



The Heron

Community Magazine

Delivered to homes in Christchurch, Euximoor and Tipps End

December 2022

		In this issue!			
Townley School	2	Food Bank/Age UK	7	Christmas Card Entries	14-15
Community Info	3	Victorian Christmas	8	Season's Greetings	16
Useful Telephone Numbers	3	Stonea Bridge	8	Royal Mint/Crimestoppers	17
Advertising in the Heron	4	Kids' Page	9	Puzzle	18
Diary Dates	4	Recipe/Coffee, Cake & Chat	10	Clubs	19-21
Editorial/Heron News	5	Church News	11	Advertisers	22-26
Dole Distribution	5	Message from Rev S Tooke	11	Welle Cinema	26
New Years Eve Party	6	Policing Fenland/What's On	12	Wildlife Watching	27
Parish Lunch Raffle Tickets	6	Christchurch Carol Singing	13	2022 Harvest/New Field Project	28



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TOWNLEY SCHOOL AND PRE-SCHOOL

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Website: www.townley.cambs.sch.uk
01354 638229



Facebook—Townley School
and Pre-School

Remember that our website has
lots more information about
school.

November 2022

Forest School

We have finally been able to start our Forest School pilot in our Year 5/6 class. I had the privilege of joining them for a part of their session, the children were so completely engaged in their exploration of the forest they didn't even notice I was there. I can see the benefits it is having on their mental health, as well the benefits this group of children will bring society as they grow up. Our children will be the designers, architects, farmers and planners of the future and if we can instil a love of the outdoor environment into them then our nursing homes will be much better places to live out the remainder of our lives! I hope this example helps you to see some of the many benefits of Forest School. I know that as adults we need to take risks in our day to day life (I think about driving to school every day!) and our children taking risks outside prepare them for adult life. We all want to keep our precious children safe, but sometimes life isn't easy and we must teach them to manage risk. Teaching children to manage risks safely is such an important life skill, I know the National Curriculum doesn't assess taking risks, but survival in life does require risk. We are always looking for volunteers to support with these sessions, please call the school office if you would like to be involved.



Christmas Fair

Friends of Townley School (FOTS) will be holding a Christmas Fair, followed by a 'mini' Christingle on 16th December 2022 from 3pm if you would like to join us.

Community Information

Mobile Post Office:

Visits Monday to Thursday in the lay-by on Upwell Road Monday and Thursday - 16.30 to 17:00

Tuesday and Wednesday - 16.10 to 17:00

Fridays - no service.

ANYONE WISHING THEIR ITEMS TO BE POSTED, ON THE DAY, WILL NEED TO GET THEIR POST TO THE VAN BY 4.40PM - WHICH IS WHEN IT IS COLLECTED.

Use it or lose it!

Mobile Library:

OUR MOBILE LIBRARY COMES ONCE A MONTH, ON THE FIRST TUESDAY, AT 12.15-1.00PM.

The van parks in the lay-by on Upwell Road, opposite to the entrance of Fen View. **USE IT OR LOSE IT?**

The Mobile Library visits March, Christchurch and Manea:

March Elliot Lodge 9:30 - 10:10
 March Shaftesbury Lodge 10:20 - 10:50
 March Upwell Park 10:55 - 11:15
 March Fleming Court 11:30 - 11:45
 Christchurch Layby 12:15 - 1pm
 Manea Festival Close 2pm - 3pm
 Manea High Street 3:10 - 4:30pm

As well as a large range of library books, you can get your NHS hearing batteries, replacement walking stick ferrules and you can dispose of old household batteries.

You can use the Select and Collect service online, or by calling 0345 045 5225.



