

FECKENHAM NEWS

June 2026

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

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Feckenham News in June

Dates for your Diary

June

3rd	S&B Gardening Club
4th	Parish Council Meeting
5th	Grand Coffee Morning
15th	WI Readers Group
20th	Feckenham Wake

July

8th	S&B Coach Trip
17th	FeckenOdeon2
25th	Fun on the Square

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: Violas self-seeded on the Village Green by the editor

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

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

Editor's Note



The funeral of Lionel Hill is covered elsewhere but I would like to thank the team of villagers who made the event go like clockwork. The green was mowed in readiness for the marquee to be erected, cars were moved and the Square generally tidied up. It was quite an event with over 500 people in the church and on the green and a huge screen brought in so all could see and hear the service.

In other news of the Village Green. I heard that the mower finally gave up the ghost and a new one has been purchased. Keeping the green and the village looking lovely is quite a job especially over the summer when watering rotas will be in place. If you would like to lend a hand with watering, let me know and I'll put you in touch with the relevant person. Also, please support the Scarecrow Weekend as this is the main fundraiser for the Village Green. Without it we couldn't afford to maintain the wonderful asset donated by Lionel.

I've been looking at using AI in the form of ChatGPT to help with editing and I don't think I'm out of a job as yet! It was very good at producing an advert for Shirley Harman's coffee morning - see next page - but when I asked it to give me a run down of the results of the local election held this month it was seriously inaccurate, so I looked up the list myself. Here are contact details in case you have issues to bring to their attention.

We have three borough councillors:
Barndon Clayton (Conservative) brandon.clayton@redditchbc.gov.uk
Craig Warhurst (Conservative) craig.warhurst@redditchbc.gov.uk
Roger Bennett (Reform) roger.bennett@redditchbc.gov.uk

We also have two county councillors:
Sue Eacock (Reform) seacock@worcestershires.gov.uk
Roger Bennett (Reform) rbennett3@worcestershires.gov.uk

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Thursday 25th June - THEMED MENU
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Grand Summer Coffee Morning



Friday 5th June
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At 33 High Street
*In aid of the
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and nearly new

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All welcome, please come and support.
(Note change of date)



FECKENHAM WAKE
NEEDS YOU
ON 20th JUNE

To ensure the children's attractions can go ahead we need
Volunteers to help for a couple of hours in the afternoon
Please contact Maggie Stephens on 07976 989425 / maggie-stephens@hotmail.com



A RIGHT ROYAL PARTY

In days of old when knights were bold Feckenham was far from the rural backwater it is today. Royalty used to drop in to the Hunting Lodge in the middle of Feckenham Forest. They were so impressed with the village's hospitality that one of them issued a charter giving the Feckenhamsters the right Royal right to hold a great big party every year... and it's been happening ever since.

789 YEARS LATER

This year, for the 789th time, the village welcomes everybody to enjoy **Feckenham Wake** (as it's been called since before anyone can remember) on **Saturday 20th June**. This "fete on steroids" features lots of attractions guaranteed to appeal to all ages and tastes – there'll be games and things to bounce on for the youngster, a trial of strength for the dads (and mums) and a Fun Dog Show - just come along on the day to enter. There are classes for all sizes, shapes and breeds. There'll be an enormous Classic Car Show with over 100 shiny vintage motors on display.

MUSIC AND MAYHEM

Also featuring will be Professor Chandler's Punch and Judy, The Arrow Valley Brass Band, Massed Morris Dancers and Feckenham Country Dancers. Circus performer Thomas Trilby will prove that it is possible to juggle on stilts whilst riding a unicycle and All Round Voices will be singing in the church. To round off the entertainment there'll be a late

afternoon performance from a brand-new band – they're going places and you can see them here first! If the weather permits the performance will be backed by the spectacle of a mass launch of hot air balloons.



