FECKENHAM

NEWS

February 2026

Published by Feckenham Church for the village
Editor Gilly Cooper - feckenhamnews@gmail.com

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Feckenham News in February

Dates for your Diary

February

4th	S&B Gardening Club
5th	Open Parish Council Meeting
7th	Village Hall Show
13th	FeckenOdeon 2
16th	WI
17th	Readers Group
28th	FeckenOdeon 1

March

7th	Midland Sinfonia
14th	Skabucks

Regular Sessions

Mondays	Dance Academy
Tuesdays	Tai Chi
Wednesdays	Playgroup (term time)
Thursdays	Bridge; Hatha Yoga

Second Monday of the month: Mobile Library
First Tuesday of the month:
Lunch Club, Feckenham Sessions
Second Tuesday of the month: Craft and Natter
First and Third Wednesday: Community Choir
Second Wednesday Art Club
Third Monday of the month: WI
1st and 3rd Fridays : Erstwhile Morris Dancers

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Front Cover

Photo: by Colin Hunt

Setting sun on New Year's Eve

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.

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Editor's Note

It's now half way through January as I write, gone are the mid-winter celebrations and also the snow - in the meantime at least. We are left with grey damp days when, for me, the urge to be in the outdoors is at its lowest ebb and, to be honest, I feel rather guilty that I'm not getting fresh air. Those early January jobs such as clearing out, sorting Christmas paraphernalia and making Seville orange marmalade are done. This is when some people have their worst symptoms of SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder). Keep a look out for those friends and neighbours who might be feeling low and don't take the glib reply when asked if they are ok as the reality they feel. Maybe now is a better time for resolutions rather than at New Year.

I have to thank a few people. Many of my neighbours have said how pleased they were to receive a Christmas card from the pupils at Feckenham School. So thanks to them and their teachers. I, for one, would love to hear more about the school. My children had such a good start there. Thanks also go to the Village Square Committee and their helpers who made The Square so pretty for Christmas and organised one of the best of Carols Around the Tree I can recall. The mix of traditional carols and some pop songs was lovely.

This month I have been sent some "Ramblings" by John Fletcher who was born in the village and knows it well. It's a relatively long piece and gives a description of what the village was like in the 60-70s as well as a sense of the continuity of the village as a strong community. despite changes that have happened over the years.

Rose & Crown
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Real Ales & Ciders
3 real ales on hand pumps every day
Traditional ciders - fine wines

Tuesday, 3rd February - in the Bar from 8pm - Free
TRADITIONAL MUSIC
SIX NATIONS RUGBY
Starts 5th Feb - all games shown in the bar.
Saturday, 14th February
VALENTINES SPECIAL MENU
Thursday, 26th February
ITALIAN THEMED MENU
www.roseandcrownfeckenham.co.uk

AN ELECTRIC EVENING!

Led by ELO's own Dave Scott-Morgan, Morganisation is an unmissable evening of classic rock nostalgia, engaging storytelling and feel-good energy. Featuring ELO favourites, original songs and timeless rock tunes, this is a show for music lovers of every generation.

With Dave's extensive musical legacy - from The Move to Magnum - and the warm presence of his wife Mandy bringing rich harmonies and humour, the performance is as personal as it is powerful. Expect soaring melodies, epic guitar moments and stories from behind the scenes of one of the world's most iconic bands.

Whether you're reliving your vinyl glory days or discovering these classics for the first time, Morganisation delivers a show full of heart, soul and great tunes - an evening that will have you singing all the way home.

MORGANISATION

HOW THE BEATLES GOT ME A JOB WITH ELO

Saturday, 7th February at 7.30pm

'SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW, SOMETHING BORROWED…'

The Midland Sinfonia returns to Feckenham with a concert showcasing works by composers who have mixed old musical ideas with new. A veritable cornucopia of styles through the ages. The programme includes Bach: Brandenburg Concerto No 5, Greig: Holberg Suite, John Denver: Annie's Song and Rutter: Antique and Folksong Suites.

THE MIDLAND SINFONIA

Saturday, 7th March at 7.30pm

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

BOILER BOTHER

On 27th December, the FeckenOdeon crew arrived to work their magic in transforming the Village Hall into a fully functioning cinema. They were a little concerned to realise that the central heating was stone cold… and the boiler couldn't be persuaded into life. Electric convector heaters were hastily rigged and saved the day and a nearly full house brought their own bodily warmth for a much enjoyed showing of Kind Hearts and Coronets.

The village hall's chair, Phil Tricklebank, swung into action and the boiler was checked, found to be a hopeless case – it was 18 years old and had been in constant use. AJ Jagielski of Reddiheat managed to source a suitable replacement and worked through a day of his Christmas break to fit it – and the hall was up and running again in time for the first bookings of 2026. A job well done – but at a cost to the hall of around £3,000… and to add insult to injury the heating system in the back room has sprung a leak somewhere under the concrete floor. The only solution to that particular problem is to re-pipe the system – digging up the floor would cause major disruption and huge expense. As it is the re-piping will cost another £2,000. This work will be done in February.

Unexpected expenses like this are the reasons that the Hall is constantly fundraising - villagers' contributions through things like the monthly Improvement Fund Draws (this month's results are below) and attendance at shows and events really do help to keep the place running and affordable for community use.

THANKS!

