

# FECKENHAM

# NEWS

January 2024



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

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# Feckenham News iJanuary

## Dates for your Diary

### January

4th	Parish Council Meeting
8th	Dismantle Christmas Tree
9th	Lunch Club
10th	Readers group
15th	WI
17th	S&B Gardening Club Dinner
25th	Burns Night - Rose and Crown
27th	FeckenOdeon

### March

9th	Maybe Dick in the Village Hall
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### Regular Sessions

Wednesdays Playgroup

Thursdays Bridge; Hatha Yoga; Pilates

Fridays Meditation Class

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

## Production Team

Gilly Cooper - Editor      feckenhamnews@gmail.com

Distribution      07500115581

Ian Bellion - What's On      whatson@feckenham.f9.co.uk

Jen Cary - NewsHound      jen@28highstreet.co.uk

Mary Smith - Advertising      fnadvertising@btinternet.com

©2023. Published by Feckenham PCC

Printed by Solopress

## Front Cover

Photo: Bell Ringers at  
Nine Lessons and  
Carols by the editor.

Magazine online at  
[www.feckenham-  
parishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk)

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## Editor's Note

As the year turns we look forward to 2024 with some trepidation, given the state of the world, the cost of living crisis etc. I do hope the outlook will be brighter.



Perhaps peace will be negotiated and we all begin to live in a more sustainable world. My resolution will be to consume less.

This magazine is a little thinner than usual. I look forward to the return of Pete Delaney's organic allotment article next month. We have had no volunteer to take over Newshound. Please let me know if you would like to take this on. There will be support if you need it. Also suggestions for people I could interview for the "Introducing..." page please.

I'd like to send a vote of thanks to the

members the Square Committee who went out in dismal weather to bring light into the darkness by stringing up the lights around the green and then erecting and decorating the tree which, I'm sure you will agree, looks magnificent. You will receive this after the Carols on the Square event has past. We will be guaranteed "snow" as usual!

It was with great sadness I received the news that Ann Matthews has sadly died. She was such a great example of someone who did good in many ways and I'm sure others will write more about her next month. I knew her ever since our daughters started nursery in the village hall over 30 years ago. Later she became a near neighbour after Jeff, Ann and their two daughters Emma and Thea moved into Chestnut House. She will be sorely missed. On behalf of the village may I send our sincere condolences to her family.



Sunset over Feckenham  
by Debbie Watton

## Feckenham Square Management Committee

### CHRISTMAS HAS BEEN...

...and gone - or it will have by the time you read this. At the time of writing it's still a few days in the future. Preparations are still going on for the Carols on The Square on Christmas Eve and the weather forecast is encouraging. One thing that has already happened is the erection and decoration of the village Christmas Tree. This time it was of a manageable size and the Committee and one gallant additional volunteer managed to heave it into place with relatively little fuss and no injuries. It now stands resplendent, dressed in baubles and twinkling lights. The Square itself is dressed in strings of warm and welcoming lights. The tree is provided by The Square Management Committee for everyone in Feckenham to enjoy. It is funded by the results of voluntary efforts - so it's a shame that an appeal in these pages for help to erect it was ignored by most villagers...

### MORE HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK...

The Square Committee organises a series of popular events throughout the year - the Carols, Scarecrow Festival, Fun on The Square, etc. Everyone involved gives their time freely and willingly - but there simply aren't enough volunteers to cope with the workload. These events are part of our community life and it would be a great shame if any of them were to cease because people are unwilling to help run them. It's simple to get involved - just email [square@feckenham.f9.co.uk](mailto:square@feckenham.f9.co.uk) and someone will be in touch. We're aware that people have busy lives so you can commit to as much or as little as you wish - but, in the words of a famous supermarket slogan, "Every Little Helps" - so please, get in touch and find out how you can help us to keep our village traditions going.

### WHAT GOES UP...

The Christmas Tree will be coming down on Saturday 8th January at 10am - so that would be an ideal time to lend a hand and to chat about how you could get involved - just turn up. Warm clothing and a pair of sturdy gloves might be a good idea!