CRAFTY CREATIONS

This year for the first time there'll be a craft village with local creators on hand to give demonstrations – and for the youngsters there'll be a fancy-dress craft competition and other crafty ideas to keep young hands busy. If you have any items you think would be useful for making fancy dress costumes you'll find a box in the Village Shop where you can drop them off - or you could just bring them along on the morning of The Wake.

PIGS AND PROSECCO

The inner man (or woman) will not be forgotten – a splendid pig roast awaits – as well as artisan pizzas, home-made samosas, burgers and other street food. There'll be a real ale bar and a prosecco bar – and, for the sweeter tooth there'll be ices, candy floss, toffee apples and many more sticky delights.

If you like a flutter - have a go at our Grand Prize Draw. Lots of fantastic prizes for only £1 a ticket!

FECKENHAM WAKE

Saturday 20th June from 12.30

On The Square and Recreation Ground.

Parking off Dunstall Court drive.

The Wake is FREE! The organisers don't seek to make a profit and all funds go towards the next year's event. Parking costs £5 per car and includes a programme and a free ticket to the Grand Prize Draw.



Feckenham Village Hall

DANCING TO FITNESS

Summer is on its way but the pace at Feckenham Village Hall shows no sign of slackening. We're delighted to welcome the Empire Dance Academy who have recently started regular Monday evenings sessions, Sarah Lightning is holding another course of painting classes and there'll be new keep fit sessions for the over 50s starting soon. For information about these and all our other activities please get in touch with our Booking Secretary, Liz Teisen, on 01527 821233 or email liz.teisen@btinternet.com

You can also contact us through the website at www.feckhall.org

We're also awaiting confirmation of a season of live shows from Live & Local and we're expecting bookings for big band concerts and a comedy club - watch this space!

Draw results

Feckenham Village Hall Improvement Fund

Draw. Carried out on 5th May 2026.

May:

1st (£25)	41	Ashley Beldham
2nd (£15)	111	Alex & Karen Reynolds
3rd (£10)	127	Martin Strange

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TEN YEARS AGO...

On 18th June 2016 Feckenham Wake was in full swing. Amid the brass bands, pig roasts, tombolas and beer tents a small group of people gathered for a final briefing before fanning out around the village, microphones in hand, to gather the opinions of the people. It was a good day for gathering opinions. The results of the Brexit referendum had been announced and everybody had something to say about it. It was wonderful. It was terrible. It would set us free. It would make us poor. It would make us rich. All were recorded for posterity... and edited into a radio programme ready for broadcast. In due course a button was pressed and, for the very first time, a voice was heard announcing "From Feckenham, this is Swansbrook Radio".

It would be nice to report that there was a rapturous response from the people of Feckenham. There wasn't. Feckenham people aren't like that. They're polite. Some of them seem to think that appearing on the wireless is a bit vulgar. Others don't seem to make the connection between the shabby chap enjoying a pint in the pub and the clear tones of the person on the radio. But they listen. They talk of things that they couldn't have known unless they heard it on Swansbrook. Some of them tell jokes so bad that they can't have come from anywhere but Swansbrook Radio. We may not have been celebrated - but we've carried on for ten years. The weekly challenges of writing scripts and meeting deadlines kept us going during the pandemic and we carry on now - and shall do until we can carry on no more. We enjoy making radio - and you might enjoy listening. Go on - give it a try - it's free after all!

LISTEN TO THE SWANS

Go to www.swansbrook.com and follow the instructions you'll find there. Most of our programmes are available for you to play ON DEMAND - listen when and where you like - as often as you like.

FECKENHAM'S OWN Local Radio
www.swansbrook.com

Feckenham WI



Our May meeting was very educational, on several fronts, as we were treated to a talk and demo from long-time Feckenham resident and ex-farrier Martin Wilkes, at his beautiful farm down Berrowhill Lane.

We started off by having a chat with Martin about his life and the history of the farm and the surrounding fields. It was fascinating to hear about the old names (such as 'Obstockin'!), and if anyone has a map of the field names, we'd all love to see it, so please do get in touch. We then crowded into the workshop to watch a demonstration of two shoes being made. It is always a delight to watch expert craftsmen at work, and we learned so much as Martin talked us through many of the intricacies of making shoes from scratch.

