



# FECKENHAM

NEWS December 2021

Published by Feckenham Church for the Village

Editor: Gilly Cooper

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(Copy Date 14th)

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# Feckenham News in December

## In the magazine:

Look out for plans for Christmas in the village particularly Christmas Carols around the tree on Christmas Eve. Also, you'll see that Studley Day Time WI have invited those interested to join their group. Look out for an opportunity for young people to get involved with Swansbrook Radio.

## Dates for your diary



### December

1st	S&B Gardening Club
	Studley Lunch Time WI
5th	The Ghost of a Smile - Village Hall
7th	Lunch Club
	Feckenham Sessions
9th	Parish Council Surgery 2-4pm
	Book Club
24th	Carols on the Square 6.30pm
26th	Boxing Day Walk
27th	Local hero - Feckenodeon

### January

20th	Parish Council Surgery 7.30-9pm
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### Regular Sessions

Pilates	Thursdays
Feckenham Sessions	First Tuesday each month

## Production Team

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## Front Cover

Fireworks courtesy of  
Kathy Gee

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

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

## Editor's Note

There's a lot more going on in the village these days and I've also been really gratified to see that people are sending me articles and information for the magazine. I continue to want pieces about our small businesses as well as from the young people, and anything else you think might be of interest to villagers. If you aren't a writer, just send me an email and I can help. You will always have the last say on what goes to print. Bring it on!



Many of us took the opportunity to go to Ian Ridley and Julian Bull's exhibition which was spectacular and also raised a phenomenal £2000+ for charity. Well done them. Next up was the Cricket Club's Bonfire and Firework Display. Fantastically organised and well attended - even the weather was kind to us. Of course, we have had Remembrance Day. Who would not be moved by the sound of the bugle at 11am on Remembrance Sunday?

Next, I'm looking forward to Christmas Carols on the village green. The tree, this year, has been kindly sourced and donated Brett and Sharon Lavin of Feckenham. Personally, my Christmas really starts at this event. Let's attend but keep ourselves safe by not getting too close to each other as we partake of

mulled wine and mince pies. How beautifully back to normal that will be.

Sometimes things just seem to line up and are a call to action. This month, by complete coincidence, the subject of disability and access are mentioned in the magazine. The Carter family have many years of caring for Cayla who is a long term wheelchair user. Though her mum, Rose, does not complain, she mentioned how difficult it is to get around the village or take longer walks safely with a wheelchair. Even getting on the recreation ground proves difficult from the car park. The impact is not just on Cayla, it meant her sister was also unable to see all of the 'wilder' parts of the village while she was young. We also have a letter from Mick Ralphs expressing his gratitude to all the villagers who help him as a recently disabled person.

I wonder how many other people with physical disability or parents with babies and toddlers have difficulties getting around the village. Is this something that we, as a community, should be thinking about and work towards improvements?

### **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.feckenham@feckenham.com](mailto:clerk.feckenham@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

## Square Management Committee



### BLOOMING LOVELY...

The Square's team of volunteers have replaced the flower tubs at the Mill Lane end of The Square and replanted them. Once again thanks are due to the good folks at Botany Bay Nurseries who donated the plants - we're most grateful and they look wonderful. Some of the older tubs were still useable and these have been re-sited at The Village Shop and at the post box corner.

### TREMENDOUS!

The Square will soon be graced by a 25ft Christmas tree. This is the gift of Brett and Sharon Lavin to whom we owe a debt of gratitude for their most generous gesture.

The tree will be erected by volunteers on the morning of Saturday, 4th December... and if you're feeling strong you might like to pop along to help. Just come to The Square at around 10am. It should only take an hour at most.

### CAROLS ARE ON!

Yes, Cinderella, you shall go to the ball and there will be Carols on The Square again this year! The popular Christmas Eve event, complete with mulled wine, mince pies and guaranteed snow, will swing into merry action at around 6.30pm when the festive lights will be ceremonially switched on - and enthusiastic carol singing will ensue. This year there'll even be a proper choir to lead the singing.

If you're new to the village do please come along - and bring your festive visitors too.

It's Feckenham's way of welcoming Christmas, so abandon the present wrapping, turkey stuffing and sprout peeling - come to The Square and enjoy a warm communal hour with your fellow Feckenhamsters. It's all free - provided by The Square Committee as our way of saying thank you for all the support the village gives us throughout the year. There'll be a bucket collection in aid of the Air Ambulance - so please be generous - you never know when you might need one!