## Feckenham Village Hall

### AN INTERVAL

After a series of three live shows and a steak night Feckenham Village Hall is taking a breather. The next live performance is due to take place in early March. The Autumn/Winter 2023 season was a great success with audiences returning to pre-covid levels. We started in September with the inspired culinary lunacy of George Egg, performed some gastronomic miracles of our own for the steak night in October, welcomed a veteran folk-rock star in November and finally, in December, enjoyed an incredibly atmospheric classical concert - the latter was completely sold out and was one of the finest performances we've ever seen at the Hall.

#### Coming in 2024:

**4th March:** Hambledon Productions in their dramatic lampoon entitled **Maybe Dick**

**14th April:** Spilt Milk Dance Company in their comedy **Desert Island Flicks**

**18th May:** The return of the award winning folk and storytelling trio **Harp & a Monkey**



### TICKETS FOR ALL EVENTS AT FECKENHAM VILLAGE HALL

Are on sale at The Village Shop  
and The Rose & Crown.

Book online through [www.feckhall.org](http://www.feckhall.org)  
Book by phone on 0333 666 3366

### Feckenham Village Hall Improvement Fund November draw.

The draw was carried out on 5th December 2023.

1st (£25)	48	Paul & Dinny Pynsent
2nd (£15)	135	Steve & Jenny Dalloway
3rd (£10)	35	John Harrison

#### December draw.

The draw was carried out on 5th December 2023.

1st (£25)	148	Pauline Jennings
2nd (£15)	136	Steve & Jenny Dalloway
3rd (£10)	90	Phil & Erica Guise

# CHURCH SERVICES



## PARISH CHURCH of ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Vicar: Fr Glenn Reading 01527 894436  
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Church Warden: Vacant

For Weddings, Baptisms & Funerals please contact Fr Glenn

Website: [www.feckenhamchurch.org.uk](http://www.feckenhamchurch.org.uk)



PARISH CHURCH  
OF  
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

## Services for January 2024

7th January	10.30am	Eucharist	Rev John Green
14th January	9.00am	BCP Communion	Fr Glenn Reading
	10.30am	Family Service	Rev Fiona Carter
21st January	6.30pm	Evensong	Rev Fiona Carter
28 <sup>th</sup> January	10.30am	Eucharist	Fr Glenn Reading

### Drop in (in church)

Wednesday at 10.30am - 12.00pm

10<sup>th</sup> January and 24<sup>th</sup> January

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](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**

## New Year Reflections from Rev'd Fiona Carter

Traditionally the new year is a time to reassess our lives. To look back on the year behind and look forward to the year ahead. Some of you will be glad to see the end of 2023 and will look forward to 2024. Even the late Queen said in late 1992 that she had an "annus horribilis". Others of you will have had a good year and feel very blessed. Which is all perfectly normal. In this life we all have ups and downs, it is all part of being human. Living in Feckenham and surrounding areas means that we are already blessed to live in a beautiful part of our country.

I have had a very good year. I was ordained deacon on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September, and I am serving as a deacon in the benefice of Christ the King which includes the local churches of Feckenham and Astwood bank, and also Crabbs Cross and Headless Cross. I spend my time being involved in local services and activities, mainly on a Sunday, but also in the week as well over the whole benefice.

In the parish of Feckenham I am involved in Feckenham school as a church governor, and in local activities such as washing up at the toddler group held on the village hall on a Wednesday and talking to people at the drop in at Feckenham church on every other Wednesday morning with coffee and cake.

I have been on something called the "auxiliary pathway" which has been designed for local people who are already involved in their local church to be ordained. So, geographically we stay where we are. This is a self-supporting role and open to those over 55 years old. We also have had to go through the national system just like everyone else wanting and hoping to be ordained.

You may see me wondering about the village, and please say hello I would love to

meet you. I live in Astwood bank now but my family's links with Feckenham are well established. From 1990- 2005 we lived in the parish of Feckenham on the Callow Hill estate. Three of my four children attended Feckenham First school when Mrs Doyle was head teacher. And I have attended Saint John the Baptist Church in Feckenham since the early 1990's.

Every day is a new start in God's eyes his mercies are new every morning. Anything that we have done that we felt could have been done better or anything that worries us can be left at the foot of the cross every day, and we start again. But a new year to us seems even more of a new start. Be gentle with yourselves as we are all doing the best we can with the knowledge that we have. And new year's resolutions are often discarded fairly early on in the year so don't put yourselves under too much pressure. God bless you all and I hope you all have a blessed new year.



