

FECKENHAM

December 2024

NEWS



Published by Feckenham Church for the village.
Editor Gilly Cooper - feckenhamnews@gmail.com
(Copy Date 14th)

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Feckenham News in December

Dates for your Diary

December

4th	S&B Gardening Club
11th	Readers Group
12th	PC Meeting
14th	Swingin' Christmas - Village Hall
16th	WI
24th	Carols on the Square
26th	Boxing Day Walk
28th	FeckenOdeon

Regular Sessions

Mondays	Dance Academy
Tuesdays	Tai Chi
Wednesdays	Playgroup
Thursdays	Bridge; Hatha Yoga; Pilates

Second Monday of the month: Mobile Library
First Tuesday of the month:
Lunch Club, Feckenham Sessions
First and Third Wednesday: Community Choir
Third Monday of the month: WI

2nd and 4th Fridays : Erstwhile Morris dancers

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Front Cover

Photo by a cricket club member.

Magazine online at
www.feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk

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

I'm sorry to say that I missed the village bonfire which, from the photos I have seen, was a great success. Our pyrotechnic expert, Lewis Stacey, who has returned annually to the village to set off the fireworks deserves a huge thanks. He is stepping down now and I hope he has found someone to fill his shoes.



Why did she miss Bonfire Night, you might wonder? Yet again I was on my travels. This time to North India and Nepal. It was full on in every way: the loudness and organised chaos of Indian cities, getting up very early most days to see such things as the Taj Mahal at dawn, sunrise over the Ganges and another sunrise over Annapurna South in Nepal as well as making early starts while trekking. Now we are home for a rest if possible before Christmas.

I have received many greetings for the village Christmas Card which is generously funded by the Church so that all donations go to our chosen charity: The Trussell Trust who run many food banks that are sadly much needed. Thanks to those who have donated. I received so many greetings that there was no room for the one from Martin and myself. So, Merry Christmas to one and all and a hope for a more peaceful 2025 around the world.

Now we look forward to Christmas in Feckenham and the joyous start on Christmas Eve of Carols on the Square. Come along for mulled wine or soft drinks, mince pies and and possibly the only guaranteed snow to be seen for a while.

I'm always pleased to receive pictures or articles which relate to the village however tenuously...

Feckenham Square Management Committee

TREE MAGIC

Every year, as if by magic, a wonderful Christmas tree appears on The Square... except that the "magic" takes a bit of heaving and straining to make it work. This is where you could help - if you could give us a hand to haul the tree into place and dress it in tasteful lights and baubles it would make life so much easier. The tree is provided by the Committee for everyone to enjoy over the festive season so it would be good if you could help at **10 am on 7th December** - just meet us on The Square and we'll tell you what to pull or push!

CAROLS ON THE SQUARE CHRISTMAS EVE AT 6.30pm

Everybody's welcome to join the merry throng on The Square on Christmas Eve for Feckenham's traditional welcome to Christmas. Carols on The Square will feature all the usual ingredients - mulled wine, mince pies, raucous singing and guaranteed snow in abundance.

We suggest that you abandon your preparations, leave the turkey to stuff itself and head to the centre of the village for an hour amid friends and neighbours. Everything's free - it's the Square Committee's way of thanking the village for support throughout the year. (There will be a collection for the County Air Ambulance Service). There'll be soft drinks for the kids and a large portion of goodwill for everybody!



Stop Press: Christmas Greeting

Jan and Alan
Wish all their friends and neighbours A
Happy Christmas and a fulfilling 2025

WI



This month Suzi Mitchell of Iris and Ivy Flowers in Cookhill gave us a wreath making demonstration. The wreath was raffled at the end of the session. It was a fun evening and Suzi explained to us, not only the method but also her ethos of using British flowers, particularly those she has grown herself.

The next meeting is on 16th December and the speaker is Margaret Green, talking about her work with the charity Mission Morogoro and her recent visit to Tunguli in Tanzania.

Meetings take place on the third Monday of each month. Doors open at 7.45 and the meeting starts at 8pm. Members are free and guests are £5. Contact Jen Cary for more details 07773 883 039.

The FeckenOdeon Cinema Society



BALI HAI IS CALLING...

Yes, we know that December's film at The FeckenOdeon has been on the telly a million times and its toe tapping tunes are perhaps over familiar - but, until you see it on the big screen you really haven't seen it at all! South Pacific was filmed using the Todd-AO process which gave a huge and incredibly sharp picture combined with 6 channel stereophonic sound. Few cinemas in the UK were able to afford the special projectors and amplifiers needed so, unless you went to a big city centre theatre during the first release, you wouldn't have seen it shown as its makers intended. Now the film has been painstakingly restored and, through the wonders of digital projection, we can present it in all its original glory.

