

# FECKENHAM

A photograph of a garden scene. In the background, a white wooden bench sits on a paved area against a red brick wall. A scarecrow with an orange pumpkin head and a black jacket lies on the bench. In the foreground, a pumpkin with a face and a tuft of blonde hair sits on a bed of gravel. To the right, a bright yellow high-visibility jacket is partially visible. The scene is set outdoors with green grass and a gravel path.

# NEWS

November 2023

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 in November

## Dates for your Diary

### November

1st	S&B Gardening Club
2nd	Parish Council Meeting
4th	Fireworks at the Cricket Club
7th	Readers Group
11th	Ashley Hutchings - 100 Not Out
17th	Fecknodeon 2
18th	Jazz for Charity
20th	WI
25th	Fecknodeon

### December

2nd	Orchestra of the Swan
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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

## Contents

	Page
Editor's note	4
Village Christmas Card	4
Feckenham Archive	5
Village Hall	6-7
Square and Wake Committee	8-9
Church Matters	10-11
Feckenham in Bloom	12
Feckenham Playgroup	13
What's On	14-15
Fecknodeon	16
Swanbrook Radio	16
Charity News	17
Hedgehogs	18-19
Readers group	19
WI	19
Village Shop	21
Gardening	22-24
Cricket Club	25

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## Front Cover

Photo: Thanks to John Dudek

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[www.feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk](http://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

To start, we can celebrate what a wonderful place we live in. Only this week we have had a very successful Scarecrow Weekend, a fun event and a fundraiser to maintain our village green. There are lots of photos of scarecrows taken by a visitor, John Dudek. His photo of the winning entry is on the front page. The following weekend there was a very pleasant Steak Night in the Village Hall, another event raising money, this time to support the Hall itself. I reflect on how lucky we are to live in this quiet, beautiful corner of a peaceful country.



This came into sharp focus this week. On the first day of the Scarecrow Weekend, whilst people were pottering around the village enjoying a cuppa, some cake and voting for their favourite scarecrow, Hamas were doing their worst in the Middle East, attacking men, women and children indiscriminately and with extreme violence. I don't need to describe what happened in these pages as you'll have seen and heard the news over the week.

Only 4 years ago, the world seemed to be in a very good place. That was before the Covid pandemic, the war in Ukraine and now, the potential all out war in Israel-Gaza and possibly more widely in the Middle East. I have been very disturbed this week watching the situation in Israel and Gaza play out. I do not know if it is reasonable to put my opinion in these pages but I feel I cannot stand by and comment on our

locality while innocent people are losing their lives. Violence such as we are seeing from both sides and the effects on the communities on each side will not bring the peaceful solution needed. I only hope that sense prevails, that a ceasefire is agreed and leaders get round the table and find a solution very soon. There are reasonable, decent people on both sides. Israelis and Palestinians have been working together to make peace and their efforts should be built upon. Stepping back from the brink is what we need now. That's perhaps overly optimistic as this situation has been building for so many years, but surely violence is never an answer.

## Village Christmas Card

Most of you will be aware of the village tradition of sending greetings to friends and neighbours through the village card. Instead of sending lots of cards, you can send just one greeting to all and a donation for charity. This is financially supported by the church and distributed by the magazine so all your donations go to charity. The card will be circulated with the December magazine and donations will be divided equally between the charities: Crisis and Shelter.

Contributions can be made by cheque (or even cash), but BACS payments to the Church Account with a clear reference "Xmas Card" are preferred. The Church account details are: Feckenham PCC Sort Code: 30 96 97 Account 01231863 Please send you wording to feckenhamnews@gmail.com or post with your donation to Angela Fletcher 12 Mill Lane, B96 6HY, Feckenham by 14th November.



For this month we have a newly added photo for the archive. This was contributed by Maxine Nall who kindly sent a copy. Where is it taken, and what are all these jolly revellers celebrating in the photo? Does anyone recognise a relative? If you have any photos of the Village or Parish, they can be digitised and returned to you.

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## Feckenham Village Hall

### STEAK in the future...

The Village Hall's Steak Night on 14th October attracted a merry throng of villagers intent on enjoying an evening of good food and good company - and they weren't disappointed on either count. Chefs Alan Smith and Peter Stephens assisted by Dave Powell turned out incredible meals, the large front of house team was marshalled by Maggie Stephens. General conviviality was encouraged by the bar under the command of the two Judys (Hooker and Underwood) and the clean up operation was in the hands that do dishes of Phil and Trish Tricklebank. The evening was made possible by the efforts of a small army of volunteers, too numerous to mention here - The Hall is grateful to them for their time and efficiency... which lead to a goodly sum being added to the coffers. Like all of the fundraising activities mounted by the Village Hall, the monies raised goes towards the upkeep and improvement of the Hall. Current projects include the replacement of all the external doors and windows of the Back Room.