With mugs of tea, and various cakes, we then held our AGM. I was delighted and honoured to be elected President again, and we are all very grateful to Maggie Meixner for remaining as Treasurer, and Emily Peters as Secretary.

Our next meeting will hopefully be warmer and drier, as we will be visiting a beautiful wildflower meadow in Crowle. We will leave the village hall car park at 8pm on Monday 15th June. Members are free and guests are very welcome and are encouraged to donate £5. For more details contact Jen Cary at jen@thecarys.co.uk.

The FeckenOdeon Cinema Society

A MONTH OFF

There'll be no FeckenOdeon films in June - but we will be at Feckenham Wake on 20th June. Come and see us - we'll have information about our upcoming films and how the cinema works. If you like what you see and hear we'll also be able to sign you up as members for our 25th Anniversary season. We will however be back in business in July...



TOUGH NUTS HAVE SOFT CENTRES

The school in the city of Matamoros, in north-eastern Mexico, is one of the poorest performing educational establishments in the country. The battle-weary staff consider it a win if more than half of the pupils just show up to class. Then a new teacher joins the school and turns the tired, rote-learned routine upside-down – literally. The kids arrive to discover that Mr Juárez, or Sergio, as he prefers to be called, has upended the tables and turned them into lifeboats in the shark-infested waters of the classroom. This comedy/drama shows that even the hardest of hearts can be won over by a mix of good humour and imagination.

(Mexico 2023)

RADICAL (12a)

Friday, 17th July at 8pm

(Doors & Bar open at 7.30pm)

The FeckenOdeon's main season - our 25th - begins in September. There are full details at www.fecknodeon.co.uk and in brochures available at the Village Hall, the Village Shop and The Rose & Crown

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

Feckenham Square Management Committee

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

A couple of things to look forward to as we head into the warmer months...

FUN ON THE SQUARE

Saturday 25th July

Following the popularity of a more laid back approach, this year's event will be very similar to 2025's. You're all invited to a village picnic. We'll provide a great big barbecue - you bring your own food and booze. There'll be a bit of music and a great deal of good company. A relaxed event for a balmy evening (we hope) on our beautiful village green.

FECKENHAM SCARECROW WEEKEND

10th and 11th October



The gentlemen of the fields are coming back after a year off. Why not spend your summer planning and constructing the most wonderful scarecrow the village has ever seen?... or just leave it to the last minute as usual? You have been warned. They will return!

THANKS

Thanks are due to residents and neighbours of The Square for your cooperation for the funeral of Lionel Hill MBE. This was one of the biggest events of this nature Feckenham has ever seen and it went without a hitch. We do hope that your weren't inconvenienced too much and are grateful for your understanding



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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 June 2026

7 th June	10.30am	Eucharist	Rev Fiona Carter
14 th June	10.30am	Family Service	Rev Fiona Carter
21 st June	6.30pm	Evensong	Venerable Paul Taylor
28 th June	10.30am	Morning Prayer	Phil Tricklebank ALM

Coffee Stop

Tuesday 9th June at 2.00pm to 3.45pm.
Take a break before or after school. Toys for children.

Drop in

Wednesday 10th & 24th June at 10.30am - 12.00pm.
All are welcome (coffee and cake)



FECKENHAM ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH St John Fisher & Thomas More

Prayer and coffee morning at 10 am first and third Wednesday of the month
Everyone welcome

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 89389

Reverend Fiona Writes...

So, we are already in June the year goes so quickly. It is so lovely to see everyone's gardens in bloom.

I expect you are all thinking about holidays now. Many of you will have booked to go away and it is nice to have something to look forward to. I hope you can have a period of relaxation during the summer even if you are not going away. We all need to be able to re-charge our batteries.