Surprisingly, despite all the glamour and glitz, the plot featuring the tender love story of a naive young Navy nurse (Mitzi Gaynor) and an older French Plantation owner (Rossano Brazzi) on a U.S. occupied South Sea island during WW2 still has the power to move. The parallel and doomed love story of a young lieutenant and a island girl is perhaps even more poignant.... and the music? Well, that's stood the test of time and you're certain to come out humming one of the tunes. An ideal post-Christmas treat! (USA, 1958)

SOUTH PACIFIC (U)

Saturday 28th December at 7.30pm
Doors open at 7pm - Licenced Bar

Tickets for all FeckenOdeon shows are on sale at The Village Shop and The Rose & Crown. You can also book by phone on 0333 666 3366 or online at www.fecknodeon.co.uk

Village Notices

T4U CHRISTMAS SHOEBOX APPEAL 2024

Thank you, all so very much for the love you have sent to a child in need this Christmas, what a difference your boxes will make to these children! Many are going through such frightening, tough and traumatic times, for other children your boxes will most probably be the only gifts that they will receive this Christmas. It's all so terribly sad, but your kindness and generosity will be sure to give these children a truly magical Christmas, and I am certain that all of your special gifts will be treasured !



I will let you know just where our boxes were distributed next month.

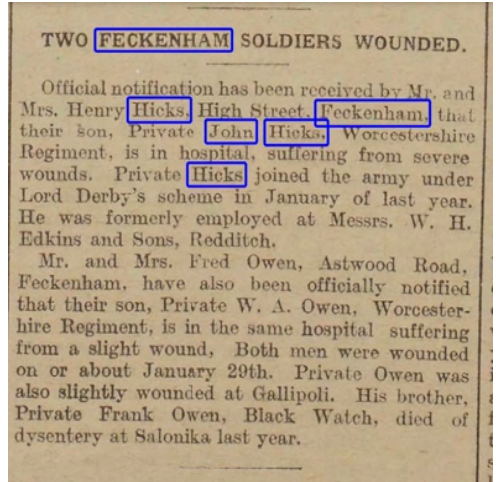
As we think about the children on Christmas day, let us all hope and pray that they will all have better times ahead.

On behalf of the children, their families, and myself, may I wish you all a Very Happy and Peaceful Christmas

YOUR BOXES REALLY DO CHANGE LIVES

Thank you, Lin

Below is a cutting from a WW1 newspaper shared on Facebook by Jayne Walker, John Hicks' daughter. Very fitting to share over the Remembrance Weekend. I share it here with her permission



Feckenham Artisans in Pershore

Feckenham Artisans are pleased to announce their forthcoming exhibition "Artists Empowered" at Number 8, High Street, Pershore. from 21/11 to 16/12 (2D art) and 28/11 to 15/01 (3D art) . Number 8 is a gallery/theatre/cinema with a lovely coffee shop in this charming Worcestershire town. More information can be found on their website , www.number8.org This is the first time that the group have ventured out en masse to a public gallery so they hope some of you may pop along. Other events are in the pipeline for 2025 including the Long Gallery at Hanbury Hall.

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Cider Mill House
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Children on Halloween. Photo sent in by Sally Yates

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Tuesday, 3rd December in the Bar from 8pm - Free
Traditional Music
 1st - 20th December
Christmas Fayre Meals
Pre bookings and pre orders essential.
Thursday, 12th December
Christmas Jumper Dinner
Turkey & Xmas pud - Jumpers Optional!

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Feckenham Village Hall

THE NEIL CONLEY BIG BAND presents a special festive concert



A Swingin' Christmas with the Big Band Greats

"One of the finest authentic Swing Bands in the country"

For nearly a quarter of a century the Neil Coley Big Band has been entertaining audiences across the West Midlands. Working with nationally acclaimed vocalists, the band brings to life the golden era of Big Band Music, featuring such household names as Glenn Miller, Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, right up to present day stars such as Michael Buble and Adele.

Together with singer Rich Hazlewood, the band promises a fantastic evening of quality jazz from its talented players and exceptional soloists. Join us for a fabulous evening as the band takes you on a journey from the classic golden age of jazz right up to the present day... with more than a hint of yuletide good cheer!

