



FECKENHAM

NEWS

October 2026

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

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Feckenham News in October

Dates for your Diary

October

2nd	R&C Charity Race Night
7th	S&B Gardening Club
8th	Parish Council Meeting
10-11th	Scarecrows
14th	Readers Group
16th	FeckenOdeon 2
19th	WI
24th	Pocket Choral Society (Village Hall)
28th	Church Charity AGM
31st	FeckenOdeon

November

7th	Bonfire at Cricket Club
8th	Children's Clothing Sale

Regular Sessions

Mondays	Dance Academy; Move It or Lose it
Tuesdays	Tai Chi
Wednesdays	Playgroup (term time)
Thursdays	Bridge; Hatha Yoga; Tumble Tots

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

2nd and 4th Fridays : Erstwhile Morris Dancers

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Miranda Powell

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

As we go into Autumn, I realise that we are already about a month into the school year. There's a new head teacher at Feckenham First School, Mrs Tanya Howarth. I hope to have more about her and the school in next month's magazine.



It's such a pleasure to return to England which has turned from a dry, brown landscape to the green and pleasant land I love. We went for late summer sun to Greece - specifically the islands of Halki and Tilos. Temperatures were in the mid 30s which was too hot for doing much, so I read some very good books. Contact me if you want some recommendations. I think I previously mentioned that I was going to fly less. That resolution is not going well but... I'm mainly vegetarian now and apparently this saves more in greenhouse gas emissions in a year than a long haul flight and can be around the same as a short haul return flight. This is not to say that both being veggie and avoiding flying is best but one does what one can.

I noted that this month's WI meeting was to be a talk by our resident expert embroiderer, Louise Burns. Her work is more accurately known as stump work and embroidery. I attended as a guest and had a

"press pass". I was blown away by the artistry of her work. Pictures on page 13 come no where near doing it justice. She may be showing some of her work at the Scarecrow Weekend - don't miss it.

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 go to Wild Goose Rural Training Centre in memory of Cayla Carter. <https://www.wildgooseruraltraining.org/>

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 your wording to feckenhamnews@gmail.com or post with your donation to Angela Fletcher 12 Mill Lane, B96 6HY, Feckenham by 14th November.

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Obituary: Betty Power - A Life in Bloom



Elma Elizabeth Power (nee Morris) known as Betty, was born in February 1931 to a farming family in Kings Norton. Her early days on the farm nurtured her life-long love of the countryside and nature. She was educated at Edgbaston High School for Girls (and in later life became chair of the Old Girls Association).

Betty married Barry in 1952 and they spent their early married life in Handsworth Wood before moving to The Old Black Boy in Feckenham in 1978.

The Old Black Boy was Betty's pride and joy, particularly the garden. Betty was an enthusiastic and knowledgeable plantswoman and delighted in sharing her beautiful creation by opening the garden at all the Feckenham Flower and Garden Festivals, even appearing on the BBC Gardener's World feature on the Festival in 2012.

Betty's love of plants extended into her talent for creating wonderful flower arrangements. She was an enthusiastic member of the Church Flower Group and enjoyed being involved in decorating the Church throughout the year and for all

major festivals and celebrations.

Betty enjoyed all beautiful things – antiques, art, flowers and clothes (she was always elegantly dressed). When not in her beloved Feckenham, she enjoyed holidays with Barry all over the world and nearer to home, where their favourite places were the Tresanton Hotel in St Mawes and the charming Welsh seaside town of Abersoch.

Sadly, Barry passed away in 1994 but Betty remained at The Old Black Boy and was a well known, active and respected village resident. She was a great supporter of all things Feckenham, including the Village Hall, Shop, Horse Show and its beautiful Church. In Barry's memory she organised for the planting of the daffodils along the grass bank approaching the village from Berrow Hill Lane. Betty was the principal contributor to the restoration of the historic and important painting of the Royal Coat of Arms of George 1 which hangs in the Church and also generously contributed towards the restoration of the stained-glass windows.