We will have celebrated the birth of the Church at Pentecost at the end of May 50 days after Easter. And we have entered the season of Pentecost.

Pentecost celebrates the time that the Holy Spirit descended on the twelve disciples of Jesus. And because of this encounter with the Holy Spirit, they were able to speak in different languages which caused Christianity to spread. The disciples were gathered together in one place when a strong wind filled the house. They saw what seemed like tongues of fire resting on each one of them and they were enabled to speak in different languages.

This feast of Pentecost fulfils Jesus's promise to his followers that he would send them an advocate - the Holy Spirit. We also receive the Holy Spirit when we are baptised whether as a baby or an adult. This is a

biblical thing to do as we are told when we want to become a Christian to repent and be baptised, and we have the assurance that we have the Holy Spirit to help us and guide us in our lives.

It's not only at baptism that we receive the Holy Spirit. We can ask the Lord anytime for the gift of the Holy Spirit to help and guide us, because Jesus is for us, and he only wants the best for us. But baptism is an outward declaration of our faith.

So, Pentecost is considered to be the birth of the Church when the community of believers empowered by God's spirit were able to spread the Good News of Jesus. The Church grew from a handful of believers and spread throughout the world. So, it is a very significant time for the Church.

We also have the Wake in June which is a lovely community time with events for everyone and teas in the church. We love having the village coming into the church and there are strong links between the church and the community, we are very fortunate here in Feckenham. The Wake has strong historic roots and has been celebrated for centuries in our village. The weekend of the Wake we have Evensong in the church on June 21st at 6.30pm.

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WHAT'S ON IN

Feckenham **WAKE**

Saturday, 20th June

12.30pm to 5.30pm

FREE entry - Car parking £5

Parking fee includes a FREE programme

And FREE entry in the GRAND DRAW

Car park postcode: B96 6QH

**HOT AIR
BALLOON FLIGHT
FINALE**

(WEATHER PERMITTING)

**VINTAGE STEAM ENGINES
CRAZY GOLF - TOMBOLA
BOUNCY FUN PARK
AXE THROWING CONTEST**



CLASSIC CAR SHOW

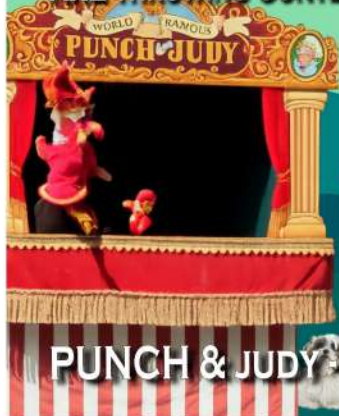
**ARTISANS CRAFT VILLAGE
MASSED MORRIS DANCERS**

**PIG ROAST - REAL ALE BAR - CREAM TEAS
PROSECCO BAR - WOODFIRE BAKED PIZZAS
HOME MADE SAMOSAS - ICES - CANDY FLOSS
STRONGMAN STRIKER - KIDS' FANCY DRESS**

MUSIC FROM LOCAL BANDS

JUNIOR COUNTRY DANCERS

**ALL ROUND VOICES
ARROW VALLEY BRASS BAND**



PUNCH & JUDY - FUN DOG SHOW - THOMAS TRILBY

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, 5th June



Stock & Bradley Gardening Club MONTANA & BEYOND CLEMATIS

A Talk by Helen Picton
Wednesday, 3rd June - 7.30pm
Stock & Bradley Village Hall



ERSTWHILE



BORDER MORRIS

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

Feckenham Parish Council MEETING

Thursday, 4th June - 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

RADICAL

12A



It doesn't matter that you're wrong
It matters that you try...