# Charity News

## T4U Christmas Shoebox Appeal Lin Preace



Thank you for your lovely boxes, your generous donations and beautiful hand knits.

This year our boxes were distributed in either Moldova or Romania, both

countries are some of the poorest in Europe. Your box was most probably the only present that some of these unfortunate children would have received.

272 boxes were collected, a joint effort, with special thanks to June Crofts (Stoke Prior) Nicola Dobson and Tricia Mortimer (Callow Hill Village), the children of Feckenham First School & Bromsgrove 1st Otters Cubs. Thank you, so much for your donations of £640 plus proceeds from Cuddly Toys Tombola of £373-20p which enabled the make up of another 100 boxes.

Any unwanted toys that are in mint condition would be much appreciated for our stall on Wake Day.



TOGETHER WE CAN CHANGE LIVES ONE BOX AT A TIME

## Village Christmas Card Angela Fletcher

This year's card raised the grand total of £xxxx which will be shared equally between Shelter and Crisis. It was made possible by the generosity of villagers and support from the Church Giving Group

## Jazz For Charity - Update David Rowe



Amazing good fortune!! The very successful Jazz for Charity evening on 18<sup>th</sup> November eventually raised a total of £1,315.00. It was our very good fortune that during the week we made the donation to the Sick Children's Trust, an initiative called 'The Big

Give' was, for one week only, part match-funding donations to registered charities, so amazingly our donation to the SCT became £2,425.00!!!!

We would just like to restate our thanks to everyone who performed, helped, donated, attended, purchased raffle tickets and auctioned items on the day. Jill, Shirley & David

## 100 Miles for the PCRF - Jamie Hubball

Well, that was one of the most difficult things I've ever done but I made it.

Thanks everyone for all the support along the way, there were so many times where I felt like quitting and then saw another donation come through and it kept me going to the end.

I never could've imagined when I started this that it would raise so much money - I'm so happy we've been able to make such a big difference together. \$5732 in total so far.

Very excited to pack the running shoes away at least for a few weeks!



## WOY?

Thanks to the Internet, Swansbrook Radio can be heard the world over. This was demonstrated recently when our Christmas request programme brought in messages for people in Canada and Australia - the latter being from a place called Woy Woy. On checking we found that this is a pleasant little seaside town north of Sydney. Our transmission software tells us that we're listened to mostly, as you'd expect, in the the UK followed by the United States and then in Germany and (worryingly!) in Russia. What can the Russians make of our meanderings through village life - and our vintage pop tracks connected by a word? Perhaps they regard us as an example of what life might be like if they were ever to be fortunate enough to rid themselves of Mr Putin...

All of which is a bit of a roundabout way of emphasising that Swansbrook can be received everywhere and that requests and messages don't have to be confined to Christmas. Birthdays, anniversaries, congratulations, admonishments - all can be conveyed through the wonder of the radio. All you need to do is contact us by emailing [radio@swansbrook.com](mailto:radio@swansbrook.com) and we'll make all the arrangements.



## LISTEN TO THE SWANS

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

**FECKENHAM'S OWN Local Radio**

[www.swansbrook.com](http://www.swansbrook.com)

## The FeckenOdeon Cinema Society



## DEAD CUNNING

January's film at The FeckenOdeon is an espionage movie with a difference. In the middle of WW2 there were many plots and counter plots hatched but few were as audacious as Operation Mincemeat. The conflict has reached a dangerous stage and desperate measures are called for. A scheme is devised in which a British agent is sent to decoy the enemy into thinking an invasion was imminent. A dangerous mission it seems but less perilous when the agent is already dead...

Colin Firth plays the chap who had the idea in a film where the term "stiff upper lip" may be rather bad taste. Penelope Wilton, Matthew Macfadyen and Kelly Macdonald have the job of making the plan work.