### SPECTRE AT THE FEAST...

Of course, Covid-19 is still with us. Inevitably this event draws large numbers of people but there's plenty of space for you to spread out a little more than usual. The Committee will take obvious precautions - there'll be hand sanitiser on tap, volunteers will wear masks, food and drink will be portioned and on a self-service basis... but ultimately it's up to you to make sure you stay safe. We believe it's possible for all of us to enjoy a near normal celebration as long as we all use a bit of merry common sense!

CAROLS ON THE SQUARE - 24th DECEMBER - 6.30pm

## Christmas Lunch Club

This will be on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December at 12.30pm.

The lunch will be the usual Christmas extravaganza of turkey with all the trimmings.

If you wish to join the festivities please ring Ann on 892180.

## Letters

**W**e were saddened to hear that **Christian Forgaard** following a long illness, died on Friday, 22nd October. His family moved to live here from Norway and he practiced as a solicitor in Birmingham. He lived with Gloria and family at The Rookery, just on the Feckenham side of the boundary with Bradley Green.

Christian firmly believed that playing a part in the community was important. He made generous contributions in both villages. He was a governor of the village school, took part regularly at the school in "Open the Book" presentations and excelled standing in for Father Christmas, also at school. He regularly delivered the magazines in this locality until four weeks ago.

He much enjoyed living in this area and shared his enthusiasm for the local countryside and our location.

The Christian faith was of key importance to Christian and he played a most active part at both churches and he will be greatly missed.

Christian was a good man - generous, enthusiastic and contributed greatly.

To the family and from all of us who knew him, loved and admired him, we share the family's sadness.

John Calvert

**D**ear Friends,  
Melissa and I were delighted to be with so many at Feckenham for our delayed "farewell". It was a special service for us both (and a chance for Melissa to be a "real Deacon" after her ordination!). It was so good to see people without the square frame of the computer around their heads!. Your gifts to us were amazingly generous. The wine was an excellent choice and the cheque will ensure a holiday next year, we think!

Thank you so much for your friendship over the past 9 years and we take so many good and happy memories with us.

God's blessing be on us all!

with best wishes,

Melissa and Wyn

**D**ear Editor ,  
As a recently disabled person , I would like to comment on and praise the local businesses and organisations within Feckenham , for the efforts they are making to accommodate those of us with limited mobility. Life can be very restrictive when you are no longer fully mobile, so it is really appreciated when people go out of their way to make you feel normal again .

For example , I would like to say a big thank you to Volunteers at the Feckenodeon who have enabled me to enjoy evenings in the Village Hall by helping me to use the side entrance rather than having to navigate the difficult steps at the main entrance. They even allow me to bring my own chair and provide me with waiter service . The Village Shop is absolutely brilliant as the new terrace area has a disabled ramp which not only allows me access to the outside seating area, but also makes it so much easier for me to gain access to the main shop. The Rose and Crown provides me with a ramp when I visit so that I don't have to use the steps and the Lygon Arms have also been very helpful by allowing me easy access to their restaurant.

Although these changes may sound small and insignificant, for anyone using a walking frame or wheelchair, they make a huge difference.

So thank you to all those who are making life easier for the less abled.

Mick Ralphs .

# December 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:** [achurchnearyou.com/church/18729](http://achurchnearyou.com/church/18729)

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

5 <sup>th</sup> Dec	10.30am	Eucharist - Rev B Wheatley
12 <sup>th</sup> Dec	9.00am	BCP Eucharist- Rev B Wheatley
19 <sup>th</sup> Dec	6.30pm	Lessons and Carols
24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	4.00pm	Crib Service
	11.00pm	Midnight Mass
25 <sup>th</sup> Dec	10.30am	Christmas Eucharist – Rev B Wheatley
26 <sup>th</sup> Dec	10.30am	Eucharist and Carols at St George & St Matthias, Astwood Bank

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

The Mass service is held every Sunday at 10.15 am.

At the moment we are requested to wear masks during the service.

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 Glenn Writes...*

**A**s I sit in my study in the middle of a very wet and windy November I know that Christmas is coming. I know this because the big stores have just released their Christmas Adverts, so far, my favourite is the John Lewis advert. I know that Christmas is coming because as a 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 19<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 of 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.