## Draw results

### Feckenham Village Hall Improvement Fund September draw.

The draw was carried out on 3rd October 2023.

1st (£25)	171	Linda Harris
2nd (£15)	147	Matt Clarke
3rd (£10)	70	Ros & Terry Hayfield

### October draw.

The draw was carried out on 3rd October 2023.

1st (£25)	32	Jeff & Ann Matthews
2nd (£15)	72	Alan Jones
3rd (£10)	171	Linda Harris

## Live at the Village Hall



Saturday, 11th November - 7.30pm

### ASHLEY HUTCHINGS 100 Not Out

Ashley Hutchings, the Guv'nor of folk rock, comes to Feckenham Village Hall with a brand new show. Entitled '100 Not Out', it's a musical review of his incredible career and celebrates and draws heavily from his 100th album release, 'More Songs From The Shows' (2022).

Throughout his nearly 60 year musical career, Ashley has worked with more great female singers than anyone else. Now he will be joined once again by one of the country's finest singers and accompanists, Becky Mills, on vocals and guitar.

With Ashley on vocals and bass, together they present a very special words and music performance, 100 Not Out, including many of Ashley's favourite songs from his repertoire, ranging from 'Crazy Man Michael' to 'Bird on a Wire', plus a number from the songbook of Bob Dylan, with whom Ashley has formed a close personal friendship.

Saturday 2nd December - 7.30pm

### ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN MIDWINTER

One of the UK's finest chamber ensembles present a seasonal concert - from Vivaldi to the Pogues - a great start to the festive season.

### BOOK NOW TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT!

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

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Book by phone on 0333 666 3366



## HALL IMPROVEMENT FUND DRAW

You will note that the October Improvement Fund winners have been published in this magazine. This was the last draw for the 2022/23 year.

The first draws for the 2023/24 year will take place at the Village Hall Trustee's meeting on the first Tuesday in December. But first we have to collect your contributions for entry in the 12 draws from Nov'23 to Oct'24.

Three cash prizes are drawn each month - £25, £15 and £10 (£600 in total over the year). A £12 contribution buys you entry to each of the 12 monthly draws (your entry could win £300 over the year – very unlikely, but theoretically possible!)

Most village households will receive a letter inviting you to contribute during the next month, with an explanation as to how to pay by cash, cheque or bank transfer.

Last year's Fund contributed £1,080 (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.

We know times are hard for some at the moment, but if you've got room for a flutter, thanks in advance for any £12ses you can afford.

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**Tuesday, 7th November - 8pm**  
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**Thursday, 30th November**  
**SPECIAL FISH MENU**  
6 - 9pm - 3 courses £19.50

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**1st to 21st December**  
**CHRISTMAS FAYRE MENU**  
Booking and pre-orders essential

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## Feckenham Square Management Committee & Feckenham Wake

### THEY'VE GONE... THEY WILL BE BACK!

The Scarecrows have returned to their duties in our fields and gardens after a weekend in Feckenham that can only be described as a huge success. There were 35 "official" scarecrows entered in the Best Scarecrow competition - plus a few that just popped up of their own accord. All were well made and imaginative despite many of their "owners" claiming that they were "just something we threw together". It was evident that a great deal of time and hard work had gone into their construction - a fact that was not lost on the many visitors who spent a happy couple of hours pottering round the village. An estimate of the numbers of those visitors puts them at about 1,500. If they had all come at once it would have been a problem. As it was, spread over two days, the result was a steady flow of people enjoying an uncrowded and relaxed day in our beautiful village. It was the visitors who decided the outcome of the competition by casting their votes for the Best Scarecrow and the results were:

**1st Prize: Cowboy Builders** made by Chloe Holmes.

**2nd: Hairy Scary Tooth Fairy** made by Judy Hooker.

**3rd: Dig Deep** made by Tracy Lee.

**Best Scarecrow made by a person under 12 years:**

**Jack Skelton** made by Albert and Alfie Scott-Ison. The overall standard was extremely high and it's worth pointing out that every entry received a substantial number of votes. The organisers send their thanks to everyone who took part.

### MONEY AND ORGANISATION

Entry and parking for the Scarecrow Weekend were both free of charge but visitors were extremely generous and dropped coins and notes into the collection boxes as well as waving their credit cards at the card readers. Donations and sales at the tea tent, barbecue, bar and pudding stall means that a handsome profit was made (exact figures aren't available at the time of



writing) for the Square Maintenance Fund - more than making up for the revenue lost by the cancellation, due to adverse weather, of the Fun on The Square event in July.