Feckenham was central to Betty's life so it was a great wrench for her to have to leave The Old Black Boy and move into a care home when her health began to decline following a fall and breaking her hip. She remained keen to hear all about the village and its happenings right up to the end and her first question to visitors was always "How is Feckenham"?

Betty's last years were spent at Burcot Grange where she received outstanding care and was a popular and well-loved resident.

Betty passed away peacefully at Burcot Grange at the grand age of 95 years on 25th August 2026 after a wonderful life dedicated to beauty in all its forms and to her beloved home, garden and the village of Feckenham.

May she rest in peace beside Barry in Feckenham churchyard.

Betty's funeral service will take place on Friday 2nd October 2026 at 1 pm in Feckenham Church.

Feckenham Square Management Committee

THERE'S STILL TIME!

Feckenham Scarecrow Weekend will happen on 10th and 11th October. It's not too late to enter your very own home made scarecrow!

There are details and an entry form in this magazine (if you don't want to spoil your magazine there are also forms available in the Shop, Rose & Crown and Village Hall - and you can enter online too - go to willumconker.wixsite.com/feckenham-scarecrows



CROWS ON PARADE

The Scarecrows will be on parade from 11 o'clock on both days. Visitors will be able to pick up a FREE map on The Square and follow the Scarecrow Trail. The competition will be judged by YOU - the public. You'll be able to vote for the best creation and prizes will be presented at 4.30pm on Sunday. To aid your deliberations there'll be teas, cakes and sizzling grills on The Square as well as games and novelties for the young at heart.

SCARECROW ASSISTANCE

Like all village events the Scarecrow Weekend is run entirely by volunteers. It's quite a big undertaking with set up work starting a few days earlier. There are tents to erect, furniture to move, parking signs to be put out. We'll be creating a tea-room and a grill station and, over the weekend itself, we'll be handing out maps, serving teas, flipping burgers and doing all the other things that keep the event running and safe. So - we need help! Please get in touch if you can spare some time and effort.

just email willumconker@gmail.com and we'll find a task that suits you and your availability!

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Friday, 2nd October - 7pm

CHARITY RACE NIGHT

at Feckenham Village Hall

Tuesday, 6th October in the Bar from 8pm - Free

TRADITIONAL MUSIC

10th & 11th Oct - SCARECROWS - Open all day

29th October - BURGER & A PINT

31st Oct - 7th Nov - BANGERS WEEK!

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Feckenham SCARECROW Weekend

10th & 11th October

We need YOUR Scarecrow! Enter NOW!

Feckenham Scarecrow Weekend is back. BUT without scarecrows there would be no Scarecrow Weekend so this is where YOU come in.

We want you to make the most eye-catching and original scarecrows you can imagine. There's no theme and very few rules so let your imagination go wild! (Though keep it decent - this is a family event!)

- Scarecrows can be as big or as small as you wish, can be by themselves or in a group.
- Your scarecrow must be placed where the public can see it from the pavement and be within the central village.
- If you live outside you'll be welcome to display your masterpiece on The Square.
- There'll be prizes for the **BEST SCARECROW**. There's no charge for entering - and the public will be the judges. Winners will be announced at 4.30pm on Sunday..... So get stuffing! There's no time to lose!

PLEASE NOTE: So that the Scarecrow Trail Map can be prepared in time we **MUST** have received your entry form by 4th October.... **AND** your scarecrow must be ready to greet the public by 11am on both days.

Use this form to enter - you can also enter online at willumconker.wixsite.com/feckenham-scarecrows



Feckenham Scarecrow Competition 2026

Name of Your Scarecrow: _____

Your Name: _____

Your Address: _____

Will your Scarecrow be at home [☐] or on The Square [☐] (tick box).

Are you under 12? (Yes/No) _____

Please drop this form into the letterbox at Feckenham Village Hall (in the porch).

We MUST receive your entry by Sunday, 4th October.

CHURCH SERVICES



PARISH CHURCH of ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Vicar - Vacant following the appointment of Fr Glenn to the Arch Benefice near Evesham.

Assistant Curate - The Rev Fiona Carter (unpaid volunteer - part time only)

Church Wardens - Vacant.