## Church Clock Appeal

John Eaton

Further to the August article in the Feckenham News we now have permission to proceed with the repair to the Church Clock. That includes getting the engineer up to the clock face to stop the hands from hitting each other and replacing the electric winding mechanism and timing monitor system.



As many of you know the clock has not struck the hour reliably for about 5 years. Cumbria Clocks, who look after BIG BEN, have taken over the annual service of our Church Clock but have now declared that the original electrification of the winding mechanism installed some 14 years ago by Smiths of Derby is no longer economic to repair.

There are the added problems that the clock keeps stopping and the mechanism that selects the hour to strike keeps slipping. As Cumbria clocks previously dismantled the clock and took it back to their workshop they are going to take it back again at their expense. We will be paying for the replacement equipment, its fitting and the repair to the clock face.

Their quote is net of VAT as we expect to be able to claim it back:-

The new autowind system	£4,850
New time regulator	£2,100
Clock Face repair	£1,000
(Half of this is the cost of hiring a cherry picker to get the Engineer up the 10 meters to the clock face)	
Total	£7,960

The clock strikes (BONGS) 156 times in a 24 hour period. We are offering the purchase of each BONG at £25 which will raise £3,900. We will record this on a Bongometer. If any of this cash is gift aided a £25 donation will raise £31.25

We will approach past donors to The Friends of the Parish Church for the balance £4,060.

I hope you will support us and buy a BONG

John Eaton Treasurer of The Friends of the Parish Church Charity number 1168889

## A Splendid Success

The weekend of the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of October saw the village hall play host to a major art exhibition with work from Feckenham artists Ian Ridley and Julian Bull. To our knowledge it is the first time that an event of this nature has taken place in the main hall and over 150 paintings and prints were on display together with T-shirts and light boxes featuring Julian's unique tree prints and some wooden bowls/sculptures.



Ian and Julian were overwhelmed with the support shown not only from villagers but also from the many people who came from throughout the Midlands and a conservative guess put the total number of visitors at about 400.

The exhibition was further enhanced by some beautiful floral work by Wren and Bramble and refreshments courtesy of Julian's mum, ably served by the "Jordan Girls".

The exhibition promoted the Music for Dementia charity and a donation of £2045 was made which included £45 from donations for refreshments. Ian also raised £200 for cancer research from the sale of his cards and book.

Anyone who missed the exhibition can see examples of work at

[www.ianridleywatercolours.co.uk](http://www.ianridleywatercolours.co.uk) and [www.visibull.co.uk](http://www.visibull.co.uk)

## OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

As somebody who discovered a passion for art late in life and purely by chance I believe there are a lot of people out there who likewise could discover their artistic selves and derive an enormous amount of pleasure and satisfaction from painting. If a sufficient number of people are interested I intend to run a six week "watercolours for beginners course" in the village hall on Wednesday evenings starting in January. It may also be of interest to those who have painted before but who haven't picked up a brush for a long time. There would be no charge other than covering the cost of the room.

If anyone is interested please contact me, Ian Ridley, on 01527 894010 or by email at [ridleyart17@gmail.com](mailto:ridleyart17@gmail.com)

## T4U SHOEBOXES FOR CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2021

Thank you so much for your continued support. Thank you, for all the lovely boxes, the generous donations



and the beautiful hand knits what a difference your boxes are going to make to children in need this Christmas.

I am sure that we will all be thinking about the children at some point on Christmas Day. Lets hope that our boxes of treasures will be only the start of better things, lets hope that our boxes are the beginning of a brighter future for them all !

On behalf of all the children I would like to wish you all a VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS

I have been told that this year our boxes are being distributed in Georgia or Moldova two of the poorest countries in Europe. I will be able to confirm their destination in January. I will also be able to tell you how many boxes were collected this year.

A Very Happy Christmas from me too, and thank you for all the love, joy and hope that went inside each and every box !



Lin

## Feckenham Conservation and Biodiversity Project



**Work to Start** (we hope!)

At the time of writing we are looking to get the final parts of the grant application submitted to gain the funding for the Feckenham Bio-Diversity Project. We are working through the appropriate 'red tape', it is public money after all. We have a review with the grant panel in the next week and then if that's good, we hope to start work in early December, as soon as the 1st week, if everything falls in to place.