The Scarecrow Weekend was organised by Feckenham Square Management Committee in cahoots with Feckenham Wake Committee. Jay Neale (Chair) was in charge of the Bar, Dave Powell (Vice-Chair) and Alan Smith looked after the barbecue, Maggie Stephens (of the Wake Committee) organised the teas, Judy Hooker cooked and sold the puddings. Ian Bellion (Secretary) looked after the competition and the Scarecrow Trail and Tim Smith was transport supremo. David Rowe single handedly masterminded the car park and Charlie Willetts made it possible for card transactions to be made.

### THANKS

There were too many people involved in the mounting of this large event to list individually. The Committees are extremely grateful to all of the people who responded to requests for help - your efforts are very much appreciated - and we really couldn't have done it without you!



*Pictures by Judy Underwood*



# CHURCH SERVICES



## PARISH CHURCH of ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Vicar: Fr Glenn Reading 01527 894436  
[vicar@feckenhamchurch.org.uk](mailto:vicar@feckenhamchurch.org.uk)

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  
FECKENHAM

## Services for November 2023

2nd November	7.30pm	All Souls Service	Fr Glenn Reading
5th November	10.30am	Eucharist	Rev John Green
12th November	10.30am	Remembrance Service	Rev Fiona Carter
19 <sup>th</sup> November	6.30pm	Evensong	Fr Glenn Reading
26 <sup>th</sup> November	10.30am	Eucharist	Fr Glenn Reading

### Drop in (in church)

Wednesday at 10.30am - 12.00pm  
8<sup>th</sup> and 22nd November  
All 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

Feckenham Church Flower Group  
Harvest Festival

Well done to the flower group ladies for another wonderful display for harvest festival. The church was full of rich autumnal colours together with fruit and vegetables.



Once again Mr Crump's dahlias we're the star of the show so thank you Mr Crump for your generosity in bringing your lovely flowers for us to use.



**UAAZ**  
for  
**CHARITY**

**OUT OF THE BLUE  
BIG BAND**  
featuring vocalists  
**Jan Harris &  
Lee Hamblett**  
in concert in aid of the



**The Sick  
Children's  
Trust**

at Feckenham Village Hall, at 7pm on  
Saturday 18th November 2023.  
Tickets (£12.50 each) from  
The Village Shop, The Rose & Crown,  
Jill Rowe (01527)892666 or  
Shirley Harman (01527)892140,  
or on-line at feckhall.org

## Feckenham in Bloom

The group, Feckenham in Bloom, have been busy recently. The tubs at the top of The Square, which have been renewed by the Village Green Committee, have been newly planted out with a display of autumnal colour and spring bulbs to follow. In addition, the Platinum Jubilee Trees by Winfelds have been underplanted with snowdrops and daffodils which should provide some spring colour. Daffodils have also been planted around the base of the trees in the car park behind the Village Hall, and along the base of the wall in the Pound. This wall also has two climbing roses which were planted last year. All of which should provide lots of colour and cheer in the Spring next year.

The planting of the flowers and bulbs has been made possible by a generous donation from The Flower Show funds, for which we are very grateful.



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## Evergreens 🌲

If anyone is cutting down or cutting back evergreen trees or shrubs this month, I would happily save the foliage from the shredder or the tip and make use of it in Christmas wreaths.

Thanks, Clare Furey 07548 832771

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and South Birmingham

## Feckenham Playgroup is a Year Old Hayley Walker

A warm welcoming playgroup organised by two mums who volunteer to run the group each Wednesday during term time. The playgroup was first set up one year ago, we wanted to bring something to the community to help young children start their journey into their school life.



Somewhere they can play with toys, make friends and also for the adults who bring them to playgroup, to socialise too. We believe our group is as much for the adults as it is the children. Each week we bring a new theme to playgroup, which includes various crafts, sensory play and toys. We use both rooms of the Village Hall: the main room has toys focused for older

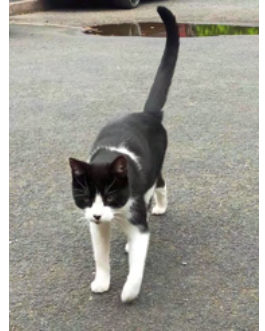


children (bouncy castle, ride ons, crafts and the back room focused for babies with calming music and sensory lights - providing a quiet atmosphere for babies and also mums to relax. We provide hot drinks and biscuits for our adults and a variety of snacks for the children, the children all come together and sit at the small tables and chairs at snack time (super cute). We also end the group together, with bubbles and song time. We are really looking forward to our next few weeks - as we begin the festive season.



## ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL FOR BANDIT! Judith Underwood

A couple of months ago, a black and white cat appeared in Feckenham, his daily route seeming to be between Coupass Cottages and Feckenham Court.