Please remember that no dogs are allowed on the playing field. Thank you. Your co-operation is much appreciated.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Age UK Cambridgeshire	0300 666 9860
Alzheimer's Society (Fenland)	01945 580480
Churchwarden - Mrs Helen Chappell	01354 638092
Citizens' Advice Bureau, Wisbech	03442 451292
Community Centre Bookings (Bryan Burfield)	07918 664402
Community Fire Safety Officer	07717 858166
Crimestoppers	0800 555111
District Councillor - Will Sutton	01354 638025
District Councillor - Michelle Tanfield	07908 707129
Electricity Faults - UK Power Networks	105
FACT	01354 661234
Fenland District Council	01354 654321
Floodline	0845 988 1188
Library - March	0354 045 5225
MIND (Mental Health Crisis Line)	116 123
National Debtline	0808 808 4000
NHS	111
Norfolk Dial-a-Ride	01553 770310
Parish Clerk - David Gibbs	07932 191050
Parish Councillor - Jill Bliss	01354 638343
Parish Councillor - Sharon Pomeroy	07837 407536
Parish Councillor - Roger Gladwin	01354 638538
Parish Councillor - James Hughes (Chair)	01354 638310
Parish Councillor - Kay Miller	01354 638232
Parish Councillor - Peter Owen	01354 638847
Parish Councillor - Andrew Sparrow	01354 638020
Police - Emergency	999
Police - Non Emergency	101
Samaritans	116 123
Telephone Preference Service	0345 070 0707
Townley School	01354 638229
Trading Standards	03454 040506
Train Information	03457 484950
Upwell Health Centre (and out of hours)	01945 773671
Upwell Health Centre - Pharmacy	01945 774934
Veterinary Centre - The Crossings (D'Mkt)	01366 382219
Water Emergencies	03457 145145
Club Contacts	
Art Club - Jan Clifford	01354 638217
Book Club - Pat Rigby	07776 142642
Gardening Club - Marion Hawthorn	01354 638230
Short Mat Bowls Club - Janet Harper	01354 638681
WI - Margaret Hayes	01354 653240
Jazz Club - Cat Johnson	musiciancat@hotmail.co.uk
Christchurch Stargazers - Mark Andrews	07425 165415

Advertising in the Heron

Quarter Page (14cm High x 9.5cm Wide)

Portrait Format

6 x issues £50

12 x issues £90

Eighth Page (6.5cm High x 9.5cm Wide)

Landscape Format

6 x issues £34

12 x issues £64

Please contact adverts@theheron.info or phone Elaine on 01354 638310.

Advertisers - all our advert rates and conditions can be found on our website www.theheron.info. Business advertisers can book a series of 6 or 12 adverts, paid in advance. Adverts for village fundraising events, personal announcements, or small private ads are usually free.

Do you know someone who would like to receive a Heron each month, who doesn't live in the village? Contact us at adverts@theheron.info and we will send them a subscription form.

The cost is £25.00 per year (including P&P).

Diary Dates

DATE	EVENT	TIME	PLACE	PAGE
Fri 2nd	DOLE DISTRIBUTION	2-3pm	CCC	5
Sun 4 th	Welle Cinema	2pm	3 Holes V/Hall	26
Mon 5 th	Parish Council Meeting	7.30pm	CCC	
Tues 6 th	Mobile Library	12.15pm	Lay-by (Fen View)	3
Tues 6 th	Book Club	7.30pm	Brimstone Manor	19
Sun 11 th	Church H/C	10.30am	CCC	11
Tues 13 th	Art Club	1.30-3.30pm	CCC	19
Tues 13 th	W I	7pm	CCC	21
Weds 14 th	Lunch Break	12 – 2pm	CCC	21
Sun 18 th	CAROL SERVICE	4pm	CCC	11, 16
Sat 24 th	Christmas Eve H/C	8pm	CCC	11
Sat 31 st	NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY	7 - late	CCC	6
REGULAR WEEKLY EVENTS				
Every Mon	Short Mat Bowls	7-9pm	CCC	21
Every Weds	Chair-based exercise class Kathleen Henderson	10-10.50am 07880 543821	CCC	
Every Thurs	Coffee, Cake & Chat	2-3pm	CCC	10
M,T,W,TH	Mobile Post Office	Various	Lay-by (Fen View)	3

At the time of going to press, all information is as accurate and up to date as we can make it. Changes and updates may be published subsequently. All information contributed by outside agencies, including dates etc., will be assumed to be correct.

NB as a matter of courtesy no content from the Heron should be used without prior permission.

Editorial

Welcome to our sparkling December Edition of The Heron. Suddenly, we are at the end of 2022!