We are starting with tree work in the Churchyard, so one reason for this update is to look out for that.

We are working with the contractors on the Health and Safety aspect, so if you do use the churchyard as part of your walk, look out for sections being closed. However, there are enough alternatives to mean that we don't think we need to close the Churchyard whilst the work is being carried out, but you might need to walk a different way, that would be walking through a different gate as opposed to a different gait. Sorry, I will get my coat...



The parish council met in early November. The parish council welcomed and thanked Ruth Bamford, (Head of Planning at Redditch Borough Council) for attending the meeting to discuss on-going concerns with some planning applications in Feckenham.

A Parishioner attended the meeting to share information on a village litter pick planned for February, as soon as dates are confirmed these will be advertised and hopefully at least 20 volunteers can help keep our village looking tidy. The Parish Council have been advised the Borough Council will arrange for a team to work on the B4090.

The first parish council surgery will be on Thursday 9 December between 2-4pm in the back room of the village hall. Anyone with a question or query is welcome to attend. West Mercia Police will also attend the event unless called away. The surgery in January will be on Thursday 20th between 7.30 -9.00. The sessions will be trialled for 6 months.

As ever any queries or concerns can be sent to the clerk by email [clerk@feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk) or by telephone 01527 892522. Please do leave a message and Jane will call you back.

### A HERO AT CHRISTMAS

The FeckenOdeon's Christmas shows had become a traditional pleasure to enjoy between Christmas and the New Year... until the pandemic messed it all up. There was no show last year - but there is one this time - offering a chance to escape the turkey leftovers and the fading tinsel for a local night out in the welcoming dark of the cinema - great for amusing Christmas visitors too.

This year's film is **Local Hero** in which Texan oil magnate Felix Happer (Burt Lancaster) gets the idea that a small Scottish fishing village would be a marvellous acquisition for his so-rich-it-makes-you-sick company, Knox Oil and Gas. Not surprisingly the locals don't share his vision. A lovely, quirky, funny film that hasn't been seen on the big screen for far too long. Bill Forsyth directs Peter Capaldi, Fulton Mackay and Denis Lawson. There'll be a suitably mellow supporting programme and all the Christmas trimmings...

**Local Hero (PG) - Monday, December 27th at 7.30pm**

Tickets for all FeckenOdeon shows 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.fecknodeon.co.uk](http://www.fecknodeon.co.uk)

## Introducing... Cayla Carter

We'd like to introduce our daughter Cayla (20 years) who has lived in the village most of her life along with her older sister Janelle, (22 years). We moved into the Juniper Tree in 2003, having built our house, next door to Rose's family home where her late parents Mary and Adrian Bedford-Smith lived.

Cayla was born prematurely and then diagnosed with a unique chromosome rearrangement which resulted in global development delay requiring many visits to hospital for surgical and medical management.

There is an African proverb that says 'it takes a village to raise a child' and even more so when that child has special needs requiring 24/7 care. Feckenham has been our 'village' where we've experienced a community of people who have supported us enabling Cayla to grow up in a safe and beautiful place. We couldn't have done this on our own. We are so grateful for all the amazing ways people have helped us over the years. This has also included raising money via the Wake for charities such as Barnardos and Acorns Hospice where Cayla has received respite care.

Whilst there is much to be grateful for, there are some practical challenges in our village for people with disabilities, especially if you use a wheelchair and also for parents with buggies. There are many narrow pavements, gravel or muddy paths and what is most frightening, for someone

sat in a wheelchair, is the speeding traffic along the road. All this means we have limited choices for walking easily around the village.

However, Cayla has been happy in the village and is grateful to those who have worked hard to ensure she could join in various activities such as Sunday School and the weekly Youth Group meetings. She's also loved dancing, as some of you may know who've helped her join in the odd party!