He was very thin but appeared to be in good health so the kind people of Feckenham adopted him as a “community cat” and fed him when he appeared at regular intervals for breakfast, lunch and dinner. He was nervous at first but soon became much more friendly and appreciative of the care he was receiving.

He was variously named by the many residents looking out for him – Lucky, Patch and Sylvester amongst them.

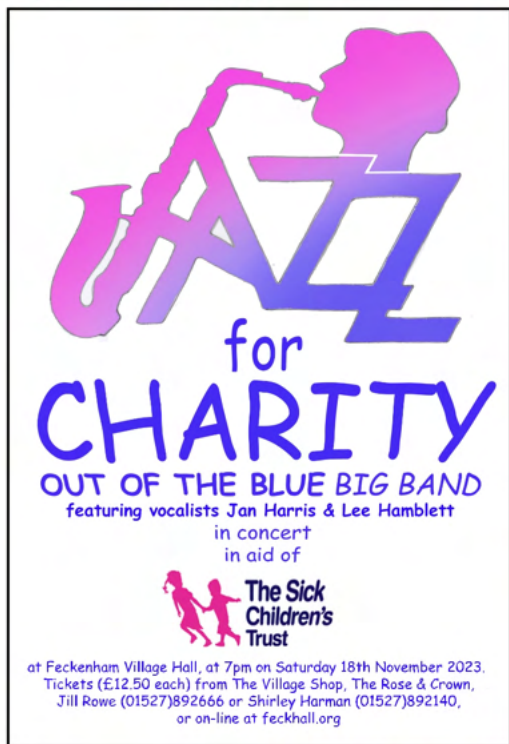
Fortunately we were able to borrow a scanner and found out that he had a microchip so contacted a local vet to see if they could track down his owner. Later that day the vet called to say that the owner had been in touch with them. The cat's name was Bandit, he was an eight year old male and had been missing from his home in Stoke Prior where he lived with his brother and sister for over six months! As you may imagine, his owner was absolutely over the moon that he had been found, particularly as she had hand reared Bandit and his siblings from kittens, so it was a very emotional reunion. Apparently, Bandit is a bit of an explorer and had once been all the way to London in a BT van and had to be brought home so a trip to nearby Feckenham was obviously a bit of a doddle!


We are so glad the story had such a happy ending but we will miss Bandit – he is a great character and a beautiful cat. Many thanks to all the local Feckenham residents who took the time to ensure that he was safe and well fed whilst his owner was tracked down.

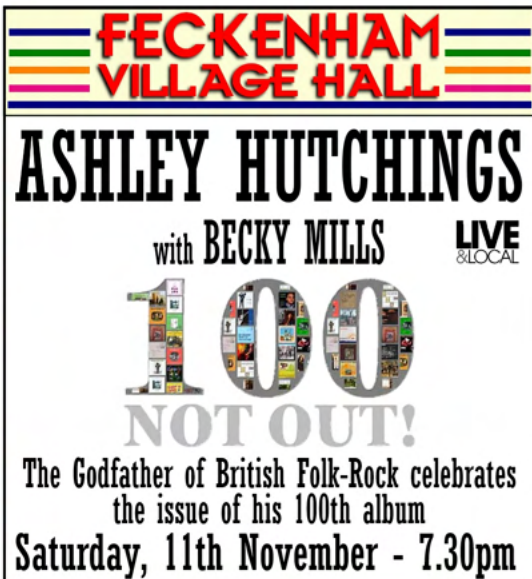
# WHAT'S ON IN



**FIREWORK  
DISPLAY**  
Saturday,  
**4th November**  
At Feckenham Cricket Club  
Bonfire lighting at  
about 6.45 pm  
Fireworks at 7.30pm  
**LIVE  
& LOCAL**



**JAZZ**  
for  
**CHARITY**  
**OUT OF THE BLUE BIG BAND**  
featuring vocalists Jan Harris & Lee Hamblett  
in concert  
in aid of  
 **The Sick  
Children's  
Trust**  
at Feckenham Village Hall, at 7pm on Saturday 18th November 2023.  
Tickets (£12.50 each) from The Village Shop, The Rose & Crown,  
Jill Rowe (01527)892666 or Shirley Harman (01527)892140,  
or on-line at feckhall.org



**FECKENHAM  
VILLAGE HALL**  
**ASHLEY HUTCHINGS**  
with **BECKY MILLS** **LIVE  
& LOCAL**  
**100**  
**NOT OUT!**  
The Godfather of British Folk-Rock celebrates  
the issue of his 100th album  
**Saturday, 11th November - 7.30pm**



**Orchestra of THE SWAN**  
**LIVE  
& LOCAL**  
**MIDWINTER**  
Saturday, 2nd 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](http://www.feckhall.org)  
Phone bookings: 0333 666 3366



**theWI**  
**INSPIRING WOMEN**  
Next Meeting - 20th November  
**MORRIS DANCING**  
8pm at Feckenham Village Hall

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, 7th November

## Stock & Bradley GARDENING CLUB



ALIENS IN  
THE GARDEN

with Roger Umpleby  
Wednesday, 1st November  
7.30 - Bradley Village Hall

## ERSTWHILE



## BORDER MORRIS

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

## Feckenham Parish Council

# MEETING

Thursday, 2nd November - 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.