Weddings and Baptisms please contact the Rev Fiona Carter on fiona-carter@hotmail.co.uk

To arrange a Funeral please contact your Funeral Director

For all other enquiries please contact Ian Hunter, Secretary to the Parochial Church Council preferably by email to secretary@feckenhamchurch.org.uk or 07874 800108.

Website www.feckenhamchurch.org.uk



PARISH CHURCH
OF
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
FECKENHAM

Services for October 2026

4th October	10:30am	Eucharist	Rev Fiona Carter Followed by Harvest Lunch
11th October	10:30am	Informal Family Worship	Rev Fiona Carter
18th October	6:30pm	Evensong	Rev Paul Lawlor
Saturday 24 th October	10-12 am	Messy Church	
25th October	10:30am	Morning Prayer	Phil Tricklebank ALM

Drop in (in church)

No drop-in or morning prayer during half-term

Coffee Stop

October 13th Tuesday 2pm - 3.45pm



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 01527 89389

Songs of Praise

It seems like months ago that we had Songs of Praise at Feckenham Church but of course it was on Sunday 23rd August.

The bells rang out before the service which I felt set the ambience for this grand occasion.

As people walked up to church several told me that it felt like they were going to a wedding.

It was a lovely sight seeing everyone stream into church with such joy in your hearts.

As I welcomed people at the door, I felt the joy and excitement that was buzzing around the church.

When I walked back into church at 10.28am, I was astonished to see the church so full.

There was no going back, after 10 weeks of planning, it was here. I joined in with the choir to sing the anthem, and announced the first hymn.

I felt the service went very well and the little drama to support the Gospel reading went ahead unrehearsed. A choir pew was converted into a boat, with the Sea of Galilee on the chancel floor, as we cast our net into the water, we caught nothing until Jesus called to us from the 'shore' and told us to cast our nets over the right side of the boat. When we did, we caught a net full of fish and the disciples helped to haul them in. It turned out to be great fun, and hopefully the story of Jesus appearing to his disciples for the third time will be understood and remembered by the congregation.

There were 11 hymns altogether, and I hope that they were the right choices for everyone's enjoyment. Mum pulled the stops out on the organ, and sometimes she sang along while she was playing, which

made me look on in awe.

And suddenly, my hour was up and we were singing the last hymn-Guide Me O Thou Great Redeemer, with gusto.

Afterwards, we had tea, coffee, and cake, and it was very humbling to receive so many positive comments and praise.

My ministry is in its infancy, and I have a lot to learn of course. I certainly enjoyed the service which did exactly what I had hoped it would do, it brought a lot of people into church, whether religious or not, and we praised the Lord together.

My sincere thanks to all who attended, and also to everyone who helped.

Philip Tricklebank ALM



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? QUIZ NIGHT



Friday 20th November 2026

7.00 pm

Feckenham Village Hall

High Street, Feckenham, B96 6HN

Teams of maximum six people

£5.00 per person

(Tickets available in Feckenham Shop and on the door)

Bar but bring your own nibbles !

Raffle

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Reverend Fiona Writes...

So, we are already in October and “time waits for no man”. It is really a beautiful time of the year with the leaves and all the beautiful colours, but let’s not rush through autumn because of early planning for Christmas. Let’s savour it and enjoy it. October gets its name from the eighth month in the roman calendar “Octo”. I am an October baby, and I find October a very useful month to have a birthday because I often have birthday money and it is a very good time to buy clothes because summer is over, and we are starting to need warmer clothes. So, I use my birthday money for that very reason.

All the season’s vegetables we see are beautiful, aren’t they? Pumpkins, swede, butternut squash to name a few. And warming soups seem to be so much more appealing this time of year rather than in the spring or summer. Each season has something special about it and there is something very familiar about each season and autumn is no different. We have the cooler weather but still have some brighter days with that golden autumn sun.

I hope you all enjoy all these autumn colours and that you enjoy this season in all its beauty. In the church this season is called Ordinary time before the season of Advent and Christmastide. The latter are seasons of celebration, but we all need Ordinary time as we can’t go from one celebration to another. We need that period of the ordinary where we can appreciate the simple things of life.