Whilst she now attends residential college, she is excited about coming home as she loves all the Christmas festivities! But she is very astute, helping us remember what is at the heart of Christmas: she stops for a moment to point to baby Jesus in the Nativity and will enjoy giving you a gift as much as receiving a gift herself. Whilst it might take a village to raise a child, therein lies the blessing as we've learnt so much from her especially her courage, humour and perseverance in overcoming so much. Thank you.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all

Rose, Richard, Janelle and Cayla Carter



# WHAT'S ON IN FECKENHAM



**THE FECKENHAM SESSIONS**  
TRADITIONAL MUSICMAKING  
at THE ROSE & CROWN

First Tuesday of every month from 8pm  
NEXT SESSION: Tuesday, 7th December

## Feckenham READERS GROUP

Meets on  
Thursday, 9th December - 7.45  
This month's book:

## ONE AUGUST NIGHT

By Victoria Hislop



Feckenham Square Management Committee

# CAROLS

round the  
CHRISTMAS TREE



Friday 24th December  
6.30pm on The Square

Hot Punch - Mince Pies - Everything FREE  
Collection in aid of County Air Ambulance

## FECKENHAM VILLAGE HALL

NICHOLAS COLLETT & GAVIN ROBERTSON  
PRESENT



## A GHOST OF A SMILE

An evening of ghost stories before Christmas

SUNDAY 5th DECEMBER - 7.30 PM  
Tickets £12 from The Village Shop and The Rose & Crown  
Book online at [www.feckhall.org](http://www.feckhall.org)  
Phone bookings: 0333 666 3366

STUDLEY OPERATIC SOCIETY  
present

## A WINTER CONCERT

of  
SONGS FROM THE MUSICALS

Saturday, 11th December  
Feckenham Village Hall  
at 2.30 and 7.30  
Tickets £10 from Lorainne - 07708 476103



The Feckenham Forest History Society

**SONGS & DITTIES**  
for CHRISTMAS with ALAN BENJAMIN  
Tuesday, 14th December - 7.30pm  
Feckenham Village Hall

## FECKENODEON CINEMA SOCIETY

A HEART WARMING BRITISH COMEDY FOR CHRISTMAS

## LOCAL HERO

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY BILL FORSYTH  
PRODUCED BY DAVID PUTNAM



FeckenOdeon 1 - Monday, 27th December at 7.30pm

The FeckenOdeon Cinemas  
at Feckenham Village Hall

Tickets for all shows from The Rose & Crown and Village Shop  
Telephone Booking 0333 666 3366\* Online Booking\* & full information at

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

\*Phone calls answered by Telephone and charged at standard rates - NOT a premium fee

## Join us on our 46th Annual BOXING DAY WALK

Sunday, 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



Send details of events for FREE listing to: [whatson@feckenham.f9.co.uk](mailto:whatson@feckenham.f9.co.uk) or call 892130



By the time you read this month's article. The Shop will be ready for Christmas. Our decorations will be in place and we will be fully stocked to meet all your festive requirements. Including beautiful hand knitted pin cushions £5 and incredible knitted Christmas decorations £20 all in aid of Mission Morogoro bringing education and medical care to children In Africa.



We've even arranged with Santa to place a post box in The Shop so you (and your children) can drop him a line to let him know exactly what you are hoping for this year. Although you will probably be doing your 'Big Shop' at a national supermarket, can I remind you that we are able meet most of your emergency needs should you forget an item or require a last minute purchase. After all, who wants to drive to Redditch or Droitwich just collect a couple of lemons for your gin and tonic?

This year we have in stock an extensive range of boxed Christmas cards priced between £4 & £7, also some lovely biscuits and chocolates in attractive festive tins that are ideal for that distant relative who you only

see once a year and never know what to buy them. Sadly despite our ongoing recruitment campaign, we are short of Christmas Elves this year to help out in the shop. This means that during the holiday period we will only be open from 10 a.m – 1p.m most days. As you will be aware from previous articles, we are constantly on the look out for more helpers, so why not start 2022 and make it your New Year's resolution to give a couple of hours a week of Community Service to The Shop? Below are the hours we are open during this years festive season:

Christmas Eve	8a.m – 5p.m
Christmas Day	Closed
Boxing Day	Closed
Monday 27 <sup>th</sup>	10a.m – 1p.m
Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup>	10a.m – 1p.m
Wednesday 29 <sup>th</sup>	10a.m – 1p.m
Thursday 30 <sup>th</sup>	10a.m – 1p.m
New Years Eve	10a.m – 1p.m
New Years Day	Closed
Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	10a.m – 1p.m
Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	10a.m – 1p.m

During the last month many of our volunteers have enjoyed some additional barrista training from our partners at Coffee Masters. The result is that our already excellent coffee is now even better than usual. Therefore can I suggest that during the holiday period, when you want to escape from visiting relatives, you join us on our coffee terrace and relax. You will be made most welcome .