A SWINGIN' CHRISTMAS

Saturday, 14th December at 7.30pm

ALSO BOOKING

9th February : **MUMBO JUMBO**

Four Hands and a Horn

23rd March : **THE TIM KLIPHUIS TRIO**

"One of the world's finest fiddlers"

5th April : **THE MIDLAND SINFONIA**

TICKETS for shows at the Village Hall are on sale at The Village Shop and The Rose & Crown.

Book online through www.feckhall.org

Book by phone on 0333 666 3366

Village Hall Draws

IMPROVEMENT FUND DRAW REMINDER

The first draws of the 2024/25 year will take place on Dec 3rd so if you wish to be included in the chance of a monthly cash prize of £25, £15 or £10, it is just about not too late to enter.

Most village households will have received an individually numbered letter earlier in the month explaining how to contribute the £12 entry to the monthly draws. If you haven't yet, but do still wish to participate, please quote the FVH*** number on that letter when making your contribution.

If you still wish to join, and have mislaid or didn't receive the letter, please contact the treasurer, Peter Chute (chutes@btinternet.com) before 3rd December, and we will be able to add you to the draw list.

Last year's Fund contributed £888 (after paying out the £600 draw winnings), so this is a worthwhile and important contribution towards covering the cost of improvements to the hall and its facilities.

FG BEAUTY NAILS AND BEAUTY

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CHURCH SERVICES



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vicar@feckenhamchurch.org.uk

Church Warden: Vacant

For Weddings, Baptisms & Funerals please contact Fr Glenn

Website: www.feckenhamchurch.org.uk



PARISH CHURCH
OF
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
FECKENHAM

Services for December 2024

1st December	10.30am	Eucharist	Fr Glenn Reading
8 th December	9.00am 10.30am	BCP Communion Family Service	Rev Fiona Carter Rev Fiona Carter
15 th December	6.30pm	Nine Lessons & Carols	Fr Glenn Reading
22nd December	10.30am	Eucharist	Fr Glenn Reading
24th December	10.30am 10.00pm	Crib Service Evening Mass	Rev Fiona Carter Rev Fiona Carter
25 th & 29th December - No service			



Drop in (in church)
Wednesday at 10.30am - 12.00pm
11th December



All are welcome (coffee and cake)

FECKENHAM ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH St John Fisher & Thomas More

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 (Type the link into the browser)

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

Local contact: Phylis Mott, Feckenham. Tel 893898

COUNCIL VACANCY

Following the resignation of Cllr. Hugo Hammersley, the Parish Council advertised for a new Councillor. Unfortunately, there were no applications received before the closing date of Friday, 8th November. This means that the post will be re-advertised and it is hoped the vacancy will be filled at the next meeting in December. The vacancy will be filled by co-option. If there are two or more applicants there will be a secret ballot of councillors.

If you would like more information you can visit Feckenham Parish Council's website or contact the clerk on telephone number 01527 892522.

GRIT BINS

The Parish Council has ordered four replacement green grit bins to replace those around the parish which have been damaged. The Parish provides the green bins while Worcestershire County Council is responsible for the yellow bins.

NOTICE BOARD

The Council has also ordered a new notice board to replace the one which is sited next to the post box at the corner of High Street and Turton Gardens. The existing board is in a very poor state of repair. It is a legal requirement that the Council must display its agendas and minutes on its own notice board so that people can be informed of all the Council's activities.

FINANCES

At their November meeting councillors began the process of considering the level at which next year's precept should be set. The precept (the charge paid by parishioners through Council Tax bills) is used to run the Council and to pay for things like, green grit bins, flood works and VAS machines as well as grants and funding for organisations like Feckenham in Bloom. Grants

have been made this year to Moors Lane Improvements, Feckenham Wake and Erstwhile Border Morris Group. For more information on applying for a grant please read the Grant Application Policy on the parish website: www.feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk

NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council meeting will take place on Thursday, 12th December at 7.30pm in the Back Room of the Village Hall. All are welcome to attend.



Visit the Parish Council's website for information about the Council, planning issues, local organisations and useful contact details to help you solve problems. You'll also find digital editions of Feckenham News going back to 2012.

feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk

Feckenham Parish Council VACANCY FOR A COUNCILLOR TO BE FILLED BY CO-OPTION

The above Parish Council will consider filling by co-option a casual vacancy for a Councillor at its meeting to be held on

**Thursday, 12th December 2024 at 7.30pm
at Feckenham Village Hall.**

Those who are interested in serving the community in this way and want to become a candidate for co-option should obtain an application form for candidacy from the Clerk.

Completed application forms should be returned to the Clerk by 8th December 2024.