The Village Hall would like to thanks Ian Ridley for his recent contribution to the Hall's funds. Ian recently held a sale of "surplus" works of art. He generously donated the proceeds to the Hall, The Square and the school. We are most grateful.

Draw results

Feckenham Village Hall Improvement Fund Draw. Carried out on 5th January 2026.

January:

1st (£25)	106	Dave Powell
2nd (£15)	66	Mike Davis
3rd (£10)	52	Georgina Heard

Feckenham Parish Council

LATEST UPDATES:

FLOODING IN ASTWOOD LANE

The Parish Council would like to clarify the situation regarding flood alleviation on Astwood Lane. In the Autumn of 2025, The Environment Agency slashed their grant budgets for such work by 50% which raised a question mark as to whether the works could proceed. Incorrect information had been given (by others) that it was Worcestershire County Council that withdrew funding, this was not the case. North Worcestershire Water Management, (NWWM), the body which liaises on these matters immediately looked for other funding for the works. Prior to Christmas we were advised that, if the PC could contribute a substantial sum towards the cost, the project could move forward. The PC confirmed that it had budgeted for this contribution in the accounts for the year 25 - 26. At the time of writing, we are awaiting confirmation from NWWM but we are optimistic that the work will proceed.

BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE STATIONS (BESS)

At the time of writing, we have two active planning applications for BESS within the Parish.

- Boom Energy at Wheaton Hill – RBC planning reference- 25 / 00888/FUL.
- Grenergy on the Saltway – RBC planning reference 25 / 00628/FUL

Significant objections to these applications have been submitted by -:

Chris Ford, consultant to the Parish Council

The BESS action group, FABSS and their advisors

Mr Aiden Butler and his team

Mr Stephen Smith and his team

The Parish Council are most grateful for the support from not only the above, but all Parishioners who have taken their time to lodge personal objections.

We are advised that a third anticipated application by Energycog on Astwood Lane, is now unlikely to proceed.

The Parish Council would also like to clarify the situation regarding the three applicants which have withdrawn their submissions. Much as we would like to claim that this was a result of the efforts of the various objectors, the truth is that, Staktcraft, Immersa, and Innova are thought to have been withdrawn as a result of commercial decisions.

Information relating to energy matters, submissions and data forwarded to the Parish council, will soon be available on the Parish Council web site.

NEW LOCAL PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Redditch Borough Council (RBC) Have to provide an additional 8300 homes as part of the new Local Plan, currently being prepared. This plan will be in place until 2043. As time progresses more weight will be given to its implications than the current Local Plan.

As part of the process RBC will consider where new development will take place. An early part of the process is the " Call for Sites," which was undertaken last year. The Call for Sites allows landowners, developers, land agents, and other interested parties to put forward land for consideration.

We are aware that land within the Parish has been suggested, but at this time its location is not public information. It may be the Summer of 2026 before we will have more information. We were advised that even if all the land submitted were found to be acceptable, which is improbable, RBC would still have a deficit of, in the region of, 3500 homes. Once RBC have considered the information submitted, and any other options to provide the additional housing, further consultation would take place.

The Parish Council have instructed a planning consultant to act on behalf of the Parish, and work for the submission to RBC has commenced.

The Parish Council has also commissioned a "Housing Needs Survey". The draft report was received just before Christmas, and the final document will be available shortly on the Parish Council web site. The information will be used to support submissions to RBC.

It is possible that it may be between eighteen and twenty-four months until the new Local Plan will be in place.

COMMUNITY USE PROJECT FOR THE WINFIELDS SITE

As you may be aware, Winfield's shop is closed, and we understand that the trading arm of the company is in administration. The property and land however remain in the ownership of Winfield Holdings Limited.

The Parish Council have been in contact with the Winfield family and there is a possibility for the property to become some form of community project. Mr Joe Winfield is keen to explore this avenue, and, on his behalf, the Parish Council have offered to set up an **Open Meeting** in the Village Hall. It is hoped that any interested parties, could attend in an attempt to discuss any proposals, ideas, or concepts the parish may have regarding this possibility. However, it is important to understand that this would be a commercial enterprise, and that it would attract a rental cost, and business rates where applicable.

Any interests, suggestions, concepts would be directly with, or forwarded to, Winfield Holdings Limited. Any discussions relating to business agreements or legal matters should also be directed to Winfield Holdings Limited.

Mr Winfield may not be able to attend in person due to family commitments, however, if possible, he will join the meeting by video link.

THURSDAY 5th FEBRUARY at 7pm

This is a wonderful opportunity, all are welcome to voice a concept, or opinion.

UNITARY AUTHORITY

There has been a great deal of talk regarding the change of Worcestershire to a Unitary Authority. At the time of writing no final decision has been reached as to whether there will a single Unitary Authority or whether it will be a North and South Authorities. Redditch Borough Council (RBC) have submitted their case for dual authorities to the Secretary of State, and a decision is likely to be made in June or July of this year.

Local elections were due to take place in May this year. However the government offered RBC the possibility of cancelling. RBC held an extraordinary meeting on Tuesday 13th January and voted that the proposed election be cancelled. This proposal has now been sent to the Government, seeking their approval.

In May 2027 further local elections are possible, but elections for the "shadow unitary council" will also be due to take place. The shadow council will then take over from the existing County, Borough, and District councils in May 2028.