FeckenOdeon 2 Friday, 17th July at 8pm

The FeckenOdeon Cinemas
at Feckenham Village Hall

Tickets for all shows from The Rose & Crown and Village Shop
Telephone Booking 0333 666 3366* Online Booking* & full information at
www.fecknodeon.co.uk

*Booking Fee applies to Phone and Online Bookings

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

Feckenham READERS GROUP

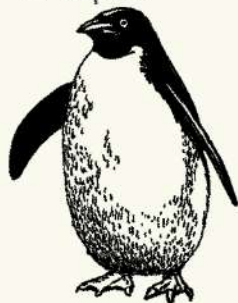
Monday, 15th June - 7.45pm

This month's book:

THE PENGUIN LESSONS

By Tom Michell

Information: 01527 892285



Grand Summer COFFEE MORNING

Friday 5th June

11 until 12.30 at 33 High Street
in aid of Church Roof

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



LIONEL HILL MBE

The Parish Council notes with great sadness the passing of former NFYFC President, Lionel Hill MBE on Friday 10 April. Our thoughts are with Lionel's family and friends at this difficult time.

Lionel was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE), in Her Majesty The Queen's New Year Honours in 2002, in recognition of his outstanding commitment and long service to Young Farmers' Clubs. Most notably, he played a pivotal role in the acquisition and development of the Shires Farm site for Worcestershire YFC's county office, an achievement of which he was both justifiably and tremendously proud.

Across decades of service, Lionel supported generations of YFC members in Worcestershire and far beyond, offering wisdom, encouragement and friendship to countless individuals throughout his lifetime.

Lionel was responsible for saving the Village Green and without his efforts it may have been lost forever. He will be greatly missed by many.

FLOOD ALLEVIATION

The Parish Council were hoping to report that works to Plack Brook would be underway this Summer. However, we still await confirmation from North Worcestershire Water Management that all is in place for work to be undertaken. This is a very disappointing situation.

ARROW VALLEY SOLAR PROPOSAL

Firstly, this is nothing to do with the Arrow Valley Lake and Park in Redditch. It is a large (500MW), solar farm proposal mainly for sites in Wychavon and Warwickshire. The scheme is at a pre-application stage. An initial meeting was held with the Parish Council recently. Full Public consultation will be undertaken later this year.

For further information -:

Email: info@arrowvalleysolar.co.uk

Website: arrowvalleysolar.co.uk

At this stage the possible impact on the Parish seems to be minimal. Energy would be cabled to the substation from the South, and would be moled under the B4090. However, there would inevitably be construction traffic issues as part of the process. The Parish Council have already responded to the "scoping proposals", and our consultant's report can be found on the parish council web site. We will continue to monitor the situation, keep parishioners informed as to progress, and ask our consultant to intervene where appropriate.

One point of interest is that the sub station has a finite capacity to accept input to the grid. A scheme of this magnitude may take up that capacity.

LITTER PICK

The village's bi-annual Litter Pick was carried out on Saturday 16th May. Volunteers toured the highways and byways collecting all sorts of detritus. Thanks are due to the gallant band of pickers - particularly the junior pickers.

NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday 4th June at 7.30pm in the back room at the Village Hall. There is an "open forum" section at the beginning of all Council meetings where you can raise matters of concern or ask questions of the Council.

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

NEED INFORMATION?

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



feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk



CYCLING FOR CHARITY

As many of you already are aware Matt Clarke from the Rose & Crown has been cycling for some years and for the last two years has taken part with BICA helping to fundraise for many worthy causes. Last year Eoin joined him cycling the East coast of Ireland. This year Mel is taking on the challenge!

I'm not known for my cycling abilities except for my 'short' Ride the Night Challenge one night in May last year fundraising for breast and ovarian cancer charities. So to take on the West of Ireland cycle with BICA is a massive & daunting undertaking for me.

EPIC JOURNEY

The journey starts from Wythall with a bus ride to the port and then an overnight ferry followed by another bus journey to Bantry Co Cork. Then we unload the bikes to begin the challenge of cycling from Mizen Head to Malin Head on the West Coast of Ireland. The whole journey is just over **900 kilometres approx.. 564 miles!**

The mileage seems shorter than last year but the terrain will definitely be harder – lots of hilly, remote terrain with wind, hail, rain, hopefully a bit of sun and panoramic views of the Atlantic Coast on our way round the West of Ireland from bottom to top.