## THE FECKENODEON CINEMA SOCIETY



FeckenOdeon 2 Friday, 17th November at 8pm

In French with English SuperTitles



FeckenOdeon 1 Saturday, 25th November at 7.30pm

The FeckenOdeon Cinemas  
at Feckenham Village Hall

Tickets for all shows from The Rose & Crown and Village Shop  
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\*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, 7th November - 7.45pm  
This month's book:

10 Minutes 38 Seconds

in This Strange World  
By ELIF SHAFAK

Details: 892285



[whatson@feckenham.f9.co.uk](mailto:whatson@feckenham.f9.co.uk) or call 892130

## The FeckenOdeon Cinema Society



### NOT SO SUPER HEROES

As the nights draw in The FeckenOdeon brings you a film that's guaranteed to light up a dark Friday evening – with laughter. After a devastating battle against a diabolical turtle, a team of five avengers – known as the TOBACCO FORCE - is sent on a mandatory retreat to strengthen their decaying group morale. Their break goes wonderfully well until Lézardin, Emperor of Evil, decides to annihilate planet Earth... But will they repair their relationship in time for a final epic battle? A crazy and always surprising French comedy. (FR 2022)

### SMOKING CAUSES COUGHING

Friday, 17th November at 8pm



### THE KING OF ROCK & ROLL

November's main film at Feckenham's community cinema is an epic, big-screen spectacle from Baz Luhrmann that explores the life and music of Elvis Presley. Elvis's story is seen through the prism of his complicated relationship with his enigmatic manager, Colonel Tom Parker. As told by Parker, the film delves into events over a 20-year period, from Presley's rise to fame to his unprecedented stardom. Austin Butler plays Elvis, Tom Hanks is Colonel Parker - but some say the real star is the music... and the spectacle. (USA 2022)

### ELVIS

Saturday, 25th November 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)*

Feckenham's Own...



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

### UP, UP AND AWAY...

It's a strange but true fact that every time Swansbrook makes a programme recorded at a local event the result is a rise in the number of people listening. The recent Scarecrow Weekend was no exception. Listener figures shot up as people tuned in to hear Colin James rushing round the village to natter to anyone and anything that had the power of speech... and some that didn't. He talked to visitors and locals and even attempted a conversation with a scarecrow. The result was a fascinating snapshot of a lovely weekend - people out for a simple day's enjoyment. We heard how people envy us living in our lovely village, we heard how they admired the creative efforts of villagers and how they'd missed the event over the past few years - a heartwarming hour of radio. You can still listen to it by going to [swansbrook.com](http://swansbrook.com) and clicking the On Demand tab. It's under "Happy Hour" and it's entitled "Scarecrow Hijack".

We'd love to make more of these "out and about" programmes but we often don't have the time... but we would have if you were to come and help us! If you fancy a bash at presenting or simply want to help behind the scenes just drop an email to [radio@swansbrook.com](mailto:radio@swansbrook.com) - we'd love to hear from you.



Scarecrow

Colin James

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## Shelter Box Award

Over the years our neighbour Alan Jones has generously lent us gazebos for our annual Rotary Extravaganza and Country Music Festival held at Birmingham's Botanical Gardens. So, prior to the pandemic we thought it would be nice for Alan and Jan to come to the Extravaganza. In addition to music, line dancing and food stalls there are various charity organisations displaying their services. Alan was particularly impressed by the 'simple idea'



of the *Rotary Shelter Box* which provide disaster hit families with essential items such as tents, tarpaulins, toolkits, solar lights, water filters and carriers, sleeping bags, blankets, cooking sets and mosquito nets – all the basics to support families in the early days of their recovery from disasters. In 2022 Shelter Box spent £14 million supporting such families. From that moment onwards Alan has been making regular contributions to the charity and to his amazement he has recently received a Shelter Box Award for *'his time, enthusiasm and effort given to Shelter Box over the years; for being an amazing ambassador and supporting countless families around the world who have been impacted by disaster'*.

Well done Alan and thank you for your generosity.

Gay Bligh

## 100 Miles for the PCRF Jamie Hubball



Palestinian civilians trapped in Gaza which is one of the poorest areas in the world and of whose population, children make up around 50%.