Have a wonderful Christmas .

## Book Club



This month's book was the 2020 Booker Prize winner, *Shuggie Bain* by Douglas Stuart. For me, as someone who grew up near Glasgow and was a student of the university there the story took place in very familiar territory. The group found it very interesting and much discussion ensued. The themes were about alcoholism and growing up in poverty as a boy who was a bit 'different'.

Next month's choice is *One August Night* by Victoria Hislop. Meeting is on 9th December.

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Once more our local police have asked me to bring this service to your attention. As you can see, if you are interested, please email the team as explained on the poster below.

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If you would like to be signed up to this new police service you can do so by sending an email to your Neighbourhood Policing Team at [neor.and@westmercia.police.uk](mailto:neor.and@westmercia.police.uk) with the following information:

- Full name
- Address and postcode
- Email address
- Telephone and/or mobile phone number

We will then sign you up to the service and you will be sent an email link and password to verify your account.

Thank you

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Email [radio@swansbrook.com](mailto:radio@swansbrook.com) or send a text/WhatsApp message on 07921 927 909.

### CHRISTMAS IS COMING

... and Swansbrook Radio is keen to help you send your good wishes to friends and family wherever they may be. We can be heard all over the world - wherever there's the internet - so send us your messages and requests NOW to [radio@swansbrook.com](mailto:radio@swansbrook.com) - we'll be featuring them in special programmes throughout the festive season

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# Season's Greetings

A few messages arrived a little late for the card so here they are:

Happy Christmas everyone.  
Thank you for welcoming us to the village.  
Alex, Karen, Caoimhe & Sadhbh

Wishing everyone a Happy Christmas and a healthy New Year.  
Enid

Merry Christmas and a happy New Year  
Kath and Brian Roberts

Happy Christmas one and all. Love Kathy Gee



## STUDLEY DAYTIME

### CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES

---

**COMPETITION:**

**SHEEP**

---

**SEASONAL REFRESHMENTS**

**RAFFLE**

**GOOD COMPANY**

**STUDLEY VILLAGE HALL**  
**WEDNESDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2021 2.00 - 4.00 P.M.**  
**NEW MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!**

## Feckenham Village Hall Ian Bellion

### SPOOKY BUT NICE...

**A**t the start of December there's a show coming to Feckenham Village Hall designed to chill the cockles of your heart and get the festive season off to a spine tingling start... "A Ghost of a Smile" features Charles Dickens' creepy tales – with a comic twist. Tales with a tingle, but also a giggle! Yarns to chill and charm! Stories with a shiver and a smile! And an interval - for drinks! "Like "The Woman in Black" – but funnier!" - It's the perfect pre-Christmas treat...

The stories are adapted by Gavin Robertson and performed by Nicholas Collett who invite you to join them for a Victorian spooky evening... there will be mulled wine to chase away the chills.

The Hall's bar will be open to help keep the spirits up.....or away.....

**"A Ghost of A Smile" - Sunday, 5th December at 7.30pm**

**Tickets (£12) are on sale at The Village Shop and The Rose & Crown and you can book online through [www.feckhall.org](http://www.feckhall.org) or by phone on 0333 666 3366.**

### YOGI NEEDED

**S**adly the popular Yoga sessions at the Village Hall have ceased. The instructor, Mel Caddick, has had to stop her teaching activities for personal reasons.

This is a great shame as many people had been enjoying the sessions. If you know of a yoga teacher who might be willing to step into

the breach we'd be glad to hear from you. All suggestions are welcome. Call the Booking Secretary on 01527 821233 or email [hall@feckenham.f9.co.uk](mailto:hall@feckenham.f9.co.uk)

### IMPROVEMENT FUND DRAW

**J**ust a reminder that the first draws of the new Improvement Fund year will take place at the Village Hall Trustee's meeting on the first Tuesday in December.

A £25, £15 & £10 prize is won each month - £600 in total over the year. A £12 contribution gives you an entry to each of the 12 draws. Most village households should have received an explanatory letter with a unique property reference number (FVH\*\*\*), and a fair number of you have already contributed. If you still wish to be included in the next 12 month's draws, you can do so by delivering the appropriate amount of cash, or a cheque, to Peter Chute, Village Hall Treasurer at The Old School House, 11 Mill Lane, B96 6HY (Cheques payable to Feckenham Village Hall Trust), but please ensure you include your name and address, or your FVH\*\*\* number – just so we know where you live if you win!

