simply interested in playing that would be helpful.

Setting up a club is likely to involve fund raising (the National Lottery maybe) and a lot of hard work. It will also be very rewarding and should be a wonderful asset to our lovely village.

John O'Brien

### Footpaths

I would like to give a 'thumbs up' in Feckenham News to Lionel Hill for repairing the frequently used stile at the back of Winfield's between Winfield's and Dunstall Court at the end of the footbridge.

I reported it as extremely dangerous to Bob Gordon, ex footpath warden (I say ex because he has sadly recently resigned as footpath warden after doing a great job for a number of years). He dropped Lionel an email and within a couple of days 'voilà'

Ivor Mason

### World War II Project

Life in Feckenham during World War Two

Following on from the history of WW1 in the village that was done a couple of

years ago, I am gathering information for a similar history of the village in WW2. If you or your family lived here then - or you have useful information - please contact me.

Steve Fletcher

01527 271234

[steve.fletcher100.sf@gmail.com](mailto:steve.fletcher100.sf@gmail.com)

### Welcome to Birdlife

In the churchyard, if you look carefully you might see that two owl boxes, a sparrow terrace, a swift box and several boxes for smaller birds have been put up. They were donated by Severn Waste as part of their environmental remit. We are hopeful that we may be in time for this year's nesting season. This fits in nicely with the wider Biodiversity project which is ongoing in the churchyard and elsewhere in the village.

### Introducing...

I hope this will become a regular feature the magazine. I intend to ask a series of questions of people who have grown up in the village or arrived here to find out about their experience of life in Feckenham, why they left or why they came here.

Some of them, like my first introduction, Imogen Morris - see page 19 - are at the start of their careers and others may be much further along their life's journey.

If you know someone with an interesting story to tell, please contact me, the editor, by email [feckenhamnews@gmail.com](mailto:feckenhamnews@gmail.com)



## HERE TO HELP

Feckenham's award winning radio station is soldiering on through pandemics and lockdowns - perhaps the only Feckenham entertainment organisation that has been able to operate throughout the crisis. Now there is the prospect of things opening up again and Swansbrook is ready to help. If you're involved in something or know of an activity that's planning to restart just let us know and we'll spread the good news.

Don't forget that we can be heard anywhere in the world (with the possible exception of North Korea) so if you'd like to send messages to friends or relatives in far flung outposts of the Empire (or even in Redditch) all you have to do is drop us an email.

An email to [radio@swansbrook.com](mailto:radio@swansbrook.com) will do the trick.

## IT'S YOUR CHOICE

Every month Chris Fletcher presents a programme of beautiful music in Classical Swansbrook. April's selection has been entirely chosen by listeners. Chris asked people to chose their favourite pieces of classical music and she was deluged with

suggestions - sufficient for two programmes. All of our presenters would be delighted to play your requests - however obscure they may be. We're able to draw upon the resources of a huge music library so we're rarely stumped. Just email us at [radio@swansbrook.com](mailto:radio@swansbrook.com) and we'll get searching.

## LISTEN TO THE SWANS

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

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## The FeckenOdeon Cinema Society



### PERHAPS....

Last Spring the FeckenOdeon's team prepared a full programme of films for its 20th Season - planned to run from September to April... and we all know what happened to that! With the thought that things may just be creeping back to normal by September this year, we're very tentatively looking at a programme starting in September this year. Given the chaos that currently prevails in the film distribution industry, this may not be easy - but we'll have a go.

We'll post any developments on our website at [www.fecknodeon.co.uk](http://www.fecknodeon.co.uk)



As I write, the ground has (mostly) dried out enough and early March saw the "square" have its first cut of the year, with rolling starting a week later. The outfield was cut for the first time which saw our "new" Land Rover towing our refurbished 3-mower "gang" around the field.

An interesting feature of our wicket roller is that the front and rear rollers are hollow and can be filled with water to add weight as the square dries out and hardens over the season. So, we drain the water before its first use.

Junior fixtures are being finalised and matches will take place early evening on weekdays and others on Sunday mornings and afternoons. Wednesday evening is mostly reserved for the Feckenham Ramblers, a mix of Feckenham players and friends who play friendlies.