Footnote

There is a great deal going on in the Parish, your views and opinions are most welcome and are important in moving forward

Alan Smith, Chair Feckenham Parish Council

THE PRECEPT

The Precept is the amount you pay (through your Council Tax bill) for the services of the Parish Council. Last year the Council did not request an increase. Unfortunately this year, due to increased expenditure on Flood Defence, large scale planning applications and other matters (detailed in this article) it has been necessary to request an increased total of £66,000.

SALT BINS AND DOGGY BINS

The Parish Council's lengthsman fills the green bins with salt for use in icy weather. These bins are in addition to the County Council provision in yellow bins. We have had reports of some dog owners putting their dog waste into the green bins. If you feel you need a further waste bin where you walk your dog, please contact the clerk to discuss as this may be possible.

FOOTPATH WARDEN

The Parish Council has been extremely fortunate to have the services of Paul Furey as its volunteer parish path warden. Paul has decided it is time for someone else to take over his role. Worcestershire County Council provides suitable training as well as insurance. As we live in such a special place the PC hope someone will volunteer for the role. Please contact the clerk if you are interested.

NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday 4th February at 7.30pm in the back room at the Village Hall.

GET IN TOUCH

If you have queries or need help with local problems you are very welcome to contact the Council. Initially you can call the Parish Clerk on 01527 892522 or Email:
clerk@feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk

CHURCH SERVICES

PARISH CHURCH of ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Vicar - Vacant following the appointment of Fr Glenn to the Arch Benefice near Evesham.
Assistant Curate - The Rev Fiona Carter (unpaid volunteer - part time only)
Church Wardens - Vacant.
Weddings and Baptisms please contact the Rev Fiona Carter on fiona-carter@hotmail.co.uk
To arrange a Funeral please contact your Funeral Director
For all other enquiries please contact Ian Hunter, Secretary to the Parochial Church Council preferably by email to secretary@feckenhamchurch.org.uk or 07874 800108.
Website www.feckenhamchurch.or.uk

PARISH CHURCH
OF
ST.JOHN THE BAPTIST
FECKENHAM

Services for February 2026

Sun 1st Feb	**10.30am**	**Eucharist**	**Rev Fiona Carter**
Sun 8th Feb	**10.30am**	**Christingle Family Service**	**Rev Fiona Carter**
Sun 15th Feb	**6.30pm**	**Evensong**	**Rev Paul Lawlor**
Sat 21st Feb	**10.00-12.00**	**Messy Church**	**All welcome**
Sun 22nd Feb	**10.30am**	**Morning Prayer**	**Phil Tricklebank ALM**

Drop in (in church)
Wednesday at 10.30am - 12.00pm on 11th and 25th February
All welcome (coffee and cake)

Coffee Stop
Tuesday, February 10th between 2-3.45pm
All welcome (coffee and cake)

FECKENHAM ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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)
Local contact: Phylis Mott, Feckenham. Tel 893898

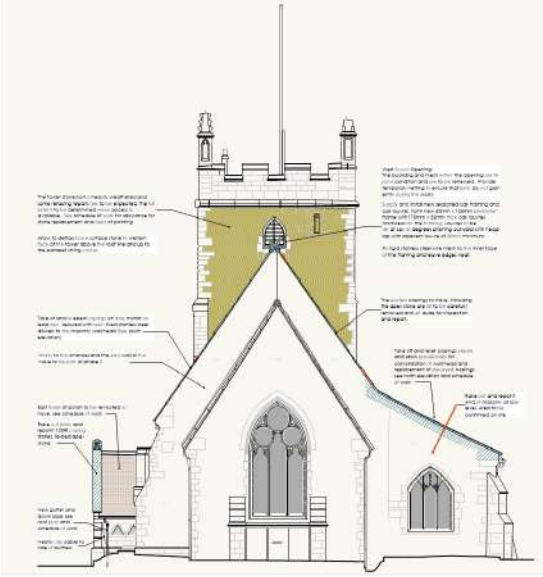
FUTURE-PROOFING FECKENHAM CHURCH
Preserving Feckenham's church heritage and community access.

In the December 2025 issue, Andrew Fisher outlined the project that is in preparation for repairs to the roofs of the church. We thought it would be useful to elaborate on the nature and extent of these repairs and the steps being taken by the PCC, supported by the Friends, to develop the project and the attempts to secure funding.

As many village residents will know, the roofs are not in good condition. There are leaks in various places and in 2022 there was a fall of plaster from the ceiling of the nave. The precaution was then taken to fix netting to the underside of all the plaster ceilings between the rafters as a temporary measure. As well as re-tiling, the project will include replacement of all the ceiling panels and re-applying the stencilled motifs in each bay.

The illustration is an extract from one of the architect's drawings showing the profile of the nave and north aisle roofs.

The first phase of the project, the nave and north aisle roofs, ceilings and some stonework repairs, will cost in excess of £300,000. We are in the process of applying to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £250,000 towards this total, and the remainder from other sources.



The Heritage Lottery Fund likes to see its grant aid to churches benefitting the community as a whole. Although the primary function of the church is as a place of worship, it has an important place in our community, with many other varied uses. This will be an integral feature of our application.

It also helps our cause if we can include letters of support for the project. Any such letters or emails would be much appreciated. Emails should be sent to secretary@feckenhamchurch.org.uk

Nick Reading
Friends of Feckenham Church

Addendum

The repair works, both external and internal, means that the church will have to be closed for the duration of the building contract. The PCC is looking at temporary alternatives for worship and other activities. In the meantime the PCC has decided that no bookings for events will be accepted for 12 months from April 2027. This will, in particular, apply to weddings, which are often arranged years in advance.