I am going to attempt to run 100 miles in the next 20 days in support of the Palestinian Children's Relief Fund which provides humanitarian and medical support to children in Palestine and I'd really appreciate any amount you are able to contribute. I am not a runner, the last time I ran over 5 miles was in 2012 so be assured this will be a huge challenge for me. I'll be posting Strava updates as I go!

To donate follow this link: [gofundme.com/f/100-miles-for-the-pcrf](https://gofundme.com/f/100-miles-for-the-pcrf)

As a Jew, it has broken my heart to see the devastation and innocent loss of life in Israel and Palestine over the past couple of weeks. Both in the abhorrent attack by Hamas and the response by Israel to retaliate against civilians in Gaza. I want to do something concrete to support

## Hedgehogs - Victoria Barber



again and a feeding station in your back garden can make life easier for them, without having to travel to forage. If you want to create a feeding station, instructions are available by following this link: [www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/feeding/](http://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/feeding/)

Keep an area of your garden a little messy. They use leaves, twigs, old grass to create nests under decking or sheds or even inside clumps of ivy or pampas grass.

If you see an autumn juvenile out in the daytime, they are already in trouble, usually from overwhelming infections like lungworm. Please pick them up using an old towel and put them in a cardboard box with the towel. If they are wobbling, they need warmth from a warm hot water bottle too. These youngsters are very vulnerable and need an experienced rehabilitator: please ring the British Hedgehog Preservation Society on 01584 890 801 and they will put you in touch with one.

Juveniles that you only see at night and are otherwise healthy, can survive if they are above 450g. You can weigh them on the kitchen scales and check!

Contrary to popular opinion, hedgehogs do not often have fleas: those that they may have, are species specific and cannot live on pets or humans. It is wise to handle them with gloves on if you have to though.

Those of us who rehabilitate these juveniles would never keep them as pets. They are smelly, trail through their water bowls and mess everywhere in their cages. They can need injections, subcutaneous fluids, daily weighing and hand feeding. But the joy of seeing them recover and gain weight, create nests and become inquisitive outweighs the cleaning out.

Just like plants, they need hardening off before release so they are put in the cool

British hedgehogs are in decline: farming practices, roadkill, badgers and urbanisation all play their part. Increasingly, they are moving into our towns and villages, often surviving with our help.

Hedgehogs start having pregnancies soon after they emerge from hibernation in April and the average litter is 4-6 hoglets. They are weaned at six weeks, weigh roughly 100g or 4oz then and grow to 800g to 1000g over the summer. Late pregnancies can result in hoglets being born in September, too late to gain enough weight to successfully hibernate. These autumn juveniles are susceptible to infection and are usually the small ones you see out in the day in November, staggering around or lying on the lawn. Most of these would die without a dedicated army of volunteers to overwinter them.

So, how can you help?

During the winter months, adult hogs do not hibernate the whole time. They will emerge every few days to eat then go back to sleep

cellar once they are a decent weight. Often, they hibernate there before they wake up in March, ready for the outside world.

Watching them hesitantly shuffle off into the garden in Spring makes helping to save the species a job worthwhile.

*Seen a well hedgehog? Help us to monitor populations and plot the location on [hedgehogstreet.org](http://hedgehogstreet.org)*



## Readers Group

We discussed *In Memoriam* By Alice Winn. There was general agreement that it is an extraordinary book which led to a full evening of discussions. It was given 9/10. War back again in the forefront of our thinking both, WW1 and the current ones. One of the group brought his family war letters from WW1 - absolutely fascinating.

Next meeting is November 7th and the choice is *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* by Elif Shafak.

## Feckenham WI

On the 18th September we had a stab at cider making, very kindly helped and guided by Simon Statham. The juicing of the apples was made much quicker and easier by Simon's electric scrapper, which left us more time for the tasting of his delicious cider from last year.

In October we also experienced our first local group meeting of WIs, hosted by Inkberrow. We are very grateful to Maggie and Emily for giving up the chance to see Chris Beardshaw that night in order to represent us, even winning the murder mystery on their table! On Saturday 21st October I shall be going to the Worcestershire Federation Annual Council meeting. The agenda looks very interesting and I'm looking forward to forging connections across the WI network.

Our October meeting (16th October) was a talk on the Samaritans, very kindly given by a local volunteer. Although mental illness, difficulties in our lives and suicide are all extremely painful topics, we felt that as a group we should find out more about the work that goes on to help people and learn how we can have better conversations with our loved ones.



Our November meeting is a more active one - hopefully Alcester White Hart Morris Men will be coming to give us a demo and teach us some moves.