Registration for the ECB's "All Stars" program for 5-8 year olds should now be open – connect to <https://www.ecb.co.uk/play/all-stars>. All Stars introduces young children to the game of cricket in a safe and fun way.

The cost is £40 for eight sessions that will run on Thursday evenings at the club, starting on May 13th at 6pm. Every participating child will receive a backpack, including:

- Backpack
- Cricket bat
- Cricket ball
- Personalised t-shirt with your child's name

Early sign-ups will also receive a cap (new participants only)

Feckenham Cricket club operates to ECB safeguarding policies and all coaches are DBS-checked. If you have any questions, please email the club at [feckenhamcc@outlook.com](mailto:feckenhamcc@outlook.com).

Upcoming senior fixtures at Mill Lane (12:30 start):

- Sat April 10<sup>th</sup> - Bromsgrove (Friendly) - 1<sup>st</sup> team
- Sat April 17<sup>th</sup> - Burghill & Tillington - 1<sup>st</sup> team
- Sat April 24<sup>th</sup> - Cutnall Green 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> team
- Sat May 1<sup>st</sup> - Coombs Wood - 1<sup>st</sup> team

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## MEDIEVAL MOATED SITE – WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

After the update on the village archaeology project in last month's issue, there follows below a brief "potted history" of Feckenham's moated medieval manor.

The site is now the village recreation ground at the top of The Square and the moat itself still exists, hidden in the trees. For most of the year, it is a dry ditch, but occasionally, after heavy rain, it does take on the appearance of what we all imagine a moat should really look like!

The site is first documented in a land charter dated AD 802 and then appears in the Domesday Book as the manor of Feckenham, continuing to be used by royalty hunting in the forest until the building was sold for demolition in 1356.

Thereafter, the site had various uses including a courthouse, a prison and a schoolhouse. In 1629 the Royal Forest of Feckenham was "disafforested" and little is known of its subsequent history, although during the reign of Charles II tobacco was planted on the former site of the manor and apparently grew very well!

The site was listed as a Scheduled Ancient Monument in 1949, meaning it is nationally important and is protected for the benefit of current and future generations. It is currently described as "at risk" in Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register which led to the establishment of the Community

Archaeology Project and the recent completion of the Conservation Management Plan to ensure that the site is maintained and protected going forward.

So, what does a Scheduled Ancient Monument signify? Well, it means that it is a criminal offence to destroy or damage it or to carry out any works without Scheduled Monument Consent. In addition, the use of metal detecting is illegal without written consent from Historic England, as is removal of any objects found. This is why it may



appear that there are a lot of rules and regulations around the site, but they are to protect the archaeology that may be hidden beneath the ground.

The Archaeology Group hope to carry on their research about the moated manor and surrounding areas and to organise an exhibition to provide villagers with more information about the site once Covid 19 restrictions allow, as the above is just a very brief outline of what we have already discovered!

## Feckenham Parish Council

### Jane Bull

The Parish Council met on 4th March by video conference.

- CCTV: Rachel Nicholls, Lifeline and CCTV Manager from the Borough Council attended the meeting to give an update. The Lifeline service helps people to continue living safely and independently within their own homes. Parishioners can enquire about the service on 01527 534060 or email [contact@newlifeline.org.uk](mailto:contact@newlifeline.org.uk)
- Dog Bins: There were requests for additional dog waste bins possibly along the Droitwich road. The Clerk will make a repeat request to the Borough Council.
- Flooding: The flooding around Astwood Lane and Swansbrook was discussed in detail. The Parish Council has been working with landowners and other agencies to find a solution and it is expected that action will be taken soon.
- Playground: Enquiries have been made about upgrading the children's play area. RBC Leader was looking into this.
- Footpaths: The appointment of a Parish Footpath Warden had been delayed by Covid but it was hoped

that the new Warden would be in post soon

- Planters: Three new planters to replace the damaged ones on the corner of Droitwich Road and High Street have now been delivered. The purchase was made possible by a generous donation from The Village Shop. The Shop has also offered an annual donation towards the costs of new plants. Thanks must also go to David Rowe who designed the planters. Thanks also to Scott and Tracey Cater for providing a skip for the rubbish and lastly the willing group of gardeners who have made them come alive- including J. Underwood, J. Hooker, D & G Rowe and J Bull.
- County Councillor: Jane Potter would not be standing for reelection. The Parish Council thanked her for all her help and support.