Reverend Fiona writes…

The Season of Lent: A Time for Reflection, Renewal, and Hope

As winter loosens its grip and the first signs of spring emerge, the Church enters one of its most meaningful seasons: **Lent**. This forty-day journey (excluding Sundays) leads us to the joy of Easter, inviting us to pause, reflect, and renew our hearts and minds in faith.

The forty days of Lent recall the time Jesus spent fasting in the wilderness, resisting temptation and deepening His reliance on God. This period is not simply about abstaining from luxuries; it is about spiritual preparation. Just as Jesus turned to prayer and Scripture, we too are called to draw closer to God, setting aside distractions and focusing on what truly matters.

Lent has long been associated with fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. Many choose to give something up—perhaps chocolate, social media, or another comfort—as a way of practising self-control and remembering Christ's sacrifice. Others take something on: committing to daily prayer, reading Scripture, volunteering, or supporting charitable causes.

Here are some practical ideas for this Lent:

- **Prayer**: Set aside a few minutes each day for quiet reflection or use a devotional guide.
- **Acts of Kindness**: Make a conscious effort to help someone each day.
- **Giving**: Support a local food bank or a charity close to your heart (in the church we have a basket for food bank collections).
- **Learning**: Read a Gospel or join a study group.

You may notice purple vestments in church during Lent. Purple symbolises penance and preparation. The absence of flowers and the simpler music reflect the solemnity of the season, reminding us that Lent is a time to strip back and focus on essentials. Details of Lent services are in this edition of the Feckenham News.

Though Lent is often associated with sacrifice, it is not a gloomy season. It is a time of hope and transformation. Through prayer and reflection, we are reminded of God's boundless grace and the promise of new life. As we journey through these weeks, let us encourage one another, share in fellowship, and look forward to the light and joy of Easter morning.

A Prayer for Lent

Lord Jesus, as we walk with You through this season of Lent, help us to turn away from all that distracts us and draw closer to You. May our prayer and fasting remind us of Your sacrifice, our prayers deepen our faith, and our giving reflect Your love. Prepare our hearts for the joy of Easter, when we celebrate Your victory over sin and death. Amen.

May God bless you all this season of Lent

Rev'd Fiona

Cool Climate
Air Conditioning Systems for your Home, Office or Business
Mr Simon Baker
Tel.: 01527 892823 or 07736 447705
E-mail: simon@coolclimate.co.uk
Web: http://www.coolclimate.co.uk

Feckenham Archive - Marion Chute

Goodness - When was Alcester Road quite so empty! Nothing but a distant bicycle on the road and a character just visible coming out of one of the houses on 'Ragley Row', originally built for the workers on the Ragley Estate,

Feckenham WI

As we all made our way into January's meeting, there was much more talk of what people had had for dinner than there normally is, no doubt prompted by our speaker tonight, the nutritionist, Functional Medicine Practitioner and dentist, Keeley Nicholas.

Keeley gave us a fascinating talk on brain health and specifically how nutrition plays a role in our cognitive function. I think we all came away with new information and a much needed reminder to eat better and generally take better care of ourselves! Lots of us took her leaflets away with us and I'm in no doubt she'll be seeing some of us soon for a face to face clinic in her Inkberrow practice.

Continuing the wellbeing theme into February, our next meeting is on Monday 16th February and we shall be trying out sound bathing.

Our meetings are every 3rd Monday of the month in the back room of Feckenham village hall. We're a friendly bunch and always welcome guests and new members. Our sessions are free for Feckenham W.I. members and guests are £5.

From Sarajevo to Feckenham - a dog's journey

Marion Chute

There are a few 'foreign rescues' in Feckenham and some people have asked me how the process works.

Conditions in the shelter where Genie was before rescue.

Genie began life in Bosnia when she was found begging in a cafe and taken to a 'shelter'. The shelters are really just holding centres and the future for the animals is bleak.

Genie was collected by the volunteers who try to take dogs that they hope to re home. The description that I saw on Social Media was for '*Oceania, a young lab x who was frightened and frozen in the corner of a cage. At first all she knew was hunger and fear but gradually we saw her gentle and loving personality revealed*'. The charity that she came from also provided our last, much loved, dog and so we felt confident in dealing with them.

Once you express an interest in a dog there is a questionnaire to fill in that includes whether the dog will be left alone in the day, are there other animals, children, whether your garden is fenced and critically how old you are! In our case our son had to agree partnership as we were over 70. Once all this is done then a small deposit is taken and your dog is reserved. Normally a home visit is then organised and, as we had had a home visit before, the charity accepted a video showing where our dog would sleep and the garden.

At this stage the charity has had the dog vaccinated, wormed and tested for heart worm and brucellosis, she was also neutered, checked for behaviour with children, checked with other dogs and

described as submissive and playful with other dogs. Sounded perfect to me! Then the long journey to the uk is booked in a bespoke fitted van. As you will appreciate the journey is broken several times and all the dogs are microchipped and have passports with veterinary records for border crossings. We paid the veterinary, transport and kennel fees at this point

On arrival in the uk, the exhausted dogs spend 48 hours in DEFRA kennels. Then we are invited to meet the 'happy bus' to collect our new members of the family. There is a uk post adoption team who will help with any questions or problems and they sent us some tips to help us through the early weeks. We picked up Oceania (immediately renamed Genie) and it was a very weird but exciting experience!