The most convenient way to pay is by online transfer direct to our bank : Feckenham Village Hall Trust; Sort Code 09-01-54; A/c No 40576709. Use your FVH\*\*\* number as the reference, or if you do not have that number to hand, please use your address as the reference.

The proceeds from the draws are used for the improvement of the Village Hall and its facilities. *Please make any contributions before Saturday 4th December, to ensure your entry in the first draws.*

## Spotted in the village



**A** family of English Longhorn cattle are new residents at Wylde Moor nature reserve grazing their way round the wetland habitat and looking beautiful. The breed are a famously docile and are a welcome sight.

Photo by Marion Chute



**O**ur family of swans were seen preening themselves at the top of the weir on Swansbrook near Brook House. What a shame some of the cygnets didn't make it but this one is going strong and soon won't be an 'ugly duckling'. Fingers crossed that the virus affecting the swan's at Stratford doesn't travel here.

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## Kathy's Flowers

In UK, this is called *sulphur tuft* or, possibly, *honey fungus*. In America it is known as the *clustered wood lover*. It's pretty common this time of year "fruiting on fallen trees, decaying stumps or, occasionally, hollow trunks of living trees. This wood-rotting fungus is not a fussy feeder it tackles deciduous hardwoods as well as conifers apparently with equal relish, although it is most effective in rotting broadleaf trees (hardwoods), which generally have a higher cellulose content and rather lower lignin content than conifers." ([www.first-nature.com](http://www.first-nature.com)) Enjoy the colour, but only admire from above, friends. This one is definitely NOT edible.



## Christmas Cake Cookies



These are a delicious alternative to Christmas Cake. The recipe came from your editor's old next door neighbour, Lois Small. You might halve the quantities as this will make many cookies!

- 500g Raisins/Sultanas/Currants
- Brandy to cover
- 60g Butter
- 60g dark brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 225g Wholemeal flour
- Pinch baking powder
- Heaped tsp each ground cloves, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg
- 1 tbsp milk
- 350g place cherries halved
- 120g mixed peel
- 225g walnut pieces

Soak fruit in brandy till plump then drain and reserve liquid.  
Cream butter and sugar till fluffy, beat in eggs one at a time  
Sift flour, baking powder and spices together then fold into mixture with milk.  
Add fruit, 2 tbsp brandy, stir in cherries, peel and nuts.  
Drop by tsp onto a baking sheet  
Bake 170C 15-20mins till browned. Cool on a rack.

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On Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> November the club provided the first village fireworks display since a pretty soggy day in 2019. This time the weather was pretty kind with the day being largely dry until a mid-evening shower. The large bonfire lit up the sky and the large crowd looked on as our guy was rapidly consumed.

The firework display was very well received and the sky seemed to be full of brilliant bursts of light and sound before it all too soon fell silent. The impressive pyrotechnics were expertly managed by Lewis Stacey and his two sons Sam and Josh.

The barbecue team stood up well to the huge demand, as did the ladies running the inside bar.

The many children – with illuminated toys and candy floss in hand - seemed to have a whale of a time and there was a tangible feeling that people had been waiting for such an event for a very long time and were set on enjoying it.

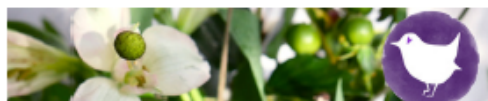
It was a great night and I extend thanks to all the club members and

friends who worked so hard to make it a success.

In terms of routine activities, the club's engineering team continues to spend time on equipment that will need to be ready for action next season, while in the clubhouse radiators are being installed in each changing room by John Bayliss Plumbing & Heating, adding to those that have greatly improved the warmth of the clubhouse and bar.

Outside, autumn/winter work will focus on keeping the grass tidy and pruning of hedges and trees.

We now look ahead to Christmas and the New Year - we are contemplating some sort of celebration of the latter, but ideas are yet to be refined. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for news.



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## Rose and Crown Golf Society Bandit Cup

The Bandit Cup returned in 2021 after a years enforced absence from the village calendar. This annual golf event saw 19 bandits old and new compete for the Bandit Cup, playing 18 holes of golf at Ombersley Golf Course on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October.