To read the full minutes of Parish Council Meetings you can go to [www.feckenham.com](http://www.feckenham.com) and select the Parish Council tab. Draft minutes are also posted on the notice board at the Turton Gardens junction. The next Meeting of the Council will be on Thursday, April 15th at 7.30pm.

To contact the Council call the Parish Clerk, Jane Bull, on 01527 892522 or email [clerk.feckenhampc@feckenham.com](mailto:clerk.feckenhampc@feckenham.com)

## Feckenham WI

### Linda Harris

It is now a year since the last meeting of Feckenham WI and how times have changed! During the easing of restrictions last year we had a garden meeting for members (social distancing guidelines adhered to) and all members enjoyed an afternoon of catching up with friends. We also organised several walks of limited numbers for members to enjoy and we have kept in touch with members via telephone and email. As a number of the current members do not have access to computers, we have not run virtual meetings during the pandemic. However, for those with IT capability, there has been the option to join virtual events on Zoom organised by the Worcestershire Federation of WIs (WFWI) or to sign up for a "Denman at Home" courses via Zoom eg cookery and craft demonstrations and talks on subjects such as history, health and fashion.

Sadly the number of members in Feckenham WI has dwindled over recent years and numbers have now reduced to the point where the village WI is no longer viable. We have lost two members over the last few months – Jane and Oliver White who have moved to be nearer their son and very sadly Sheena Shale, who passed away very unexpectedly in January. Both were active committee members, Jane was Secretary (Oliver occasional photographer) and this key position has not yet been filled.

We will reach a milestone of 102 years in April but unless we can attract new

members, the Feckenham WI will have to close. The WI has been an integral part of village life since its inception and to lose a longstanding organisation that is part of the village would be very sad. Over the years we have risen to challenges new and old, being a great support to country folk during the Second World War, eg providing canning facilities, and over the years running the teas at the Garden and Flower Festival. WI is not just for monthly meetings but garden visits, theatre visits, social outings, seeing friends and for those who live on their own, a time to talk – the telephone is a good communicator but not the same as talking face to face.

Feckenham WI is part of the National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI) and the Worcestershire Federation of WIs. A membership subscription is paid annually and the new membership year will start from April 2021. The subscription fee is set by the NFWI and is made up of three parts – this year £12.10 will go to the NFWI, £10.30 will go to the WFWI and £21.60 would normally go to the WI group, making a total of £44.00. As the NFWI is concerned that some members have felt a lack of a "full WI experience" over the last 12 months, a new initiative has been launched to allow each WI greater flexibility over the subscription to be charged and, in line with this, Feckenham WI has agreed to waive its share of the annual subscription fee and charge just £22.40 to existing members and any new members who wish to join – this represents the amounts to be paid to NFWI and WFWI and will cover the cost of the services they provide, The WI Life magazine, newsletters, etc.

The national organisation - the NFWI - health and ending violence against women. To find out more about the WI, please refer to the WI website: <https://www.thewi.org.uk> or the Worcestershire Federation website: <https://worcestershirewi.org.uk/>. Should anyone be interested in joining Deckenham WI, please phone me on 01527 892850.

of activities and to campaign on issues that matter to them and their communities. Current campaigns include the importance of cervical screening, climate change, work to alleviate loneliness, support for mental

We have to be optimistic and work on the principle that times will get better and we will be able to meet friends again in person in the not too distant future.

### [Community First's oil buying group.](#)

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Community First is a long established charity, in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, with aims to support strong and vibrant rural communities.

In 2013, we set up a bulk buying group for heating oil for anyone in the two counties. The scheme keeps money in the local economy, builds a greater sense of community and cooperation and helps tackle fuel poverty. Over the years, with hundreds of members, we have saved many thousands of pounds across both counties.