I'm cycling with Eoin as far as Westport in Mayo, then Matt and Eoin continue for the rest of the challenge and I'll return to work with a sore backside for my troubles!

A VILLAGE EFFORT

Alongside us will be The Lavin Family from Moor's Lane who have been involved with BICA for a long time. Sharon, Brett, Aidan and Kivah are cycling and with us will be fundraising for BICA.

We will be hosting some great events over the coming months including a quiz and a charity Race Night. Please dig deep and support BICA who then pass all your donations to some great charities:

Birmingham **Irish** Cycle Appeal



THIS YEARS CHARITIES ARE:

- Maeve Fanning Cancer Care – A young mum of 3 from Hall Green, now deemed terminally ill but fighting on through private treatment of hypothermia, hypobaric oxygen therapy, curcumin infusions and light therapy.
- Reynolds Cross School for children with special educational needs.
- Birmingham Children's Hospital – Cystic Fibrosis Unit
- UHCW – Teenagers with Severe Mental Health Needs
- Enterprise Sailing – Making sailing accessible to children from urban communities. Giving them a life experience that can have a lasting effect moving forward.

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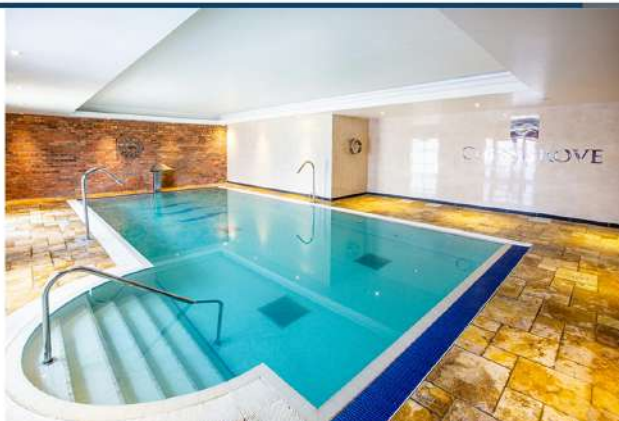
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Feckenham Archive - Marion Chute

Some more from Eric Styler These look like Wake Days to me – rather more energetic day than it is now! Time to bring back the Feckenham Olympics? The other game looks more like my cup of tea but I'm not sure what it is!



It looks as though the weather was a bit less kind in the final photo, or were headscarves mandatory back in the day?!



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Village Shop - Alan Slater

A Load of Balls!

If you've ever wondered what keeps a village ticking - aside from mild gossip and an unhealthy interest in who parked slightly over a yellow line - the answer is of course: the Village Shop. Not just a place to panic buy milk or items that you don't really need, though everyone likes a reduced bargain. It's more than a biscuit depot as it has once again proven to be the beating heart of our community, or at the very least, it's slightly irregular but enthusiastic pulse.

Let's start with the Cricket Club. For the next three seasons the Shop has decided that what our cricket club really needs - apart from perhaps improved batting - is balls. Lots of them,

brand new ones, not ones that look like they've been chewed by a Labrador or been run over by a Ford Fiesta but gleaming new shiny red ones. Having to provide two new balls for every match in the season is a major expense for the Club and we are pleased to help.

But The Shop doesn't stop there. Oh no, The Shop has its fingers in more pies than the WI Bake Off. This month we will be involved in the Wake - our proud annual tradition of slightly lopsided bunting and cakes that makes you feel that you have wandered onto the set of Midsomer Murders. We will appropriately be sponsoring the ever popular - and politically incorrect - Punch and Judy Show. The Wake is a colourful, lively and only mildly chaotic event and is without doubt a highlight of the Feckenham calendar. The Horse Show also benefits. A lovely event where everyone pretends to know the difference between a gelding and a pony and the riders can pretend they're at something much grander than a field that was until the previous day, full of sheep. And who could forget the Scarecrow



Weekend? A time when the Village collectively decides to build unsettling human replicas and dot them about the place. Again with the Shop's financial support, these straw-filled nightmares will continue to thrive, confusing passing motorists and alarming small children for years to come (I'm still receiving therapy after last year's event). I'm not sure if it's a charming rural tradition or a set of a low budget horror film but either way, these vaguely human shaped objects certainly attract a load of people to Feckenham and provides the Shop with a bumper weekend of takings.