The arrival of Genie is obviously just the beginning. Her personality has been gradually revealed from that silent shadow at my heels and two months in she has learned how to play with toys, chase and retrieve balls and usually come to the whistle. She'll always be a Labrador, with that food focus which makes her quick to nick any that she comes upon. She is still a gentle and lovable girl and we are looking forward to introducing her to the beach and many other new experiences.

You never quite know what you are going to get but the charity did help us as much as possible.

WHAT'S ON IN

FECKENHAM VILLAGE HALL

MORGANISATION

Former ELO musician leads trio in original songs, rock 'n' roll classics and ELO hits.

Saturday, 7th February at 7.30pm
Book online at feckhall.org
by phone 0333 666 3366
or in person at The Rose & Crown or The Village Shop

Feckenham Cricket Club proudly present

Feckenham Village Hall, High Street, Feckenham B96 6HN

Saturday 14th March 2026

Doors open 7.30pm – Band start at 8.30pm

Tickets £10 in advance, £13 on the door

Tickets Available from Feckenham Cricket Club, Mill Lane, or telephoning 07980309844

THE MIDLAND SINFONIA

"SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW, SOMETHING BORROWED"

BACH: BRANDENBURG CONCERTO NO 5
GREIG: HOLBERG SUITE
JOHN DENVER: ANNIE'S SONG
RUTTER: SUITE ANTIQUE
RUTTER: FOLK SONG SUITE

Saturday, 7th March at 7.30pm
Book online at feckhall.org
or in person at The Village Shop

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT WINFIELDS?

AN OPEN PARISH MEETING

Thursday 5th February at 7pm
Feckenham Village Hall

There is a possibility for the former Winfields store to become some form of community project. We understand that Mr Joe Winfield is keen to explore this avenue, and, on his behalf, the Parish Council have offered to set up an open meeting.

However, it is important to understand that this would be a commercial enterprise, and that it would attract a rental cost, and business rates where applicable.

Please come along if you have any thoughts, ideas or views on such an endeavour

Feckenham READERS GROUP

Tuesday, 17th February - 7.45pm
This month's book:

THE SAFEKEEP

By Yael van der Wouden

Information: 01527 892285

ERSTWHILE

BORDER MORRIS

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

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 February

Stock & Bradley Gardening Club

ALPINES in the WILD and in CULTIVATION

A Talk by Diane Clement

Wednesday, 4th February - 7.30pm

Stock & Bradley Village Hall

Feckenham Parish Council

MEETING

Thursday, 5th February - 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.

CRAFT AND NATTER

on the 2nd Tuesday of each month in the bar at the Rose and Crown from 7pm

You can come along with your craft, watch others - or have a go at learning something new

THE FECKENODEON CINEMA SOCIETY

THE MARCHING BAND

12A

FeckenOdeon 2 Friday, 13th February at 8pm

CITY LIGHTS

U

A FILM BY CHARLES CHAPLIN

FeckenOdeon 1 Saturday, 28th February 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.feckenodeon.co.uk

*Booking Fee applies to Phone and Online Bookings

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

theWI

INSPIRING WOMEN

Next Meeting: Monday, 16th February

SOUND BATHING

8pm - Feckenham Village Hall

Contact jen@thecarys.co.uk for details

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

The FeckenOdeon Cinema Socety

BROTHERS...AND A BAND

When internationally acclaimed orchestra conductor Thibaut is diagnosed with a serious illness, a DNA test leads him to discover he has a biological brother, Jimmy, a factory worker who plays trombone in a local marching band in Lille. Authentic, funny and very moving, French actor and director Emmanuel Courcol's drama pairs Benjamin Lavernhe and Pierre Lottin as newfound brothers who forge an unlikely connection through the joy and power of music. *(FR 2024)*

THE MARCHING BAND (15)

Friday, 13th February at 8pm

THE TRAMP IN LOVE...

Even though the talkies had taken over by 1931, Charlie Chaplin preferred to work without dialogue and, in this tale of the love between the Tramp and a blind flower girl, his insistence pays off. The film is both hilarious and intensely moving - one of the finest of its kind. It has a dedicated musical score composed by Chaplin himself. The film has been painstakingly restored - you'll never believe that it's 94 years old – and this is a rare chance to see it as Chaplin intended – on the BIG screen. *(USA 1931)*

There will be a supporting programme of short films from the same era.

CITY LIGHTS (U)

Saturday, 28th February 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 on 0333 666 3366 or online at www.feckenodeon.co.uk

Feckenham Square Management Committee

CAROLS UPDATE

Christmas Eve seems an age ago but The Square Management Committee would like to update you on the highly successful Carols On The Square which gave everybody's Christmas a jolly start.

The Committee would like to thank villagers for turning out in such great numbers to support the event - and for being so generous with donations. Just under £1,000 has been sent to the County Air Ambulance Charity.

The organisers tried to liven things up a bit this time. As well as the usual traditional carols there were a couple of popular Christmas songs for everyone to join in with - and for the first time ever there was dancing on The Square... despite it being decidedly muddy underfoot.

A novelty rendition of the 12 Days of Christmas with choir members singing the individual gifts and the "congregation" joining in for the Partridge was also much enjoyed.