We meet in the back room of Feckenham village hall on the 3rd Monday of the month. Doors open at 7.45pm and our meetings start at 8pm (usually finishing about 9.30). Members are free, guests are £5



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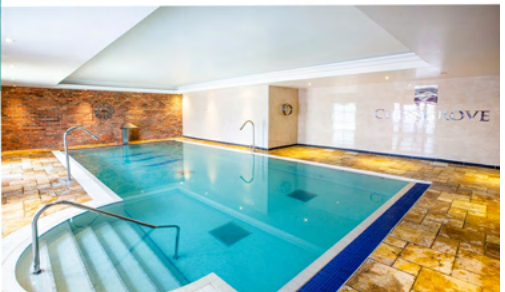


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## Feckenham Village Shop - Alan Slater



It has certainly been a busy month at the Village Shop. Our big news is that we have raised a £1,000 from our Coffee Morning in support of the Macmillan Nurses. An incredible achievement considering last

year's total was an impressive £660. Paudits must be given to everyone involved, especially Lesley and the Friday Team who worked tirelessly throughout the day to ensure we exceeded our 2022 record total. I must also thank the many other Volunteers who made cakes, donated raffle prizes and give a special mention to 'Gerri the Jam 'who produced eighty jars of homemade jam all made from locally sourced fruit. I am delighted to report that all 80 jars were sold and the kitchen at Vine Cottage has returned to domestic normality. Most importantly without the support and generosity of our customers all our efforts would have been in vain, so thank you one and all.

Having barely recovered from the exertions of our Macmillan Coffee Morning, we then faced an extremely busy two days trading during the Feckenham Scarecrow weekend. It was a pleasure to welcome so many new customers and families to the Shop and to receive their favourable comments about our Village. Congratulations to the Organising Committee and to all the participants who made the weekend so special and successful.

It always amazes me how Christmas Promotions seem to appear earlier each year. I spotted my first advertisement for Christmas lunch outside a hotel in mid July! So I hope that I'm not too early to promote the Feckenham Christmas card that we will be exclusively selling in the Shop from November 1st. Last year, you may remember, we produced a card depicting a winter scene of the High Street, this year we are featuring a winter scene of the Square. Again the cards are designed by Debbie Watton and will be on sale at the same price as last year (£1.95 each ) but there is a limited supply so don't delay in purchasing your requirements.

Without any apology I'll make another plea for new volunteers to join our Shop Team. As we continue to be busier each year, it is a constant challenge for us to staff the Shop especially during holiday periods. So if you could spare us a few hours of your time each week or month, then we would be extremely grateful. I can guarantee that you will be made very welcome, just drop by and have a chat to find out more.

As always thank you for continuing to support your Village Shop.



## An Organic Allotment by Pete Delaney

November is a great month for increasing the diversity and capacity of the compost heap. I have three compost bays that I fill at different times to try and stagger their usage. At the moment I am filling 2 bays to prepare fresh compost soil for the new year to spring months when the compost shall be ready to throw onto and dig into chosen beds. Apart from all the foliage and damaged produce this month I cut all the grass and weeds from my paths to sling into the compost bays and as I got some great results using fallen leaves last year I shall repeat the process, its resultant leaf mould compost I believe was the reason for a fantastic tomato and cucumber crop I harvested this summer/autumn, harvesting 48 cucumbers from 3 plants and a fine glut of tomatoes. The remaining, third compost bay I have already been using. I top dressed my leeks and lettuce (under cloches) and winter cabbages with its contents. Unlike professionally made shop bought compost, I am not so careful about the exclusion of the seeds of weeds or vegetables. This means keeping an eye on the weeding of beds fed with my homemade compost, but the benefits of the feeding in cropping results are worth the effort.

Apart from a late sowing of Chinese winter radish (we are already harvesting from 2 previous sowings) I don't bother with any other planting this month other than garlic, for which I consider November to be the ideal month. I once experimented, on advice, with planting some bulbs straight into a fresh bed as I harvested them mid summer. I was advised this would make large bulbs, however, although the stems grew very thick, when I harvested them, the bulbs were no bigger than those I had sown in November. Each year for the last three, I have sown out half and half with garlic bulbs bought from the garden centre and bulbs I

have kept from my own crop the previous season. This year my own kept garlic gave me the healthier yield.

Anyone who happened to read my article last month will know how I did myself out of any pumpkin or squash this year in keeping the seeds of pumpkins and squash and marrow from the previous year, a mistake I am now aware of, not to keep the seeds of pumpkins squash or marrows or even courgettes if they have grown together, as cross pollination means that they will not resemble the fruit of their parents. Mine all turned out marrows. That is except for one very large marrow that has turned completely orange and I have named it a "mumpkin". I am writing this not long before Halloween. Next time I shall let you know how carving it out went and whether it tasted like a marrow or a pumpkin!



On the November harvesting front, I have been eating the outer leaves of my cloched lettuce, still have a couple of courgettes and could have leeks in every meal. I still have plenty of onions and garlic hanging in the shed. Parsnips (the few that germinated this year) look healthy and large, and this month I shall pull the first of them having already experienced this seasons first frosts.