Information on eligibility, the role of the Parish Council and its schedule of meetings may be obtained from the Clerk and/or the Chairman.

Clerk Jane Bull Tel: 01527 892522
clerk@feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk

Chairman Alan Smith Tel 01527 893967.
alansmith@feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk

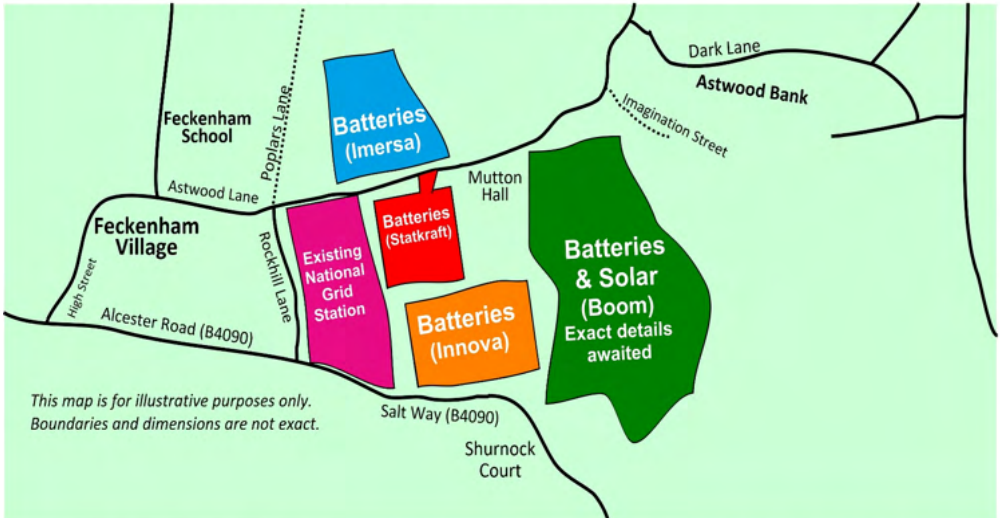
Feckenham Energy Action Group

Dear Resident

Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)

You may not have the time or energy to keep up to speed with the latest planning applications in and around Feckenham.

If not, you will be interested to learn that there are now 4 applications (with more expected), submitted or pending, for BESS installations almost completely encompassing the Feckenham Green Belt area from the school across to the electricity sub-station and even up to Astwood Bank Business Park (Imagination Street), as shown in the map below.



If all these applications are granted there are likely to be up to 200 HGV vehicle movements a day transporting, amongst other things, the several hundred 23 ton storage units. These will be on articulated low loaders with a total vehicle weight of approximately 40 tons, driving up and down our local roads - including via Church Road Astwood Bank, Astwood Lane, Rockhill Lane and the Saltway (B4090). This will cause huge disruption and the process will take many years as the units have to be replaced every 5-8 years.

The installations emit constant noise which will vary in intensity but continues 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. If and when their generators are operating, these emit over 100 decibels of noise, which is equivalent to that of a very low flying jet, flying just over your head.

In addition to these everyday issues, there are real safety concerns.

In exchange for taking over our local area and digging up our precious Green Belt land, the installations, which could be located anywhere in the country, will not bring a single job to the area since all the development will be done by outside contractors and the site will be run remotely with no employees on site.

The Feckenham Energy Action Group are holding 3 'Drop-in' events in the Village Hall in early December, to provide more illustration and information – look out for the notices we shall circulate.

We would cordially urge you to come to see and hear more about the proposed developments at one of these events and look forward to seeing you.

WHAT'S ON in

**FECKENHAM
VILLAGE HALL**

**The NEIL COLEY BIG BAND
A Swingin'
Christmas**

**with the Big Band Greats
featuring singer RICH HAZLEWOOD
Saturday 14th December - 7.30pm**

Tickets for all Village Hall events are on sale at The Village Shop and The Rose & Crown

Book online at www.feckhall.org
Phone bookings: 0333 666 3366

Fight the Christmas FLAB!
Join us for our 48th Annual

**BOXING DAY
WALK**

Thursday
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

Feckenham Square Management Committee

CAROLS

round the CHRISTMAS TREE

On Christmas Eve

Tuesday, 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, 3rd December

Stock & Bradley GARDENING CLUB
XMAS WREATHS
with Chrissie Barnes
at Bradley Village Hall
Wednesday, 4th December - 7.30pm



ERSTWHILE
BORDER MORRIS
Twice monthly Sessions
at Feckenham Village Hall
2nd and 4th Fridays - 7pm