Leading the singing were members of Feckenham Church Choir with their conductor Amanda Gordon. We are grateful to the choir for taking part in this when they had another important "gig" later in the evening.

Gallons of mulled wine and several tons of mince pies vanished in a twinkling and, after a rousing rendering of "We Wish You a Merry Christmas", everyone went off to the pub or back home with a warm feeling that Christmas had actually begun.

WHODUNNIT...

The Carols on The Square are organised by The Square Committee as a way of thanking the village for helping to take care of The Square throughout the year. The Committee is made up of Dave Powell (Chair), Tim Smith (Vice-Chair), Ian Bellion (Secretary), Martin Strange (Treasurer), Alan Smith, Ian Ridley, Judy Hooker, Judy Underwood and Maggie Stephens. New members of the Committee are always welcome. Contact square@feckenham.f9.co.uk for information.

THANKS

The Committee wishes to thank Ian Ridley for his extremely kind donation of a third of the proceeds of his recent clearance sale of paintings held at The Rose & Crown.

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The Ramblings of a guy born in Feckenham back in the 1940's!

My name is John Fletcher and I was born in the front bedroom of the middle, of what then was three cottages, on the Droitwich side of the old coaching inn called the Black Boy almost opposite the Community Shop on Droitwich Road. The middle cottage was lived in by my grandparents, Bill and Winifred Glover, the top cottage by a Mrs Owen and the bottom one by Tom Fox.

It was 3rd April 1948 and my mum, Iris, and dad, Jack, were living with my Mum's parents. When my mother went into labour my father was dispatched to Astwood Bank on his motorbike to fetch the midwife, Nurse Woolridge, a formidable figure who apparently hated men – despite them keeping her in her job for many years!

At some point in the proceedings my dad was sent to make a pot of tea which I imagine would have seriously challenged his culinary skills based on what I observed when I was a little older! He was away somewhat longer than Miss Woolridge expected and when he returned with said tea she asked him if he had been to India to obtain it! I had the pleasure some 20 years later of Miss Woolridge delivering my and my wife's first child and she would have been subjected to the same wait when I was sent in the same quest as my dad!

Anyway, I duly arrived and was registered as a 12.15am birth although my gran and grandad, mum and dad, all thought I was born earlier at 11.45pm on the 2nd April!

We lived in Feckenham until I was about 4 years old when we moved to The Mayfields in Redditch and then after 3 or 4 years to Heathfield Road in Webheath where I lived until I married in 1968.

I spent every weekend back in the village with my grandparents and when I was about 7 or 8 years old I was allowed to catch the R9 bus from Webheath to Redditch bus station, walk about 50 yards and get back on the same bus which was now the R9 to travel to Feckenham via Astwood Bank arriving just before 10.00am! My nan would 'keep an eye open' for the bus and as soon as it arrived she would start cooking my bacon and egg. Nice thick slices of bacon cut from

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cured pig kept in the cellar complete with fatty rind and its hair!

John Smith, the son of Chester and Mrs Smith (I do not recall her Christian name) was born either the day before or the day after me at what is now the community shop, then Feckenham Garage. We became good friends later and I remember Chester building smaller racing cars which John, and sometimes me, were able to drive around the orchard at the rear of the garage.

You will, no doubt, be aware that John was killed in a road accident in France in 1969 (I think) and the gates into Feckenham churchyard were erected in his memory. There is also a memorial garden beside them in memory of John's grandmother who lived in the village (in the High Street I seem to remember!) for many years and was a well respected and loved lady.

I have a cousin, Richard, who lives down in Mill Lane adjacent to the cricket ground.

I remember 7 (Yes Seven) shops in the village namely Co-op (on the corner of High Street and Alcester Road), Mrs Watton's shop (opposite the Co-op), Bakery (High Street below entrance to the Catholic Church), the Post Office (close to the Village Hall and owned by Mr and Mrs Hicks), a butchers shop somewhere near what is now a road junction High Street/Turton Gardens, a Sweet Shop (between the Butchers and Village Green) and the 'Top Shop' (opposite the Village Green on High Street – the guy who owned it ran a Morris Traveller vehicle I remember!).

I had many friends in the village including John Smith, Jo Palmer, Roger Hawkes and brothers, Martin Crowe, Neil Johnson, Jo (Peter) Davis, John Davis, Pete Masters, Andy Bray, John Hicks (his brother Fred now volunteers in the Community Shop) and more whose names I just cannot recall!

My grandfather, Bill Glover, was well known around the village and I guess was something of a horse whisperer! When he was much younger he apparently went to Argentina to purchase horses for various wealthy persons (but that may have been before he lived in Feckenham). I vividly recall him killing chickens round the back of the Black Boy in Droitwich Road and hanging them to bleed (somewhat gruesome!) and I went ploughing with him around the village when he used horses to pull the plough! He also took me harvesting in the season, catching rabbits in the blades and taking them home for my nan to put them in the stew-pot which was always on the range fire in the lounge.

My grandad, apparently, enjoyed a pint of beer (or several!) and each day, just before lunch would go into the Lygon Pub to partake! My nan told me that he went in there to have his haircut and at my young age of about 8 or 9 it never occurred that might not be the reason as he was as bald as a coot!