In church there is more Ordinary time than anything else and during this time we just walk with Jesus praying and just being with him. We walk through his story and our own stories. There is nothing ordinary about Ordinary time as every day Jesus calls us into communion with him. So don’t rush into preparing for Advent or Christmas but have a blessed Ordinary time.

Blessings Rev’d Fion

Friends of Feckenham Church Charity AGM

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Church Charity will take in the Church on Wednesday 28th October 2026 at 7pm

EVERYONE IS VERY WELCOME

Up to date details on the Charity’s finances will be available including progress on the roof renewal.

See you there!

Phil Guise

Secretary to the Board of Trustees



Join us on Saturday 24th October

10-12pm at Feckenham Church

and

2-4pm at Astwood Bank Church

We will be finding out about Jesus through craft,
food and our celebration time.

Messy Church is for everyone,
just turn up and join in.





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tomorrow



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Thank you for your kindness and generosity

WITH THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS



A kinder, brighter Redditch this Christmas

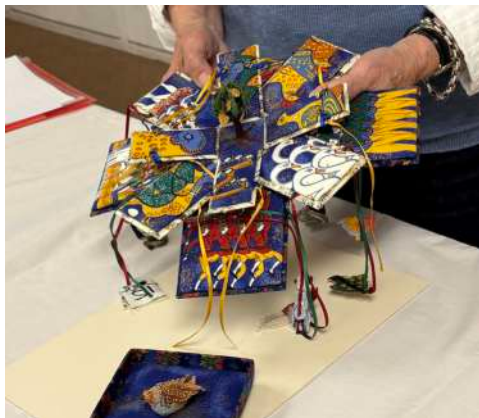


Feckenham WI

Our September meeting was timed to possibly inspire us to get crafty for Christmas, with a talk from the very talented (and patient!) Louise Burn. Louise has been a member of The Embroiders Guild for many decades, and has done talks and lectures to large audiences all over the country, so we were very grateful that she would take the time and effort to bring some of her many treasures to our little meeting. We were all fascinated by the creativity, skill and artistry of Louise's embroidered boxes, and it was so interesting to hear a little bit about her life in embroidery. She took us through how receiving an etui box inspired her to create her own, incorporating stump work pieces along the way, and how she did her City & Guilds qualifications in Bournville, culminating in a beautifully intricate garden scene. Once again, we were all astounded at how many creative and talented people our small village has.



Our next meeting is on Monday 19th October, and it will be a talk on local policing. So if you want to know about the best ways to put off burglars, or what it's like to be arrested, we will be in the back room of Feckenham village hall. Doors open at 7.45pm, the meeting starts at 8pm. Members are free and guests are very welcome for a suggested donation of £5.



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WHAT'S ON IN



**Feckenham
SCARECROW
Weekend.**

10th & 11th October
Throughout the village
FREE Exhibition!

📍 Pick up your Map of the
Scarecrow Trail at
The Square (village green)

🕒 Trail Open 11 am

☕ TEAS served all day
🔥 Sizzling Grills

🏆 Grand Prizegiving
4.30pm - Sunday.

FECKENHAM VILLAGE HALL



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TICKETS £15
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From The Village Shop
and The Rose & Crown.
Book Online at www.feckhall.org

Feckenham READERS GROUP
Thursday, 14th October - 7.45pm
This month's book:
GOOD PEOPLE
By Patmeena Sabit
Information: 01527 892285



? QUIZ NIGHT
Friday 20th November 2026
7.00 pm
Feckenham Village Hall
High Street, Feckenham, B96 6HN

Teams of maximum six people
£5.00 per person
(Tickets available in Feckenham Shop and on the door)
Bar but bring your own nibbles!