Christmas Opening Times at The Rose & Crown
Christmas Eve: Open all day
Food 12- 3pm & 5.30 - 8pm (Evening: Bookings only)
Christmas Day: 12noon to 1.30pm - Drinks ONLY
Boxing Day: 12 - 6pm - Drinks ONLY
27th to 29th Dec: Open all Day (Food 12- 3pm & 6 - 9pm)
30th Dec: Normal Sunday hours (Close 10.30pm)
New Year's Eve: Open all Day (Food 12 - 3pm + Evening: Bookings Only)
New Year's Day: Food 12 - 4pm only

MAKE A NEW YEAR RESOLUTION!
Advertise your events on these pages for FREE*.
Just send the details to
whatson@feckenham.f9.co.uk
*Free for Feckenham based voluntary organisations and charities

THE FECKENODEON CINEMA SOCIETY
MITZI GAYNOR - ROSSANO BRAZZI
IN
ROGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S
SOUTH PACIFIC



Back where it belongs on the BIG screen 

FeckenOdeon 1: Saturday, 28th December at 7.30pm

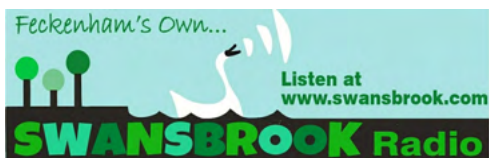
The FeckenOdeon Cinemas
at Feckenham Village Hall
Tickets for all shows from The Rose & Crown and Village Shop
Telephone Booking 0333 666 3366* Online Booking* & full information at
www.fecknodeon.co.uk
*Booking Fee applies to Phone and Online Bookings
*Phone calls answered by Ticketsource and charged at standard rates - NOT a premium line

Feckenham READERS GROUP
Wednesday, 11th December - 7.45pm
This month's book:
The Family Frying Pan
By Bryce Courtenay
Details: 892285



Feckenham Parish Council
MEETING
Thursday, 12th December - 7.30pm
Feckenham Village Hall (Back Room)
All welcome - Meetings include a Public Forum where parishioners can bring matters to the attention of the Council and ask questions.

whatson@feckenham.f9.co.uk or call 892130



NICK JOINS THE SWANS

There's a new voice coming to Feckenham's own local radio station. **Nick Ledbury** is a veteran broadcaster who has presented programmes for numerous stations at home and abroad. More recently, after reaching "a certain age", he's slowed down and turned to local radio - until August he was a main presenter on Bromsgrove's BRMG Radio. He still appears on Riviera Radio and Phantom Radio but he's delighted to be joining a station in his own home county of Worcestershire.

Nick writes:

"Born in the 50s, grew up in the 60s and have had fun ever since, also I'm a proud "South Brummie" as you will notice when you hear my voice I've been an avid collector of music for over 50 years, started with Jazz then Beat, Glam Rock, Prog, New Wave, Electronic, Folk & World Music. I am a live music freak and I go to loads of gigs large and small every week I'm also a musician - a drummer (some would dispute a drummer is a musician) playing Kit and various world percussion in the theatrical percussion group "Glamba" - we used to regularly be seen on CBeebies "Justin's House". I appeared at various theatres and used to love hearing stories from the other acts, some that I share on my show.

I was a mobile DJ for many years but now I have channelled all that into being a radio presenter. So if you want to hear something different, then "Turn On, Tune In & Drop Out" (love that saying) with me Nick Ledbury because **I Like It Like That**".

And "I Like it Like That" is the title of Nick's show which will air live on Swansbrook Radio at **7 o'clock on Saturday evenings** - two hours of great music and relaxed chat. The programme will be repeated on Sunday nights at 10 o'clock and will be available "On Demand" from Monday morning. The first transmission will be on Saturday 7th December.



Nick Ledbury presents "I Like It Like That"
Saturdays at 7pm, Sundays at 10pm
and On Demand from Monday morning.

CHATTING WITH DAVID STREET

Many long term Feckenhamsters will have known **David Street** - now resident at Wood Norton but for many years the owner of the best view of Feckenham as seen from his home on the top of Berrow Hill. David has been chatting to Paul Furey about his life and career including the early days of Feckenham Garage and his later exploits in the motor trade. You can hear them "**In Conversation**" on Swansbrook Radio now. A fascinating life and a fantastic listen!