I used to love watching Feckenham's football team, never missed a home game and the football field to me was 'the theatre of dreams', never mind Old Trafford! Peter Williams, whose wife ran a cattery in Droitwich Road very often took me to the away matches. I recall Jake Slade, a barrel-chested centre-half not to be 'messed' with was one of my heroes (he also had a pig-swill round which he did every Saturday morning!), Dennis Farmer played at centre-forward, Pete Williams played at left-half and took the penalties and there are other guys I can

picture in my mind but I cannot recall their names!

My nan and I took walks around the countryside outside of the village. Down Mill Lane, over the river bridge, turn right and come out in Berrow Hill and then back home was one of my favourites!

At some time my Grandad, who was working part-time for Redditch council, planted daffodils in the grass verges on every road entering the village and I like to think that those up by Berrow Hill and possibly others are related to his plantings some 70 years ago. He also took over the maintenance of the sewer beds which were situated about three fields behind the Rose and Crown. He grew excellent vegetables there and he and my father won prizes at Feckenham and Webheath Flower Shows.

I well remember the motor-cycle scrambling on two sites towards Bradley Green with Jeff Smith, Vale-Onslow and one of the Biddles from Webheath plus many others taking part and I can sense the smell of the fuel as I am writing this!

Feckenham Wake with all the traction engines and stalls on the Green was another highlight on the calendar and much enjoyed – particularly the Pig Roast!

I loved my times in Feckenham and when my nan died when I was about 13 it was one of the saddest days of my life. I continued to visit my grandad until he died several years later. They are both buried in Feckenham Church Yard.

I have been connected to Feckenham Cricket club for the best part of 40 years as Secretary, Treasurer, 3rd Team Organiser and latterly as Auditor! Both our sons played at Feckenham with Andrew serving as 1st XI captain for several years and Paul, our youngest son, (who died 15 years ago), was 3rd XI captain for a few years. Steve Daniels, who lives in Turton Gardens, has been with the club for close on 65 years!

My wife and I attempted to move into the village, down Mill Lane, about 30 years ago but that did not work out unfortunately.

However, my wife, Sue, enjoys a coffee and me a piece of bread pudding or a scotch egg in the village's community shop – probably the best coffee in the area!

Fond memories!

John Fletcher

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SWANSBROOK Radio

UPCOMING ANNIVERSARIES

It's a little daunting to realise that, in June this year, Swansbrook Radio will celebrate its 10th anniversary. After a number of tests and false starts the station went on the air for real on Wake day 2016. The day after the result of the Brexit referendum was declared. We recorded the events of the day on The Square and rapidly edited them for broadcast that evening. There were numerous Brexit opinions expressed - it might be interesting to resurrect those interviews and check back to see if the interviewees have changed their tune!

On the same day the first edition of Ian Bellion's Happy Hour programme was transmitted. That programme is also about to celebrate it's 500th edition. It seems a shame not to mark these anniversaries but, at the moment, we're not sure what form the celebrations should take. A massive live outside broadcast from a party? ... or perhaps just a quiet drink in the studio with indoor fireworks? Watch this space!

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Village Shop - Alan Slater

Well that's the festive season done and dusted for another twelve months and life at the Shop has slowed down considerably since we took the decorations down. January is always our quietest month of the year, a time when most of us are still eating the leftovers from Christmas and nervously awaiting the arrival of our credit card statement. So it comes as no surprise that most retail outlets see a downturn in trade during the first few weeks of the new year. We are no exception. However, now it's a bit quieter we can take the opportunity to a bit of spring cleaning and planning for the year ahead.

If one of your New Year's resolutions is to widen your social circle or become more involved in our local community, then why not volunteer to help out at the Shop? It's a very friendly and sociable atmosphere even if the pay is lousy! And you will be made most welcome. You can choose what hours and day you wish to work, so if you would like to know more just drop by and have a chat with any of our volunteers.

One of those lovely volunteers, Margaret Green, would like to thank everyone who supported the Mission Morogoro Charity by purchasing her knitted toys last Christmas. A fantastic total of £500 was raised and that money will help to fund a midwife at a rural health centre in the remote village of Tunguli in Tanzania. I'm delighted to end on such a positive note and I'm looking forward to the year ahead just as the first snowdrops are appearing in my garden ..... hooray for spring.

An Organic Allotment
by Pete Delaney

As this is my first article of the year, I would like to take the opportunity to wish everyone a 'happy grow year'.
With January having given us a taste of proper winter weather, I am catching up with some of the allotment's winter jobs. Especially turning over compost heaps and digging out the compost soil beneath the top most layers, spreading it over and lightly forking it into the beds in the plot that I shall be needing first in the season. Preparing for the sowing in late February of early crops, such as onions, shallots, potatoes and Jerusalem artichokes all of which I like to get into the ground by the end of the month.
Also, as I spread compost feed about the plot, I begin my first weeding session of the season, pulling up all that is trying to poke it's head up through the soil, as they can establish themselves quicker than you think, creating harder work later on. Indoors this month I sow broad beans into pots which I grow on until they are established, then I plant them out into the bed fed and prepared for them. I also, indoors, sow leeks into trays which I transplant into small pots once they are big enough to handle.
On the harvesting side, I had a plentiful crop of parsnips this winter, they were not as large as previous years, but plenty of them. Jerusalem artichokes are a main stay of my winter diet, replacing potatoes in my meals boiled or fried as chips. My best ever crop of sprouts have been a joy, although I was surprised to find that the red sprouts, which I grew for the first time, were all green sprouts below the outer leaves.
For a second year in a row my winter cabbage has not thrived as in previous years and I shall look at the positioning and feed when I plant them later this year. Ah well, all growers know you can't win them all and no year is ever the same as the previous one.
On the other hand, the romaine lettuce, that self-seeded on the plot has grown very well, I planted the young seedlings together under a glass cloche to protect from frosts. They should make good heads of lettuce by late spring and I have been pinching a few outer leaves already.
In my fruit net this month, I shall prune the raspberries almost down to the ground, new shoots soon appear. Last summer they gave me my best crop of fruit so far. The grape I planted a couple of years ago gave its first 4 clusters of grapes last autumn, which I delighted in and I am hoping for more from the plant this year.
So with the spring season and good weather hopefully on the horizon, it's get stuck into the preparations of feeding, forking and weeding the plot. Here's to a good growing season.