Then there are the flower tubs. Overflowing, immaculate, bursting with colour and civic pride, silently judging anyone whose hanging basket contains nothing but regret and a dead petunia. The Shop is responsible for sponsoring some, happy to keep them blooming as it sends out the message that as a Village "we care".

What makes the Shop special isn't just its willingness to fund these things - it's that it does so while still managing to sell slightly squashed bread and vegetables that are on life support. It's a delicate balance between part retail outlet, part philanthropic powerhouse and part unofficial village HQ. You go in for a loaf of bread and come out with a scented candle, a birthday card for someone you don't know and a vague sense that you've just funded half the Parish! But remember - you are not just shopping, you're funding cricket balls, horses, scarecrows and an entire village's sense of pride and the very engine that keeps our glorious village running. Not bad for the price of a pint of milk!

And finally ... Margaret Green our champion knitter, raised over £900 from the sales of her Easter Bunnies. A truly remarkable achievement and all the money will go to fund the salary of a midwife in rural East Africa. She says a big thank you to all who have given support.

An Organic Allotment by Pete Delaney

Midsummer is almost on us!

Spring and early summer this year certainly gave some challenges through the main sowing and planting season. With an extremely wet couple of months in February and March followed by a long dry spell in April and May. Frequent late frosts experienced in April continued well into mid-May. I lost young crops of runner beans, haricot beans and some tomato plants to an extreme frost late last month. Other sowings and plantings began slowly rather than spring forth, some struggling to take root in early May's cold conditions.. Potatoes, which seemed to take their time emerging from the earth, also suffered frost damage late in the season. They at least recovered and I am earthing up around healthy plants again. Onions are at last looking like they want to grow, shallots next to them have thrived regardless of the late cold spells, garlic along side that, was sown in November and are looking like mature plants, on course for the time of the season.

Beetroot has finally taken hold and I am pinching some outer leaves that I am adding to my salads of romaine lettuce and mustard, both of which have served me well all Spring despite the unusually cold conditions. Newly planted out lettuce beds and other plantings and sowings I have covered with cloches or netting. It seems late in the season for half the plot's crops to still be covered up.

My second sowing of runner beans and french beans are at last climbing canes, although along with slow to get growing this year broad beans they will be late in flowering. Peas missed the cold spell through late sowing and are growing strongly.



In June I always plant out leeks that I have raised in pots to about pencil size in the green house, dibbing holes in a prepared and fed bed, dropping the leeks into their respective holes, leaving the back fill to happen naturally.



In the poly tunnel I have replaced early damaged tomatoes and, along with cucumbers, have planted them in prepared and fed ground. As with last year I am going for it with peppers, raising 10 pepper plants in large pots. Last year I was eating peppers until December. Problems in my fruit net I have also put down to the cold dry conditions in May. My gooseberry bush has only greened up in its centre and I shall be pruning it hard at the season's end. Raspberries also have been slow to green and grow new shoots, although my grape is showing good health. I had my first 4 bunches of grapes from the young plant last autumn. So all in all it seems to be a late season, the only plants totally unaffected by the weather conditions are of course the weeds, I didn't see any dock leaves or nettle suffering any frost damage and they carried on thriving across the plot, hey hoe.

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Rob Cole's Gardening Tips - May - My Favourite Month

Praise for Annuals

There are many annuals which perform as well as our precious perennials, maybe more trouble - but well worth it.