How does it work?

At the end of each month we collate orders placed by our members and negotiate with a number of suppliers. Our savings are often between 2p and 4p a litre against the average English price and can be much more against local individual quotes. Our prices are the same for 500 as for 1500 which is good for spreading your costs.

To register your interest or ask a question please contact [info@comfirst.org.uk](mailto:info@comfirst.org.uk) or ring Richard on 07515 881231.

Membership costs £20 per year. We are very happy to work with established local groups too for instance by sharing good practice and energy efficiency tips.

More details can be found at [www.comfirst.org.uk](http://www.comfirst.org.uk)

Finally after wishing children and families 'Merry Christmas' back on 17th December 2020, we have been able to say, ' Hello and welcome back!' to our whole school family. It has been a reunion much anticipated and it did not disappoint! We had a full complement of pupils and with little, if any persuasion that it was a good day, a day of joy and hope.

Like all schools across the country, we remained open with all staff on site delivering live teaching for key workers' children and those that are more vulnerable whilst also setting home learning and regularly 'zooming' with those at home. It has been a challenge especially in the first few weeks as no one expected primary schools to close but we made it through what became an organic response to the changing needs of our families. Now that particular challenge is over it makes us all the more appreciative of our classrooms being full again.

It must be said that all our parents and carers deserve huge recognition for coping with home-schooling for such a long period. Many have juggled working from home with teaching their child/ children at the same time. This I can assure you is not an easy ask and we salute the efforts that families have gone to maintain a happy home atmosphere during what has been at times, a very dark period. We have been touched by the positive messages sent to staff over the past few months via our online learning platform and thank our families for being just as supportive in lockdown as they are in regular times.

The next few weeks and months will allow us to get all our children back on track with their learning and progress. Positivity is the key here. Our Christian values will play a huge part in forging forward and as our school mission statement states, 'with God we grow to live life in all its fullness'. With prayer, hope and determination we shall succeed.

We do send our gratitude to all the NHS workers who have, and continue to work tirelessly for us all during this time. Our prayers are with them.

Lesser celandine - this one from Poplars Lane but they are popping up on verges and lawns all over the place. As one of the first flowers after winter, they are important to bees and they may be named after the Greek word 'chelidon' - swallow - because they flower when swallows return. The bulbous roots were used to make tea which was said to cure haemorrhoids! Hence the country names 'Spring Messenger' and 'Pilewort'.





Pussy Willow found in Poplars Lane in Late February. Also known as Great Sallow or Goat Willow. These are the early male flowers. Mature wood was used for hurdles and fences and fresh growth as osiers for basketry. Apparently, sprays are carried on Palm Sunday in countries too far north to find palm fronds, and 'To wear the willow' traditionally means to go into mourning, especially for a sweetheart.

A Special Parish Meeting was held on 15th March to allow Parishioners to ask questions about and pass comment on two matters:

**Football:** A proposal had been received to allow football matches to be played until the end of June in order that teams could make up for matches lost due to the pandemic. There is an agreement in place that means that goalposts are usually taken down at the end of April. Concerns were expressed about the impact on residents particularly in relation to traffic, parking and bad language. The organisers had arranged alternative parking and offered to try to get players and attendees to tone down their language. It was understood that this year would be regarded as exceptional and that, if an extension was granted, it would not establish a precedent for future seasons.

**Greener Grid Park:** A planning application had been submitted for the construction for a battery unit to be built on land adjacent to the National Grid switching station on Astwood Lane. Parishioners expressed many concerns including safety, effect on the Green Belt, noise and construction traffic. The Parish Council would be working with Borough Councillors to clarify many issues. Parishioners were urged to view the plans on the Borough Council's website and make comments or objections as soon as possible. (Search for "Redditch Borough Council Planning", select "View and Comment on Planning Applications" and enter reference number 21/00195).