Rob Cole's Gardening : More Snippets

I have, in my time, edited a fair number of garden society newsletters and journals. I often found that an article didn't quite fill a page, so I resorted to some 'snippets' to fill the gaps. A while ago, I used some of them as my article in the Feckenham News. Here is another selection.

The original source of *Fuchsia* 'Mrs Popple' is unknown, but it grew on a bank in Mr and Mrs Popple's garden in Stevenage between the wars, and had done so since long before the Popples moved in. Their garden bordered the famous Six Hills Nursery run by Clarence Elliott, and he observed, over the years, that it appeared to be completely hardy. He begged some cuttings, and eventually exhibited the plant at an RHS Show in 1934, naming it after Mrs Popple, since when it has become a well known cultivar.

Geranium 'Johnson's Blue' was raised in 1945 by the Dutch nurseryman Bonne Ruys (who also introduced *Helenium* 'Moerheim Beauty' in 1930) and came from a batch of seed of *Geranium pratense* received from the garden of Arthur Tysilio Johnson in the Conway Valley. It was introduced around 1950, and received an AGM in 1993. *Geranium* 'Johnson's Blue' is a sterile hybrid, perhaps with *Geranium himalayense*. If you see seed offered of this cultivar (as you often do in Seed Exchange lists), you will know that it is not from the real thing.

Daphne cneorum 'Eximia' was introduced by Arthur Tysilio Johnson and differs from the ordinary species in having larger leaves and flowers. 'Eximia' means distinguished.

Gardening requires lots of water - especially perspiration.

The Lesser Celandine, *Ranunculus ficaria* is sometimes referred to by the name of Pilewort, based on the perceived resemblance between its knobbly tubers and piles.

Nora Darwin was the granddaughter of Charles Darwin, and at the age of twenty-six she married Alan Barlow, later Sir Alan Barlow. *Aquilegia* 'Nora Barlow' was not bred by her, but was a plant which grew in her garden for many years, and which came reliably true from seed. Eventually, seed was given to Alan Bloom of Bressingham Nurseries, apparently on condition that the strain was named after her.

God makes rainy days so that gardeners can get the housework done.

If you plant sprouts in January, you'll never have to eat sprouts.

'Our England is a garden, and such gardens are not made,
by singing "Oh how beautiful" and sitting in the shade'.
(Rudyard Kipling "The Glory of the Garden")

When weeding, the best way to make sure you are removing a weed and not a valuable plant is to pull on it. If it comes out of the ground easily, it is a valuable plant.

A garden is always a series of losses set against a few triumphs - a bit like life itself.

'The most noteworthy thing about gardeners is that they are always optimistic, always enterprising, and never satisfied. They always look forward to doing something better than they have ever done before'.
(Vita Sackville-West)

Stock and Bradley Gardening Club Report

CLUB MEETING – Wednesday 7th January 2026

Our meeting at the Village Hall on Wednesday 7th January was to have been a 'Bring and Share' supper followed by a 20 Questions Gardening Quiz. However, we had to cancel the meeting at the last minute due to the discovery of frost damage and leakage of water pipes. All members were contacted by email and/or by text and telephone, so we hope that there were no wasted journeys.

NEXT CLUB EVENT – Wednesday 4th February 2026

Our next meeting at the Village Hall will be on Wednesday 4th February 2026 and will be a talk by Diane Clement on 'Alpines in the Wild and Cultivation'. This will be a welcome return by Diane who is an active member of the Alpine Garden Society.

The subject for the monthly competition is 'Three Snowdrop Flowers (the same or different) - with no foliage'.

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 2026. 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.

Feckenham Cricket Club

As spring is rumoured to be approaching, or at least the Cheltenham Festival, thoughts turn towards the new season & its preparation.

After a relatively dry winter the situation was turned upside down mid January with some of the worst snowfall for a few years, particularly in Birmingham, that thankfully lasted only a few days. Indoor nets will soon be in full force amidst the sound of new bats being knocked in through thin walls in new builds everywhere, & the thoughts of sunshine are tantalisingly in the air. Prospective new players & social members are always welcome to the clubhouse at the weekends, 5-10 Fridays, 2-10 Saturdays & 1-7 Sundays where our selection of real ales, lagers & guiness are sure to quench your thirst. Sky sports is on offer for weekend football & we'll also be showing the six nations.

An upcoming date for your diaries is an exciting venture in the village hall where we welcome Skabucks, the ever popular local band playing top Two Tone tunes from the revival & 60's ska eras. This isn't to be missed & is expected to be a sell out so don't delay in getting in touch. Either ring the number on the poster or preferably pop into the cricket club itself to pick up your tickets.

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