CHRISTMAS IS COMING

...and Swansbrook Radio can be heard all over the world so why not spread a bit of good cheer to your friends and relations wherever they live? Swansbrook can pass on your greetings and play requests so that your loved ones don't feel forgotten - it might even make them homesick. Just send your messages and requests to **radio@swansbrook.com** - and we'll read them and play them over the Festive Season. You can even request something for yourself - we don't mind!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

LISTEN TO THE SWANS

Go to **www.swansbrook.com** and follow the instructions you'll find there. Many of 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

When Santa Started from Our House by Ada Baylis

We'll leave the children's toys with Nan'
they said,
And pick them up when they are safely in
bed;
Then all the family took up this cue, They
either brought or sent their presents too.
On Christmas Eve my son came with his van,
I'll take them all in one go if I can;
We lashed two "bikes" on the old roof rack,
Then started in to pile up the back.
A horse on wheels, a scooter too, one doll's
cot and a tricycle blue;
Two teddy bears, two elephants grey,
A large doll's pram with covers gay.
Then into the pram went bits and pieces,
Little presents for Uncles, Aunts, Cousins
and Nieces,
Guns in holsters, carpenters sets, books and
games,
All neatly packed with tabs and names.
Six Christmas stockings we found room for,
And then we had to tie the door;
We filled the passenger seat up too,
With a couple of dolls, and still we had more
to do.

Some of the gifts were left behind,
The reason for this was easy to find,
one of our grandchildren was coming to
stay,
So that we could share his Christmas Day.
And as our son started off with his load,
The people who were walking along the
road;
Just stood to stare, and then to smile,
At the little green van with its gorgeous pile.
Our hearts were bursting with joy that night,
Even the stars seemed to shine more bright;
Children's carols filled the air,
The spirit of Christmas was everywhere.
We gave thanks to God for His gifts to us,
Seven beautiful children, the cause of this
fuss;
For the chance to give them such fun and
pleasure,
And for this marvellous memory to treasure.

From REDDITCH INDICATOR & ALCESTER
CHRONICLE, DEC. 22 1967



She claimed once that she was never lucky when it came to winning competitions. But now, Mrs. Ada Baylis has hit a winning streak. Back in August, Mrs Baylis a youthful 60, won the Link magazine's Happy Memory competition.

And now she's winner again—of the Link's Happiest Christmas competition.

Last time Mrs. Baylis of 1210 Evesham Road Astwood Bank thought of buying something to remind herself of the competition. But this time she is giving her £10 prize to Dr. Barnardo's - a charming gesture.

Photo: Ada Baylis is seated on the left

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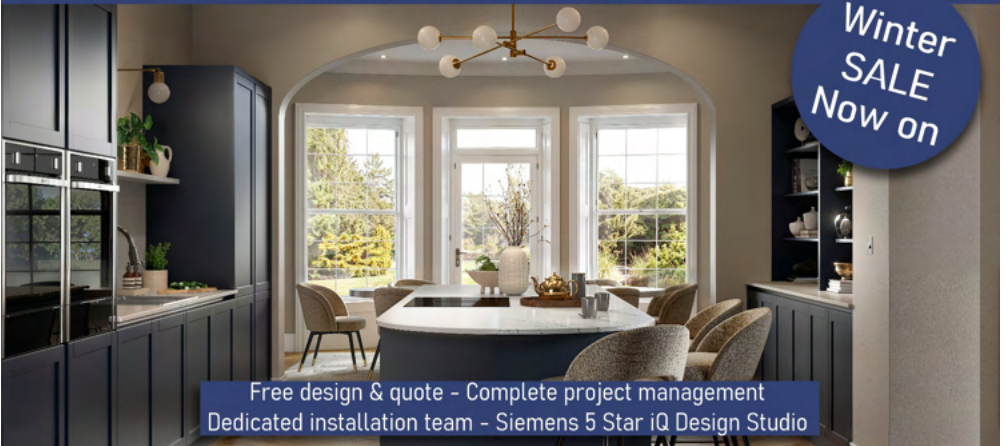


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Village Shop - Alan Slater

As I write this month's article on a gloriously sunny autumn morning, it's difficult to imagine that Christmas is only six weeks away. That means that we don't have too long to prepare the Shop for the festive season. We will, of course, be making sure we have plenty of delicious Christmas goodies to tempt you. These will include seasonal cakes, biscuits, sweet treats and a full range of products on our extensive deli counter --- the game pies are a particular favourite at this time of year. Should your drinks cabinet become depleted don't forget we have plenty of emergency beer and wines just to help you out. We will also be open during the period between Christmas and New Year in case you have to restock on day to day essentials, so there's no need to do a ten mile round journey for a bottle of milk! In fact the only days we will be closed are Christmas Day, Boxing day and New Year's Day. Even our dedicated team of Volunteers are entitled a bit of time off to spend with their families. So after a some persuasion and arm twisting I am delighted to state that the Village Shop will be open for your business during the following hours,