## Introducing... Imogen Morris

Imogen grew up at Moors Lane in Feckenham, moving out to study Fine Arts and Art History at Kingston University. She returned to her parents for a while and finally moved out permanently 3 years ago because she was then able to rent her own place. She said that she wanted to live near her friends close to Birmingham commenting, "When you get to your twenties you get the itch to be elsewhere. Feckenham is lovely but I felt a real pull to be a part of the hustle and bustle of Birmingham."



She has been living in the same flat in Kings Heath for 3 years now. Asked about what she's doing she said, "I'm currently working as an artist. I have been since January 2021, so I'm in the early stages of this venture! I make portraits out of thread and nails, although I have started branching out to new subjects like landscapes, and dog portraits. I quit my job as a Youth Worker at the end of December, saved a bit of money, and I am now pursuing

an art career. It's been a bit of an uphill battle but very exciting and I wouldn't want to be doing anything else.

I asked her about her favourite memories of the village. "Living on an old farm up a lane was really good I spent my childhood mainly outdoors, playing on my parents' land and cycling up and down Moors Lane. Also working at the Lygon Arms – it's changed hands numerous times, but throughout the years I loved working there. We worked so hard but also built up a real community- some of my closest friends are those that I met through working at the Lygon.

She has particularly fond memories of people who supported and were inclusive of the young people in the village "Mr Mott and Paul Cotton running Youth Club then Liz Teisen and Mrs Moyes taking over. Of course her parents ran Junior Youth Club for a long time too. The Barratts ran Youth Zone, Vicky Butler and the pantomimes, Claire Fury and the choir – there was so much to do in the village as a kid and we were really encouraged to be adventurous, imaginative and creative."



# Farewell to Jane and Oliver White

As our former editor and her husband move away, I asked a few villagers, Phyllis and Michael Mott, Ann Matthews, Janie Anderson, Jilly and David Rowe as well as Marion and Peter Chute for their favourite memories of the couple. Here are a few their comments:

“Oliver was a witty and entertaining neighbour who kept a racing car in his sitting room. In due course our two boys went to see him race. The car might sometimes finish! He was hospitable, producing an excellent cod Portugaise. He was an essential part of village pantomimes in the glory days of Frances Andrews and the Butler family: but his finest performance was as one of the sinister hooded priests in Frances’ unforgettable production of T.S.Elliot’s Murder in the Cathedral.”

“Jane, a domestic genius who could cook, make marmalade, sew and arrange flowers like few other people, a member of Feckenham WI for about 40 years joining when it was in danger of folding. The rest is history. Over the years Jane held various roles including President, Vice President and Secretary. A great cook and craftswoman: there are several items in the church that she had a hand in making.

She was a founder member of the Lunch Club which met monthly to serve a hot lunch to older residents of the village. Her puddings and casseroles always went down well. Oliver particularly enjoyed puddings with custard as Jane wasn’t in the habit of making custard at home. She offered her skills as a school cook in 1984

when Feckenham Primary ceased to provide cooked meals. Numerous charity banquets were held in the school hall where Jane would cook and Oliver be one of the waiters - dressed appropriately in white bow tie and tails!”

“Oliver was one of the founders of Feckenham Readers Group which has been around for over 20 years. He was a regular and his often controversial opinions always meant that the group had lively and animated evenings. He’ll certainly be much missed and his ‘worst month of my life’ will resound into the future! Also a member of the team that put the FeckenOdeon Cinema together. Memories of those early days include all the hard work that we had to do to build the infrastructure of the Cinema. It was a bit of a slog at times but we’ll never forget him sawing some wood in the Village Hall, complaining how hard it was and triumphantly finishing only to find that he had sawed off the corner of the table! It made our day.”

“Described as a perfectionist in everything she did: needlepoint, flower arranging so beautifully done, time no object. Cooked to perfection. The coat hangers she did for The WI Christmas sale...was on the doorstep otherwise they would disappear in a trice; on top of that a really good brain, and an interesting lady. Oliver, a real village man. Loved his Swansbrook interview with Paul Furey...who never got a word in edgeways! Again a character. Frankly I can’t think how the village will manage without them...how we will miss them.”