However unlikely it seems this is based on a true story - and it was the subject of an earlier film - *The Man Who Never Was* - in 1958. One of the British intelligence officers behind this unlikely plan was Ian Fleming, who would go on to create James Bond based on his own experiences working in espionage. So if you ever wondered about the inspiration behind such legendary figures as M and Q, you're in for some amusing enlightenment. (UK 2021)

## OPERATION MINCEMEAT (12A)

**Saturday, 27th January 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.fecknodeon.co.uk](http://www.fecknodeon.co.uk)*



This memory is from 1958 and shows long term Feckenham resident Barbara from Mill Lane with her two small children. It features the Mothers Union group. Maud Smith was the president of the union and stands on the back row second from the right. She lived to be 100 and has the small rockery on Church Walk dedicated to her. Barbara's mother in law, Ada Baylis lived in one of the oldest houses in the Village going back to at least the sixteenth century. She and her husband bought numbers 1,3 and 5 Mill Lane for £228! in 1928. When Barbara was sorting through some of Ada's papers she found the following poem which seems very apt for this time of year.



*Ada Baylis outside her house. Photo taken for the Feckenham 2000 file.*

On the first day of Christmas  
My true love said to me  
I'm glad we bought fresh turkey  
And a proper Christmas Tree

On the second day of Christmas  
Much laughter could be heard  
As we tucked into our turkey  
A most delicious bird

On the third we entertained  
The people from next door  
The turkey tasted just as good  
As it had the day before

Day four relations came to stay  
Poor Gran was looking old  
We finished up the Christmas pud  
And ate the turkey cold

On the fifth day of Christmas  
Outside the snowflakes flurried  
But we were nice and warm inside  
For we had turkey curried

On the sixth day I must admit  
The Christmas spirit died  
The children fought and bickered  
We ate turkey rissoles fried.

On the seventh day of Christmas  
My true love he did wince  
When he sat at the table  
And was offered turkey minced

Day eight, nerves were getting frayed  
The dog had run for shelter  
I served up turkey pancakes  
With a glass of Alka Seltzer

On the ninth day our cat left home  
By lunch time dad was blotto  
He said he had to have a drink  
In face of turkey risotto

By the tenth day the booze had gone  
(except our home made brew)  
And if that wasn't bad enough  
We suffered turkey stew

On the eleventh day of Christmas  
The Christmas tree was moulting  
The mince pies were hard as rock  
And the turkey was revolting

On the twelfth day my true love  
had a smile upon his lips  
The guests were gone, the turkey too  
And we dined on fish and chips!

Feckenham WI



### **Nuclear Energy Talk**

On Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January there is the opportunity to hear from a real life 'Mr. Burns' from The Simpsons – Ian Scott, Founder and Chair of Moltex Energy will be coming to Feckenham to give a talk and take questions about his new generation of nuclear reactors and why he felt compelled to set the company up. Interviewed by BBC Radio 4's '39 Ways to Save the Planet' programme (apparently it's Arnold Schwarzenegger's favourite episode!), Ian's reactors are very safe, very small and can be sited anywhere. They also use the waste from conventional reactors as fuel, rendering it safer and smaller. *Tickets are £5 on the door (cash and card), Feckenham WI members are free. Back room of Feckenham Village Hall. Doors open 7.45pm, talk starts at 8pm. Contact Jen Cary for more details 07773 883 039.*

# WHAT'S ON IN

## theWVI INSPIRING WOMEN

Next Meeting - 15th January

### NUCLEAR REACTORS

A talk by Ian Scott of Moltex Energy  
Small scale nuclear reactors for local communities

8pm at Feckenham Village Hall

Visitors welcome - £5



## 2024 DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### FECKENHAM WAKE

22nd June, 2024

### SCARECROW WEEKEND

5th & 6th October, 2024



## HAPPY NEW YEAR



## FECKENHAM VILLAGE HALL

### FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

HAMBLEDON  
PRODUCTIONS  
present

LIVE  
LOCAL

John Kewer in

## MAYBE DICK



SATURDAY, 9TH MARCH



## DESERT ISLAND

### LIVE LOCAL FLICKS



SUNDAY, 14TH APRIL

## HARP & MONKEY

'Award-winning folk and storytelling trio'

SATURDAY, 18TH MAY

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

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

Phone bookings: 0333 666 3366

Send details of events for FREE listing to:

# FECKENHAM



THE  
FECKENHAM  
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First Tuesday of every month from 8pm  
NEXT SESSION: Tuesday, 2nd January

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GARDENING CLUB**



**ANNUAL  
DINNER**

Booking essential

Wednesday, 17th January  
Bookings: njdean50@outlook.com

**ERSTWHILE**



**BORDER MORRIS**

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

**Feckenham Parish Council**

**MEETING**

Thursday, 4th January - 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.