Tuesday 24th December 8am - 2pm
Wednesday 25th December CLOSED
Thursday 26th December CLOSED
Friday 27th December 8am - 4pm
Saturday 28th December 9am - 4pm
Sunday 29th December 10am - 1pm

Monday 30th December 8am --4pm
Tuesday 31st December 9am - 4pm
Wednesday 1st January CLOSED
Thursday 2nd January resume normal hours

As usual at this time of year, Margaret Green has hand knitted some beautiful Christmas decorations, the proceeds of which are sent to Project Morogoro in East Africa. These unique items make lovely gifts or can be used to adorn your Christmas Tree. They are on display in the Shop so take a look the next time you visit us, I am sure that you will be impressed.



If you are out and about during the festive season, maybe for a ramble or some dog walking, call in and see us and enjoy a delicious hot chocolate. So Merry Christmas and thank you for supporting your Village Shop throughout the year. We are looking forward to a successful 2025 and I hope you are too.

An Organic Allotment by Pete Delaney

December, the last month of the year. By the time the month is over we shall have passed the shortest day and, although in the heart of winter, the days shall have begun to grow longer and the new year growing season will have started.

As with all the other autumn and winter months in December I throw as much feed onto my veg beds as I can get hold of.

Each year since I began my plot I have tried to make more compost, although it is difficult to create enough for all of the allotment needs. Most of what I make goes onto the land as feed and I tend to buy in good organic compost for the germination of seeds and potting on of young seedlings.



I am quite particular about what goes into my compost bays. Leaves and weedings from on the plot are ok, but I try to avoid weeds that are seeding so as not to be spreading weed seeds on the allotment as I feed. All my vegetable peelings go into my compost heap, plenty of horse muck and chicken muck .

Rotten leaves make the best composted feed in my opinion, I rake up the fallen

leaves from the trees around my plot and get them mixed in my heaps, the more leaf mould the better.

In January/February I turn my compost heap and mix them together into one big heap. As I do this I remove the bottom layer of the heaps, usually forming into usable compost by then and get it spread and forked into beds that I shall be using to grow in first early in the year. Onions, shallots, cabbage and potato beds, any plot that I shall be sowing or planting in early spring. Once my 3 heaps are 1 heap I leave it composting until March/April when I spread and fork it into beds across the plot.

On the growing and harvesting side of things, obviously not a lot is going on at this time of year, although I am still harvesting leeks, parsnips and Jerusalem artichoke. All of which I have grown plenty of.

In store I still have my largest and second largest Jamaican pumpkin and a New Zealand pumpkin. Quite a few onions, plenty of garlic still and even a couple of large courgettes, I find courgettes store well in with the squash.

Then, of course, there is any bottled or preserved produce that I have put away. Of all my bottled (in jars) produce this winter my favourite has been my own haricot beans in tomato sauce. I've eaten them all now but was so pleased with how they turned out I shall try and grow a large line of haricot beans this coming year.

So, in looking forward to the turn over of the year at the end of the month I wish all a season's greeting and a plentiful New Year on the plot.

Rob Cole's Gardening Tips

In last month's Feckenham News, I described my basic method for sowing seeds of hardy plants, and I will continue this month with the aftercare system.

AFTERCARE

I break with convention when it comes to where the pots and trays are kept after sowing. TV advice says 'on a sunny window sill', or a heated propagator, yet others say in a frame or greenhouse. I place all of my hardy plant seed pots and trays OUTSIDE in a fully open, but never hot, situation – NOT on a 'sunny window sill', NOT in a heated propagator, NOT in the greenhouse, NOT in a cold frame, but OUTSIDE in a simple, shallow, timber box with a removable mesh lid to give some protection against mice, birds, and slugs and snails. The lid is a basic timber frame covered in shading mesh.

The one thing you must remember is DON'T ALLOW THEM TO DRY OUT.

GERMINATION

All being well germination will occur when the seed is ready! With some species, this is within a matter of a few days, most within eight weeks, and just a few take a year or longer - so don't be in a hurry to throw away the pot. Eryngium, Helleborus, Paeonia, Trillium and Cyclamen fall into this long germination category. Keep the seedlings moist, but not wet, at all times.