Raffle
Further information: 07487 539265
All proceeds to Mission Morogoro



Rose & Crown CHARITY RACE NIGHT

AT FECKENHAM VILLAGE HALL
FRIDAY 2ND OCTOBER
★ 7PM ★

IN AID OF BICA CHARITIES



theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

Next Meeting: Monday, 19th October
An arresting talk about
LOCAL POLICING
8pm - Feckenham Village Hall
Contact jen@thecarys.co.uk for details

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, 6th October



Stock & Bradley Gardening Club

Wednesday, 7th October

VEGETABLE GROWING

with Roger Umpleby

Stock & Bradley Village Hall - 7.30pm



Feckenham Parish Council MEETING

Thursday, 8th October - 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.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the Friends of the Church Charity

In the Church on

Wednesday 28th October 2026 at 7pm

EVERYONE IS VERY WELCOME

Up to date details on the Charity's finances will be available including progress on the roof renewal.

THE
FECKENODEON CINEMA SOCIETY

Mads Mikkelsen
as

**THE
LAST VIKING** 15

FeckenOdeon 2 Friday, 16th October at 8pm

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JOSEPH COTTON

**THE
THIRD
MAN**

PG

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FECKENHAM CRICKET CLUB

**BONFIRE
NIGHT**

SATURDAY 7TH NOVEMBER 2026
FROM 7PM

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

Worcestershire Open Studios: A Great Success



It is now a month since this event ended but on behalf of those Feckenham artists taking part we wanted to thank everybody who came along. The Open Studios is not just a selling event but an opportunity for us to show our work and talk about how it is changing in terms of content and application and indeed to demonstrate procedures to those who come along and ask "how do you do that?". It does mean an awful lot to us when people show an interest in our work and come along to support us. Altogether we had nearly 400 visitors over the two weekends from both near and far.

Some were following the Open Studios Arts Trail and were coming from areas such as Bromsgrove, Droitwich, Worcester and Malvern, others were more local having seen the event advertised around the village and some, on holiday in the area, came from as far away as Scotland and Northumberland!

When explaining who we were and that we were part of a group known as Feckenham Artisans, all of whom live in Feckenham, a number of people were amazed that there were so many of us in such a small village and more than one asked if Feckenham was known as an Arts Hub and actually attracted artists and creators to live here!



Finally on a personal note I advertised the fact that I would be making a contribution from sales to the Alzheimer's Society and I'm pleased to report that I have been able to make a donation of £2000.

Thanks again for all your support.

Ian Ridley on behalf of myself, Julian Bull, Sara Lightning, Jude Sullivan and Debbie Watton.

BABY & CHILDREN'S



*Second hand
sale!*

NEWBORN TO AGE 11

CLOTHES, TOYS, UNIFORM, EQUIPMENT, CHRISTMAS

SUNDAY 8TH NOVEMBER
2.30-4.30PM
FECKENHAM VILLAGE HALL

LARGE TABLES - £20, SMALL TABLES - £10
£2 ENTRY FEE, REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE



EMAIL BY 1ST NOVEMBER TO BOOK A TABLE
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ALL PROCEEDS TO GO 50/50 TO THE VILLAGE HALL & WI

The FeckenOdeon
Cinema Society

25th
Anniversary
Season



VIKING TREASURE LOST

Anker has finished his prison sentence for bank robbery. His one consolation during his incarceration has been the knowledge that his brother Manfred has safely hidden the loot. Returning home, he discovers that Manfred now believes he is John Lennon and no longer remembers where he buried the money... or the lyrics of Love me Do... A hilarious if slightly dark comedy. (Denmark 2025)

THE LAST VIKING (15)
Friday 16th October at 8pm



VIENNESE THRILLS

A true classic from our first season and part of our anniversary celebrations. With a script by Grahame Greene and direction by Carol Reed, this is a terrific thriller in which Holly Martins (Joseph Cotton) – an American writer of cowboy stories – comes to Vienna to visit his old pal Harry Lime, only to be told he has died - or has he? Orson Welles lurking in the sewers and Anton Karas' haunting zither theme make for a suitably sinister atmosphere (UK 1949)

THE THIRD MAN (PG)
Saturday 31st October 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

Feckenham's Own...



AGELESSNESS

We can't pretend that the music we play on Swansbrook Radio is aimed at the youth market. Most of our presenters are past their sell-by dates and we dare to guess that description applies to most of the readers of this magazine too... so why not have a listen and find a musical age that suits you...