Two annuals which we used to grow for both our garden and for our plant sales were *Anchusa leptophylla* (left), a soft blue, and *Omphalodes linifolia alba* (right) which is a good clean white. Both are about 30cm tall and are easy and reliable to germinate - we used to sow them in early March, cold outdoors, in 20-cell plug trays, a few seeds in each cell, and pot



the plugs on into 10cm square pots when they were large enough. We would have flowering plants of each by late June.

A recent find was seed of *Lavatera* 'Ruby Regis', a typical mallow flower in a deep ruby pink, being sold by Mr Fothergill Seeds. It turned out to be spectacular and bushy, with lots of flower from late June onwards. It sets plenty of seed, as most mallows do, and this is now the third year of growing it from home saved seed and there has been no variation.



Californian Poppy is another good and easy annual which we have been growing for years. Most seed offered by the seed companies is *Eschscholzia californica*, but back in the nineties we came across *Eschscholzia maritime prostrata* in a strain called 'Golden Tears' (left). It is much more compact than *E. californica* and does not get long and gangly as it matures. The flowers are, admittedly a little smaller, but are in scale with the plant and are the same golden yellow with a deep golden orange

centre. We do grow *Eschscholzia californica* too, including 'Red Chief' and 'Ivory Castle' along with some mixed double forms.

Finally, a good annual for cutting is *Calendula* 'Indian Prince', a lovely form of the Pot Marigold which not only has the typical bright orange petals, but also a deep red staining on the under surface. I have saved the seed progressively over the years since my first packet of bought seed, but the seedlings are now becoming quite variable, some good and some not so good - though they still make an attractive small vase. But it's probably time to invest in a fresh packet of the real thing.





Our **May meeting** at the Village Hall was a talk by Nigel Hopes entitled 'Trees and Shrubs for a Small Garden'.

NEXT CLUB EVENT – Wednesday 3rd June 2026 is at the Village Hall is on Wednesday 3rd June 2026 and will be a talk by Helen Picton entitled 'Montana and Beyond – Clematis'.

The subject for the monthly competition is 'A Clematis Flower'.

ANNUAL PLANT SALE was on Saturday 9th May in the Village Hall and was another resounding success! Full details next month.

COACH OUTING – Wednesday 8th July 2026 - is to John Massey's garden at Ashwood Nurseries in the morning, followed by a visit to nearby David Austin Roses in the afternoon. Pre-booking is essential and all members have been given full details. If you haven't booked yet, there is still time!

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.

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Feckenham Cricket Club

The cricket season is now in full flow & records are being broken by many teams around the leagues, other than ourselves it seems.

The Firsts look set for a long season on paper but performances are decent & strength in depth is coming in players returning and improvement will surely follow. The Seconds have started well in a higher division and the Thirds similarly are playing higher. Many youngsters are playing in the 3 Saturday teams and the future is bright, proof being Sam Curtis's maiden hundred opening for the Firsts against Martley, opening and remaining not out at the end. Finn Davies, at the second attempt, landed his second career hat trick at the age of only 17.

The bar is now fully stocked with our new range from Camden brewery including the pale ale and Hells Lager, Robinsons cider, Guinness, Carlsberg and always in stock are Bewdley real ales & our own recipe, The Feckers.

We're open Thursday to Sunday and all other match nights.

Upcoming fixtures are:

6th June, 2nds v Inkberrow

13th June, 1sts v Brockhampton

20th June, 2nds v Old Halesowenians

27th June, 1sts v Astwood Bank

If you can only attend the one of those, obviously we could do with support in the last one against our near neighbours & bigger cousins!

Finally, the old warrior himself continues to lead us forward by scoring 99 not out for Worcestershire over 70's v Wiltshire. He heroically jugged a single with 4 balls to go to lose the strike and his chance of another century, and with it the purchasing of a celebratory jug....or so he thought!
Well batted Joe!

As the World Cup is approaching, the club boasts 2 large screen TVs & another on the balcony in peak hours, perfect for your local celebration for England's euphoric progress.

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