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**FeckenOdeon 1 Saturday, 27th January at 7.30pm**

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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**

Tuesday, 10th January - 7.45pm  
This month's book:

**OLIVE KITTERIDGE**

By ELIZABETH STOUT

Details: 892285



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# Feckenham Village Shop - Alan Slater

The New Year gives us all an opportunity to reflect on the events of the past twelve months and set personal goals for the year ahead. The Members of the Shop Management Board are no exception in this regard. There is no doubt that we have enjoyed a highly successful 2023 both in respect of our trading performance and the contribution that the Shop has been able to make to the wider Feckenham Community. With just three months to go before our financial year ends and barring any unforeseen disasters, we are on course to break all records since the Shop opened nearly 15 years ago. This strong ongoing performance has enabled us to support a range of local events such as the Wake, the Scarecrow Weekend and the Hanbury Countryside Show as well as community projects such as the over 60's Lunch Club, the new Book Exchange in the Church and several other worthy causes. In the year ahead it is the Board's intention to continue to do more of the same.

Of course this will only be possible with your continued patronage of the Shop and the support of eighty Volunteers who give their time freely to keep us open for trading seven days a week every week of the year. I am extremely grateful to you all and am delighted that the Board will be showing its appreciation to our Volunteer Army later this month at our annual anniversary party in the Village Hall.

Looking ahead, our resolution for 2024 is to keep the Shop moving forwards because, in the world of retail (and that's where we are) you can't stand still, customers just won't allow it. So our Buying Team will continue to source new lines of products and we will

endeavour to be as price competitive as possible.

I hope you all had an enjoyable Christmas but if you did overindulge in the festive spirit and your



penance is Dry January, here is something we are stocking that might help you.

I'll now raise a glass of non-alcoholic beer to our many customers, our brilliant Volunteers and a successful 2024

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## COUNCIL TAX

The Parish Council are due to meet on the 4th January at 7.30pm to discuss plans for the coming year and finances.

The Parish Council receives a Precept. This is a “demand for payment” made to the Borough Council on a yearly basis for sufficient money to run the council. This is included in the amount you pay to the Borough Council in Council Tax. Some Parish Councils run children’s playgrounds, village halls, sports facilities and can make more grants available to local organisations, local charities and consider other requests. The January meeting is open to all, and you can hear current conversations about plans for 2024 and how this might affect the amount you pay. During the public consultation you can ask questions of your Council.

## FLOODING

As many people have had issues with flooding in Feckenham, this will be high on the agenda. The Parish Council last paid £5,000 towards flood measures with divisional funds kindly donated from Cllr Warhurst and Cllr Rouse back in 2021. The flood work now needs to be redone and extended further to help with flooding on the edge of the village. This will be expensive.

## WORKING PARTIES

The Parish Council has two working parties. Both working groups comprise of volunteers supported by Parish Councillors. Currently Feckenham in Bloom has a remit of making our village look even better and provides volunteering opportunities. The second group, The Highways Working Party is concentrating on all aspects of road safety and has put forward plans aimed at making the village more accessible to those people using wheelchairs, prams etc. The groups have had some success with raising money towards projects particularly Feckenham in Bloom.

## PLANNING

Planning remains a big concern in the village and the Batteries application (BESS Site, planning reference 23/00417/FUL) is still undecided. Should you require any help with making a comment in support or an objection against planning applications please do contact the clerk.

## THE COUNCIL

The Parish Council is made up of 7 Councillors, all of whom are volunteers who spend considerable hours to improve the lives of everyone who lives or visits our village. They do not receive any payments.

Should you have any questions regarding the meeting, Precept, or other concerns, it is suggested you contact the clerk by phone (01527 892522) or email [clerk@feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk)

*The Parish Council wishes everyone a Happy New Year.*

## CONTACT THE COUNCIL

Should you require any help or further information please do not hesitate to contact Feckenham Parish Council on telephone number 01527 892522, email [clerk@feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk) or check the website at [www.feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk)



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.