We've got the 1950s and 60s covered in the form of Colin James' "All Time Favourites" - anything from Chuck Berry to the Beatles via Adam Faith and Brenda Lee...

Then there's the 70s and 80s in Nick Ledbury's **Classic Prog Rock Show** - and a great selection of later music from all over the world in Nick's weekly "I Like It Like That"

If your tastes are timeless Chris Fletcher's "Classical Swansbrook" encompasses music from Bach to Bacharach and Ian Bellion's "Happy Hour" features anything from 78s to MP3s - he's even played something by Taylor Swift... though that was probably an accident.

So tune in - you may find a tune that you like - and you may be pleasantly surprised - which is part of the joy of old fashioned radio!

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.

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Feckenham Village Hall



OUT OF POCKET...

Hailing from the hard-to-find village of Pocket comes The Pocket Choral Society, a new a cappella and ever so slightly off-the-wall choir of four. The vicar, publican, farmer and village shop worker who form the group, bring a whole new vibe to the show as they combine the singing with tales of intrigue and village life from their own village of Pocket.

In their new opus (entitled "Please Drive Carefully") they combine beautiful harmonies with much laughter. There's a mix of original music with comedy songs on the minutiae of life - and even improvised singing sessions. Singing unamplified the quartet bring lots of their own songs and new arrangements of some more well known numbers from Lennon & McCartney, Flanders & Swann and Tom Waits in an intimate and relaxed way.

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Saturday 24th October at 7.30pm

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Book online through www.feckhall.org

Book by phone on 0333 666 3366

DRAW RESULTS

**Feckenham Village Hall Improvement Fund
Draws.** Carried out on 1st September 2026.

August:

1st (£25)	137	Peter & Liz Teisen
2nd (£15)	77	Tony Hunt
3rd (£10)	40	Shirley Harman

September:

1st (£25)	76	Harold Richardson
2nd (£15)	52	Georgina Heard
3rd (£10)	175	John and Dulci Morris

The money collected for these draws and the proceeds of the various shows at the Hall are put into the Improvement Fund - and that's used to keep the Hall in good order. The latest project is to renew or replace the interior doors which are showing signs of their age - and the constant passage of trolleys and equipment. We're currently researching designs and materials - watch this space!

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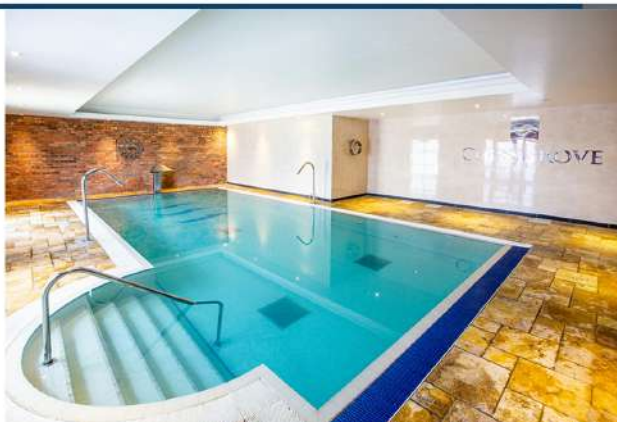
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Feckenham Archive - Marion Chute

A few more photos from Eric Styler's collection. This is a very new looking clock-face on the church with Eric



And here are a couple that show the broken bell followed by the complex exercise of getting a new one up to the tower with the help of what looks like a couple of planks of wood!



I think these date back to the 1960's.
Let me know any details
marionchute@me.com

Village Shop - Alan Slater

WE ARE GOING MAD FOR AUTUMN

There are certain things you expect from a Village Shop. Bread, milk, newspapers, and maybe the occasional emergency bottle of wine having suddenly remembered the in-laws are coming to lunch. What you don't expect is a full blown autumnal spectacular involving scarecrows dressed as characters from Alice in Wonderland. Surprised? Well you shouldn't be, after all we are no ordinary village shop.