Sustained by a pre-round bacon butty and hot drink, our bandits enjoyed a sunny autumn afternoon with refreshments and snacks provided courtesy of Arthur Hinds' drinks buggy. The evening prize presentation with a golfers supper for players and their partners in the Rose Room rounded off the day.

The fiercely contended Wooden Spoon prize for the lowest score this year went to Tony Hunt with 5 points, narrowly beating the current holder Q . We suspect some sneaky practice may have taken place over the past couple of years!

Nearest the Pin was won by Richard Fletcher.

Third place was the 2019 champion, Adam Jordan, with a solid 34 points, despite his handicap cut from the previous competition. Second placed was Ian Ridley with 39 points, and this years winner was a new Bandit, Nigel Barrington with an excellent 42 points. (For non-golfers 36 points indicates someone is playing to their handicap).

Well done to all the winners, and we look forward to seeing Nigel return next year to defend his title.

Our thanks go to the organisers Dai Barrett-Mead and Steve Dalloway, and to Matt and Mel for hosting the presentation dinner and displaying the trophy in the bar, and to Ombersley Golf Club for looking after us so well.



## Rob Cole's Gardening Tips

### PLANTS FOR WINTER EFFECT - Part 1

**W**e tended to specialise in hardy perennials and bulbs when we lived at Meadow Farm, many of which managed to look good early in the year.

For foliage effect, *Heuchera* 'Amethyst Mist' was hard to beat. It is one of the constantly growing band of purple leaved types, but is dwarfish in stature and virtually evergreen (everpurple?) with a very tidy habit. It is a wonderful foil for snowdrops. Equally impressive were the various colour forms of *Hellebore* and they were the mainstay of the late winter garden, flowering from December through until April in some cases.

I have always extolled the virtues of the many forms of *Erica carnea*, the winter flowering heather, and make no apologies for plugging it again. The newer cultivars particularly are such wonderfully coloured and long flowering plants that they richly deserve a place in every garden where they will give a bold display from November to March. Their other virtue is that they don't require acidic soil as other heather species do.

I have already mentioned snowdrops, and will merely add that they give a much better effect in large random clumps. With the price of some of the cultivars going ever

higher, this is a pipe dream if you are a collector, but ordinary *Galanthus nivalis*, the Common Snowdrop, is cheap and cheerful and can readily be used in this way.

Whilst on the subject of bulbs, *Narcissus* is a mainly March and April flowering bulb, but there are some varieties which show earlier colour. 'Tête-à-Tête' usually flowers at the end of February if planted in a sunny open position. 'Rijnveld's Early Sensation' and 'Grand Soleil d'Or' are also naturally early flowerers, and 'February Gold' is good for mass planting and is widely available. The little species *Narcissus cyclamineus* opens at the end of February, and bravely shrugs off any frost or snowfall, but is difficult to obtain as it will not suffer being lifted and dried for sale as a bulb. Consequently it is fairly expensive to buy if you ever find it offered as a growing plant, but it is still cheap compared to most snowdrop cultivars.

Another bulb which flowers in early February, or even earlier, is *Ipheion uniflorum*, with short, lax foliage and star shaped flowers to about 150mm (6"). The main species has a pale blue flower, but darker violet-blue forms are available such as 'Wisley Blue' and 'Froyle Mill', whilst 'Charlotte Bishop' is pink flowered, and 'Album' is a clear white. All have the advantage of being summer dormant and disappear soon after flowering, so can be overplanted with subjects which will fill the gap they leave as they die back.

More recommendations next month.

## Stock and Bradley Gardening Club



Our speaker at the November meeting was Tim Walker who gave an inspiring and informative talk entitled 'Plants, Borders and Gardens'. Due to a medical condition, Tim is unable to drive at the moment so we held the meeting via Zoom - but with a difference. We successfully projected his talk as a live presentation onto the screen at the Village Hall, and it was almost as good as having him with us in person and enabled us to still have our monthly get-together.

### **NEXT CLUB MEETING - Wednesday** **1st December 2021 at 7:30pm**

Our speaker will be Darren Rudge who will give a talk entitled 'Tea Bags, Bras and Tights'. A most intriguing title, from which

we can expect an amusing and entertaining evening.

Please note that the next £5.00 annual subscription will become due on 1st January 2022. 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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