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# Rob Cole's Gardening Tips

## *Narcissus romieuxii*

In the bleak months of January and February it is good to have something in flower to remind you of brighter times to come. I first encountered *Narcissus romieuxii* at Potterton and Martin's nursery in Lincolnshire many years ago, when I was astounded to see a cold frame full of these delightful miniature daffodils. Since then, I have bought various cultivars, raised them from seed, and grown them in my cold greenhouse where I can enjoy them unblemished by the winter weather.



Its wild habitat is exclusively from North Africa in the Middle Atlas, the High Atlas and the Rif regions and it seems to grow in both acid and limestone conditions with equal vigour. The flower is rather untypical of what we think of as a daffodil, being only about

150mm tall and consisting of a cone shaped corona (the trumpet) surrounded by six slender and short petals. The flower ranges in colour from pale straw to primrose yellow and, in some forms which I have seen, can be up to 50mm in diameter, but more normally about 35mm.

*Narcissus romieuxii* can be grown outdoors, but it is easily damaged by wind and marked by soil splashes, so growing it in a cold frame or unheated greenhouse is a better proposition. In the summer months, the bulbs don't mind being dried out and baked, and so as soon as the leaves dry off, I clean up the pot and don't touch it again until I reawaken it by watering it in the second week of September which stimulates new growth. If the pot of bulbs has become congested, I knock them out of the pot in mid August, separate them into similar sizes, and then replot the larger bulbs into a 9cm square

pot, 9 bulbs to each pot (3 x 3), topped with grit. They are not too fussy about the type of compost, but I use a peat free product, with about 20% grit added to improve drainage. By late October shoots are appearing and the first flowers appear in early January. The smaller bulbs are just tipped *en masse* into a similar sized pot to grow on for a year or two. In either case the bulbs are set well down the pot, the deeper the better.

In most years, plenty of seed is set and it is best to sow it immediately, but it can get left until early November. For sowing I use a 9cm round pot and a compost mixture of 3 parts peat free, 2 parts John Innes No. 2, and 1 part 6mm grit. The mixture is put through a 6mm sieve to remove the odd lumps and a 12 month fertiliser added, in the form of mini-granules. Fill the pot to halfway and sow the seed fairly generously and then top up with more compost, and finally add a layer of grit to the surface. Sowing deeply does not inhibit germination, but does reduce the time till flowering by at least a year. Don't forget to label the pot with the name and date of sowing. Lightly water the pot, and then place it outdoors in an open situation and leave it for the wonder of germination to begin.

It will happily tolerate being outside through the winter and will begin to germinate in January or February, whereupon I move the whole potful into the greenhouse to protect the emerging seedlings. I allow the potful to grow on all year and make sure that it doesn't dry out whilst it is still growing. The seedlings are left in the original pot for two growing seasons and then moved, without splitting, into a 1 litre square pot and grown on for a further year. Some of the bulbs often flower in this third year, and in the August of that year can be knocked out of the pot and the larger bulbs potted up as flowering size specimens for the next year. There is often variety in the seedlings produced and I select the best as single bulbs and grow them on individually to multiply as a clone.

And don't forget - the unique enjoyment and excitement of seeing your seedlings flower for the first time is reserved only to those who take the trouble to sow the seed and nurture the seedlings!



Our meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 was a talk by Samantha Hopes entitled 'My Journey into Horticulture' which traced her progress from a geology student to a plant lover and on to a career in horticulture.

## **NEXT CLUB EVENT - Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024 Annual Dinner**

Our next get-together is our Annual Dinner at The Boot Inn, Flyford Flavell at 7:00pm for a 7:30pm start. Pre booking is essential – please contact Nikki Dean on [njdean50@outlook.com](mailto:njdean50@outlook.com) if you haven't booked already as we are limited to 30 places.

Our 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024 meeting is a talk entitled 'Butterflies' by John Tilt who is the warden of the local Grafton Wood. The subject for the members' monthly competition is Three Snowdrop Flowers (the same or different) with foliage' and will be judged by our speaker.