More than eighty volunteers help to keep the place running which is frankly astonishing. Most organisations struggle to find three people willing to attend a committee meeting without claiming they have suddenly developed an appointment with their dentist. We can struggle at times to staff the Shop, so we always have space to accommodate more volunteers in our Team. Don't be shy, if you can spare a couple of hours come along and join us, it's fun and we're a very sociable crowd.

Now the season of 'mists and mellow fruitfulness' is upon us, the Shop has been given an autumn makeover in preparation for this month's Scarecrow Weekend. When I say autumn theme I don't mean someone has just put a pumpkin by the till and called it a day. No, I mean leaves, colour, seasonal decorations and enough autumnal enthusiasm to make a squirrel feel slightly inadequate. The transformation is all part of our support for the Scarecrow Weekend of which the Shop is proud to be a major sponsor. We thought simply handing over a cheque and wishing everyone good luck would be too sensible, so we have also decided to build scarecrows.

Not ordinary scarecrows obviously, we have gone for the theme of a Mad Hatter's Tea Party. Quite why we have thought combining scarecrows, tea and the general concept of madness was sensible is unclear, but it does seem remarkably appropriate for



our cafe which becomes something of a madhouse most weekends. So we will be populating the veranda with a collection of oddly dressed straw people having tea throughout the weekend when they will no doubt attract attention, admiration and possibly a few puzzled expressions from customers wondering if they have accidentally wandered into a particularly eccentric garden centre.

The Scarecrow Weekend is always a fantastic Village occasion with people going to extraordinary lengths to construct scarecrows that are considerably better dressed than many of the humans who live here (I have deliberately avoided mentioning names for legal reasons!). So as autumn, arrives and the Village prepares to unleash its scarecrows upon the unsuspecting public,

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An Organic Allotment - September

by Pete Delaney

October for me is the month of squash harvest. Pumpkin, Butternut squash and Turkish turban are all ripening nicely in my squash patch.

This summer, with all the dry heat, for a time I thought I was going to get small pumpkins and a small crop of them. However since the rains began in late August and continued through much of September, my squash patch has seriously caught up with the season and I have some fantastic sized pumpkins and healthy looking squashes, all ripening just in time for the pumpkin carving season.

I will cook the whole of a large pumpkin along with other ingredients, peppers, onions, garlic and even sweet corn or runner beans, then bottling the meals, vacuum sealed in jars and put them away for a future date.

Using the same heated jars bottling method I also store away some jars of my own haricot beans in tomato sauce, an annual favourite of mine.

As with last year I went for a good number of pepper plants on the green house. This has paid off again with a continuous supply of green, yellow and red peppers through the autumn.

Cucumbers did not produce as many as previous seasons, but I still had a good supply till mid September.

Outside my sweet corn gave me a good harvest and for a change I actually beat the squirrels to them, well most of them.

Runner beans, which struggled to produce pods during the hot months, sprang into life once the autumn rain came and I have had a good crop of new young runner bean pods into late autumn.

In my brassica net, sprouts are doing well, so far. I find they need a lot of looking after until harvesting. I have lost sprouts to diseases or pests near harvest time. I try to keep them clean of mould and remove damaged leaves.

Savoy and red cabbage are building nice heads, they will both be winter harvests. Greyhound summer cabbage was slow growing this year, but now at last I am eating some small but nice tight heads.

At the end of this month I shall likely lift sweet potatoes. It is difficult from the plants to tell what kind of harvest is waiting below the earth. I had an excellent crop of tubers last year, but the year before they were very small. I am still eating this year's great crop of regular potatoes. I grew white Kingsman and red Desiree which harvested over 60 lb of potatoes between them.

One lettuce plant I left to go to seed had produced a number of seedlings bunched together where the plant had stood, I eat some of it as young salad and transplant some into a prepared bed to bring on through the winter under cloche cover.

At least at this time of the year the weeds become more manageable, I try to get them up and onto the compost heap before they go to seed.



Rob Cole's Gardening Tips

More Praise for Annuals

Annuals are often dismissed as “too much trouble” or “they only last for one season” but there are many annuals which perform equally as well as our precious perennials in flower, maybe a bit more trouble - but well worth it.