## Bell Ringing, Sir Tom and the Clock Angela Fletcher and John Eaton

For those who heard and wondered why a solitary bell rang out for several minutes at 12 noon on Saturday 27 February, it was the day of Captain Sir Tom Moore's funeral. Ringers in many towers around the country tolled a bell 100 times to honour his life and the amazing fund-raising he did for the NHS in the run up to his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday last year. Tolling is ringing a single bell slowly and historically has been associated with funerals. This was allowed under the Covid restrictions as only one person was needed to ring and a Feckenham ringer was very happy to join in with marking the occasion. In total some 350 towers around the country tolled a bell on the day of his funeral. Other towers in the Worcestershire included Bretforton, Bromsgrove, Chaddesley Corbett, Eckington, Kidderminster, Stoulton, Worcester Cathedral, Worcester All Saints and Wychbold.

Bell ringing is usually a very social activity with each bell needing a person to ring it. The layout of the ringing chamber and how the bell ropes hang down from the bells makes social distancing in most towers an impossibility. Therefore, tower ringing has been on hold since the start of the pandemic. Ringers all around the country are very much hoping they will soon be able to get back into towers to ring the bells in a more joyful way, although it will probably not be before all the restrictions are (hopefully) lifted in June.

When ringing does resume, we would welcome anybody that would like the chance to try a new hobby.

You may have noticed the church clock has not been working for the past 3 months. On Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February the Cumbria Clock engineer was able to visit the Tower and inspect the clock. There was no apparent reason for the clock stopping however we noticed that it had stopped at 05.25. A closer inspection of the hands showed that the minute hand fouled the hour hand each hour.

The hands have now been disconnected, parked at 12.00 and the clock left running so that it will chime the hours.

We are awaiting quotes for the next stage of the repair."



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We continue to make steady progress in creating increased bio-diversity around the Ancient Monument that is King John's Hunting Lodge, the Cricket Pitch and the Churchyard. In the Churchyard, we can report that several new nesting boxes have been put up. Donated by the RSPB to churches throughout Britain, we were able to claim several which Alan Moore has successfully installed. We have a new owl box, several smaller boxes (for tits, sparrows and the like) and some boxes placed under the eaves of the church for swallows and swifts. See if you can spot them.

The precise detail of the project is now being worked up particularly the seed planting for the flower meadow and the maintenance plan tree by tree so permissions can be applied for.

We are hoping to start the tree work once the nesting season is over and the bulk of the flower meadow preparation will be later in the year for next spring – in time for the Flower Festival, all being well.

We aim to create a website to show the exact detail very soon, so you can see the plans.

In the short to medium term, we are adopting a policy that every tree removed (we have five that need cutting down) will be replaced by a new one. Piles of wood will be created as 'bug hotels' to support insect and wildlife. Wherever possible we are going to replace non-native trees with native species and the largest specimens of the chosen types we can find, so that the wooded feel of the Churchyard won't

be lost but habitats for native species will be created. Worcestershire Wildlife trust are suggesting the following types to choose from:

Holly Ilex aquifolium – evergreen, can be easily pruned if required, wildtype not variegated.

English yew *Taxus baccata* – evergreen, traditional for churchyards, medium-large tree, very long-lived.

English oak *Quercus robur* – supports a huge number of species, large tree, very long-lived, needs plenty of space.

Crab apple *Malus sylvestris* – small/medium sized tree with blossom and fruit, plant a few different varieties.

Field maple *Acer campestre* – medium sized tree, nice colour in autumn.

Spindle *Euonymus europaeus* – brightly coloured small tree/shrub, bushy, better amongst other trees/in hedges.

Midland hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata* – lots of fruit and flowers, forms large shrub or small tree.

Wild cherry *Prunus avium* – fruits and flowers, medium/large tree.



Daffodils by Alan Jones' garden.  
Photo from Ian Bellion



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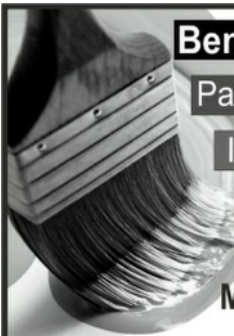
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