This year I have opened my first jar of runner bean chutney early as I made a decent amount. I have also opened a large jar of pickled shallots and one of gooseberry jam, all bringing some summer tastes to the winter months.

# Rob Cole's Gardening Tips

LADY'S SMOCK - *Cardamine pratensis*  
'Diane's Petticoat'

I have always had a fondness for *Cardamine pratensis*, Lady's Smock, and it was one of the first wild flowers which I came to know. It is one of the food plants of the Orange Tip butterfly, and I can recall happy meanderings looking for the tiny orange egg which the female lays on the stalk just behind the flower. The egg is like a tiny Ali-Baba basket and changes from orange to black just before the caterpillar emerges.

When we moved to Meadow Farm in Feckenham, we were delighted to find Lady's Smock growing wild in our meadow in the wetter areas. During April 2003, we spotted a white one amongst the pale mauve ones, and on closer inspection it turned out to be not only pure white, but also double.



In its first year we marked its position and allowed it to grow on undisturbed, in situ, as it was very small and had only one flower. The following April, however, it was a little stockier and we lifted it complete with the surrounding grass and potted it up. As soon as it was large enough, we took some leaf cuttings as a precaution against loss, and when the original plant died down completely in the autumn, we sprayed the grass off with glyphosate, and the next year ended up with a large flowering Lady's Smock plant and no grass! And a small batch of flowering cuttings, too.

The original plant grew readily and was a mass of white double flowers in April 2005, only two years after being found. It is fairly upright in stature, and the flower is a very clean white with an open central boss of doubling. It has more the look of a petticoat than a smock!

Julia Wilkins held a National Collection of *Cardamine* in York at the time, and we sent her one of the flowering cuttings and asked for her judgement as to whether it was distinct enough to be worth distributing. She confirmed that it was distinct from any other of the doubles which she had, and that it was worthy of naming. So I named it *Cardamine pratensis* 'Diane's Petticoat', after my wife, and shared it with various nurseryman friends to hopefully increase its distribution.

We also began to sell it at our plant fairs, where it proved very popular, and we now grow it in our new garden in Salford Priors, some twenty years after we first found it.

Just a chance find, and we do see it for sale occasionally in nurseries and garden centres we visit.

# Stock and Bradley Gardening Club Report



Our meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> October was a very special 'tickets only' event when we welcome Chris Beardshaw as our speaker to give a talk entitled 'Painting With Plants'. Chris is a renowned garden designer, Chelsea Gold Medal winner and television presenter, and is much in demand as a speaker to gardening clubs and horticultural societies. Our audience of nearly 80 members and guests was entertained by Chris's enthusiasm for plants and his approach to planting design.

## **NEXT CLUB EVENT - Wednesday 1st November 2023 at 7:30pm**

Our next meeting is a talk by Roger Umpleby entitled 'Aliens in the Garden'. Roger is a keen entomologist and will be showing us examples of the kind of insects and bugs we might find in our gardens.

The subject for the members' monthly competition is 'Seedheads' and will be judged by our speaker.

---

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, ring Dinny Pynsent (Secretary) on 01527 821355 or Rob Cole (Chairman) on 07544 832052.*



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approximately and the firework display commencing at 7:30pm. We will of course have a full BBQ and there will be traders offering coffee and doughnuts, cocktails and children's' toys.

As usual, there is no admission charge but we ask for contributions to our bucket collection, which then pays for next year's fireworks. The event needs a lot of help, particularly stewards and bucket collectors – if you would like to help, contact me on 07749 884062 or via the club's Facebook page.

As the days shorten and dusk is now falling before 6pm, the cricket season seems long ago and so since mid-September we have been working on preparations for winter and generally tidying, including having our hedges trimmed. Much effort (helped significantly by a few club members) resulted in the Square being stripped and renovated, with new grass now in glorious abundance over the 25 pitches.

The boundary fences are looking somewhat sorry for themselves, their age now showing in the shape of rot and general dilapidation. They are important in preventing at least some of the cricket balls that are belted towards the stream for actually dropping into it and so those that need repair or retirement are separated out for attention before next season. Inevitably, there will be fewer available in the Spring as a number look to be beyond repair. At many committee meetings we have discussed the future of such fences as the cost of wood alone means that each could cost £40-50 in timber alone, meaning that replacement of the 60 or so that we have would cost at least £2,500-£3,000 – and we would need to make them all ourselves. If anyone has a solution to this conundrum, please let us know!

The field has been very soft in places and we are hoping that it will dry out before we host the annual village Fireworks Night, on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup>. The bonfire will be lit at 6:45pm

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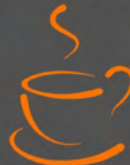
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