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Membership of the Gardening Club is currently by £5.00 annual subscription which becomes due on 1st January each year, so please come prepared to renew if you haven't already done so. 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 2023. Visitors are made very welcome and may attend for £3.00 per meeting.*

*If you require any further information, contact Nikki Dean (Secretary) on [njdean50@outlook.com](mailto:njdean50@outlook.com) or Rob Cole (Chairman) on [meadowfarm33@aol.com](mailto:meadowfarm33@aol.com).*



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## Feckenham Football Club - Peter Philips

The first season at the higher level Midland League Two as expected has been a tough challenge for the club on and off the pitch.

After a decent start we came under pressure for some of our most influential players from other local clubs who have a budget to play and in the current climate its hard to turn down money for playing football.

We were holding our own up and till October when things came off the rails, we were sitting in the top half of the table but several points behind the top teams. We suffered a spate of injuries to some of our top players and with the loss of key personal to other clubs left the squad very thin .

The lads battled on but we were given two very tough cup draws in the county cup to Kidderminster Harriers under 21 team and Knowle who are running away with the division above us and we suffered two heavy defeats .

With very few home games due to the way the fixtures came out and lately the bad weather which means the club house which is our only source of income is closed. The situation was compounded again by the resignation of our manager Glen Adams who felt he had taken the club as far as he could.

We would like to put on record our thanks to Glen for getting the club back on its feet at Mill Lane after so long. It was always going to be a hard season to follow with winning both cup league last season

However I am glad to report that assistant manager Matt Phillips although inexperienced at this level has stood up to the plate to rally the team .

He has been fortunate to obtain the services of ex Feckenham football legend Wayne Bunn who was captain of the Feckenham team back in the eighties . Wayne has managed the club before and had spells at Studley and some other high level clubs.

It took a couple of games to steady the ship with a couple of 0-0 draws at Wake Green and high flying Silhill.

They are now on a unbeaten run of eight games conceding only three goals this has seen us shoot up the table to third and put promotion back in our own hands

We have a testing time over Xmas with games at home on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December against top side AFC Solihull 2.00pm ko plus away games to local rivals Meadow Park on Boxing day .

Off The pitch it has been encouraging to see some local residents at the matches and coming in for a drink after the atmosphere in the club is always good. To make viewing more comfortable we are applying to build a canopy off the club to protect spectators from the elements .

In addition we are hosting the Feckenham Dads v Lads game at the club on 28<sup>th</sup> December at 11.00am with a social event in the club on the day hopefully see a good turn out to support their charity Prostrate Cancer .

We are always looking for helpers, volunteers, and committee members to help us. If you have a interest in football in Feckenham come down and introduce yourself.

## Feckenham Cricket Club Bob Gordon

Well, the damp weather has hardly abated since mid-October and so we have been unable to move the large pile of wood intended for the Guy Fawkes bonfire. For that we apologise – it is unsightly and its far from ideal to have it still sitting that as I write this three weeks before Christmas, but we will move it once we can get a tractor onto the ground in that area.

It was gratifying to learn recently that a photograph of our ground has been chosen to be the cover for the annual calendar produced by *The Cricketer*, a respected and long-standing national magazine about the game. The glorious summer scene, with blue skies and fluffy clouds, seems a long time ago now!

However, you might like to know that cricket still takes place in England in the depths of winter. Bury Cricket Club have an annual match each Boxing Day against a neighbouring team from Tottington St Johns, about which their Facebook page states that *"The match will start at 11am and will take place whatever the weather. We'll have hot food and drinks available and the bar will be open throughout"*. It is this sort of thing that makes one proud to be English!

I recently read an article about the origin of the Laws of Cricket and I found it fascinating. Apparently, for significant matches, individual "articles of agreement" were agreed between the teams. The oldest surviving written version of the Laws comes from 1744 and was created by the "noblemen and gentlemen" of the London Club, who played at the Artillery Ground in Finsbury. That code defined the length of the pitch (22 yards), the toss for choice of innings, and nearly all of the ways of dismissing a batsman. The first LBW law also first appeared in 1774, the present weight of the ball (5½ to 5¾ ounces) was defined, along with the maximum width of the bat (4¼ inches).

Happy New Year



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