I have already referred to Papaver commutatum 'Ladybird' in my previous articles, but have no shame at all in recommending it again. It is such a deep red and the black blotches to each petal emphasise the rich colour.



Two annuals which we have grown for our garden (and for our plant sales) are Anchusa leptophylla, a soft blue, and Omphalodes linifolia alba which is a good clean white. Both are about 30cm tall and are easy and reliable to germinate - I 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 are large enough. I would then 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, and I now grow it from home saved seed each year and there has been no variation.



Californian Poppy is another good and easy annual which I 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. I 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. So, it's probably time to buy a fresh packet of the real thing!





CLUB MEETING, Wednesday 2nd September 2026

Our club meeting at the beginning of September was a talk by Josh Egan-Wyer entitled 'Classy Plants for Autumn'. Josh is a regular visiting speaker and showed us a range of perennials and shrubs to give foliage and floral colour in Autumn. Plants for sale were readily snapped up by club members.

NEXT CLUB MEETING, Wednesday 7th October 2026 at 7:30pm

Our speaker for the October meeting is Roger Umpelby who will give us advice on 'Vegetable Growing - Getting The Most From Your Plot'.

The theme for the monthly competition is 'A Single Flowering Stem of a Michaelmas Daisy'.

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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LIMITED AVAILABILITY

Feckenham Cricket Club - Neil Evans

As the hour of vespertophobia (the fear of sunsets, dusk, or the evening hours) approaches, cricket drifts into the memories of a long dry summer.

As I write the club is preparing the end of season renovation and putting the square to bed. This is a great and necessary cost to ourselves to sustain the standard of cricket that our opponents generally attain and that we aspire to and occasionally achieve. It's the hope that kills you....

The surface of the square needs to remain untouched until it settles and the grass comes through and binds it together. Yes, we do have signs up regarding dog walking but we also have dogs ourselves and are very relaxed as long as our ground is treated with respect and no unnecessary mess left behind. We are all volunteers and many thanks to the 95% of visitors that understand our situation and treat the ground accordingly.

This writer has been off his feet recently, missing the last few weeks of the season and was a guest of the largest BandB the second city has to offer and can only recommend the quality of the apple crumble served by the NHS. Having written three eulogies in these pages this year alone I left instructions that if things went worse than expected that a copy and paste effort would probably suffice.

So imagine my surprise during my convalescence, I was reading a magazine called 'The Nighwatchman', a quarterly collection of cricket writings from Wisden. I came across an extended write up of the 1995 season where a certain bowler called 'Humpty' got both brothers out within two weeks of each other, and left the future Zimbabwean captain and England coach sitting fully clothed, still padded up, on the floor of the shower with the jets on full power.

Paul Humphries, he of the shoe shop in Redditch, had a long career bowling mid to high 80's for clubs like Pershore and Old Hill in the Birmingham League, and also turned out from time to time, and finished his career, at Mill Lane. Indeed both of his brothers and also Ryan, his son, have played for the club.

'Humpty', or 'Humpy' to me and many others, is still found having a beer on many Fridays at the bar, and is always worth a chat to about his career. You'll need to judge your beer when you approach though, not that he'll want one off you but it can be difficult to get away at times!

The piece is well worth a read, and a hard copy can be bought off the internet for £12. A cheaper way would be a subscription to Readly, currently 2 months free, enabling access to thousands of magazines online. I am neither an agent of Scott Oliver or an employee of Readly, but a word to the wise, if you wish Humpy to sign the piece, one, buy a hard copy, and two, don't let him sign the part where he wasn't overthinking the situation... it may not end well.

And yes, the touring Australians did used to request him as a net bowler going into the Edgbaston test match, and that's not on the internet or AI!

The club remains open Friday to Sunday during the winter. All new members are welcome and we will be showing all Sky Sports football and other sports.

Also, the best and cheapest bonfire night in the area returns to the club Saturday 7th November, more details next month and online but all we ask for is donations to cover the fireworks. The more donated, the better the fireworks next year.

Winter on!

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