POTTING ON

Around April time, when the seedlings are showing plenty of growth, you can pot them on - and this is the rewarding bit. Seedlings from pots can be carefully turned out of the pot and the ball of compost dropped (gently) on the bench to encourage them to separate (the sieved compost and the grit at the bottom of the pot help enormously to ensure easy separation of the seedlings). If the seedlings are small, or the roots damage

easily, pot up the seedlings in clumps (don't be greedy - 10 good clumps is better than 30 miffy individuals). Don't try and pot on seedlings if they are in wet compost - allow it to dry out a fair bit first. If you don't, the compost will be heavy and clinging and the chances of root damage are high.

I pot everything directly into a 100mm (4") square pot using a commercial peat free compost - by the time they are potted they will be wanting to grow away vigorously and will need plenty of space for the expanding root system.

For cell grown seedlings, make sure that they have grown plenty of roots before trying to remove them from the cells, otherwise the rootball will not hold together as a 'plug'. You can either pot up the plugs, or plant them directly where they are to grow.

POSTSCRIPT

Growing hardy plants from seed is really very easy and straightforward, and once you have had a success or two, you will be hooked - and your garden will be the richer.





CLUB MEETING – Wednesday 6th November 2024

At our November meeting, members were entertained by Diane Clement who gave a very informative talk entitled ‘The Dark Months – Not Just Snowdrops’ in which she described and illustrated many flowering plants and bulbs which gave colour in the gloomy months from November to February.

NEXT MEETING – Wednesday 4th December 2024

Our next meeting commences with our brief AGM, followed by a demonstration of ‘Christmas Wreath Making’ by Chrissy Barnes.

The theme for the monthly competition will be ‘Holly’.

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 2024. Visitors are made very welcome and may attend for £3.00 per meeting.

If you require any further information, ring Rob Cole (Chairman) on 07544 832052.



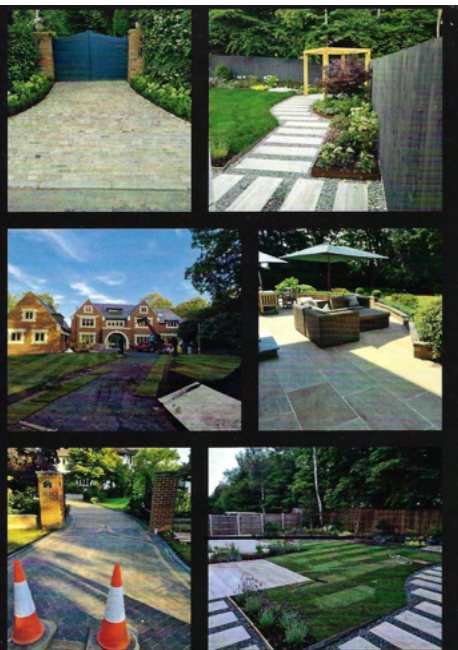
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Feckenham Cricket Club Bob Gordon

The weather was (reasonably) kind to us and so the annual bonfire and fireworks display took place a few days ago. A good crowd turned up and so the bar and particularly the barbecue were kept busy, while dozens of children were hurtling around with their junior light sabres. The bonfire was enormous and thanks to Rob Banner's preparation was soon ablaze and threatening the guy (a second and final outing by the club's scarecrow entry). Lewis Stacey and his team expertly dealt with the pyrotechnics and the firework display was truly breathtaking – the crowd's reaction at its climax was evidence of that – that was a very good display.

So, heartfelt thanks go to the many people that were involved in making November 2nd 2024 very special indeed.

One of our long-time (and I mean long time) cricketing stalwarts is Joe Davis, who will be known to many in the village. 50 years ago Joe was a prolific hitter of the ball and a fearsome fast bowler – and he has never stopped playing! Although a shy and retiring chap, he is a regular in the Worcestershire Over 70 team and is still knocking the ball all over the field at the age of 80 – a remarkable example to all those who give up sport in their early years. Here are just a few examples of the scores that Joe has achieved in the 2024 season:

66 not out v Wales

75 not out v Warwickshire

65 not out v Wales (in the return match)

78 against Devon

82 not out v Wiltshire

100 not out v Somerset

87 against Wales (once again, they came back for more)

101 not out v Wiltshire

Joe has simply not stopped loving cricket and has asked me to pass on his disappointment at the number of youngsters that stop playing in their teenage years rather than continue with a sport that develops teamwork and self-reliance. Lecture over.

After 7-8 years I have stepped down as Chairman but will still continue to help my successor and support the club.



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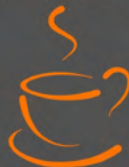
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