It's been a good one for The Heron, I'm sure you'll agree. It takes a lot of work to get the magazine out each month, as you may imagine – what with the AGM in July, and some Executive Team meetings; the ongoing sorting out and checking of the finances, and advertisers, and fundraising events; the monthly Editorial Team Meetings, finding people to write articles, editing them, fitting them into the design in Publisher in time to get it to MSP March, who print them; organising deliveries, and last, but by no means least, being delivered by our faithful Delivery Team. Well done everyone and thank you. Here's to a great 2023!

Be sure to check out all the interesting articles this month; there's something for everyone. And a very special THANK YOU to local farmers, Jill and Gabriel Bliss, for their regular contributions this year, which have been so interesting (page 28). Enjoy your Christmas. *Annie Nason*

Heron News



to all our artists! We at The Heron are so pleased to see such talent produced on our behalf (pages 14 and 15). They are delightful!

And even more CONGRATULATIONS to those 8 people whose designs were chosen to be in our Christmas Card Pack. There is one of each of the 8 designs in a pack, plus envelopes.

This is our winter Fundraiser. Do order some. £4 per pack, or 3 packs for £10. Get them from Elaine Reed-Hughes or Annie Nason. (Contact details on the front of this magazine).

And a big thank you to Rex for sorting it all out. Great job, as always.



Copy Deadline - The deadline for copy for the **January** edition of the Heron is **16 December**.

UPWELL (CAMBRIDGE) CONSOLIDATED CHARITIES

(FORMER ISLE PART OF THE PARISH))

DOLE DISTRIBUTION

THE TRUSTEES ANNOUNCE THAT THE ANNUAL
DISTRIBUTION WILL BE HELD ON

FRIDAY

2nd DECEMBER 2022

VILLAGE HALL, UPWELL

Between 11am and noon

Applicants residing in CHRISTCHURCH to apply at
the Christchurch Community Centre between
2.00 and 3.00 pm

The aged and infirm will receive the first consideration
No able bodied man or woman under 65 need apply
ONLY those resident in the Parish for at least five years
will be considered

Further information may be obtained from :-
Mr. C Crofts – Upwell 01945 353366
Mrs Bliss – Christchurch 01354 638343

A Point of View

Christmas is built upon
a beautiful and intentional
paradox; that the birth
of the homeless should be
celebrated in every home.

G. K. CHESTERTON

Brave New Family



Letters to the Editorial Team

The Editorial team welcome letters from its readers. Please email letters to: editor@heron.info or post them to *The Editor of The Heron, Grasshopper Cottage, 5 Upwell Road, Christchurch, PE14 9LF.*

PLEASE NOTE: Letters will only be considered for publication if they are accompanied by name and contact details. The Heron will not share any contact details unless given permission.

The team look forward to hearing from you!

PARISH LUNCH FUNDRAISER

Raffle in aid of the annual **Christchurch Parish Lunch**. Due to covid, we were unable to have our annual fundraiser for the Over 65s Parish Lunch this year. However, we did have some fantastic raffle prizes lined up - which we are now selling tickets for.
£1.00 a strip.

1ST PRIZE

A Food Hamper
(worth in excess of £50)

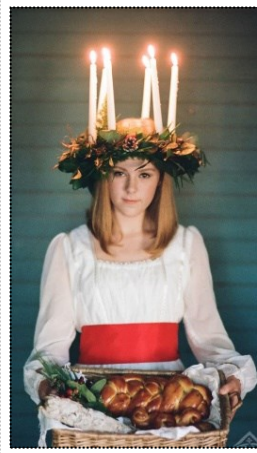
2ND PRIZE

A bottle of White and Red Wine

3RD PRIZE

A Festive Flower Arrangement

For tickets, please contact Ruth Ingram on 01354 638419 (or any of the Parish Lunch Committee). Thank you.



December 13th is Saint Lucy's Day.

This is a Christian feast day observed on 13 December. The observance commemorates Lucia of Syracuse, an early-4th-century virgin martyr who, according to legend, brought food and aid to Christians hiding in the Roman catacombs, and wearing a candle-lit wreath on her head to light her way and

leave her hands free to carry as much food as possible.

Saint Lucy's Day is celebrated most widely in Scandinavia and in Italy. In Scandinavia, Lucy is represented as a lady in a white dress symbolizing a baptismal robe, and a red sash, symbolizing the blood of her martyrdom, with a crown or wreath of candles on her head. As songs are sung, girls dressed as Saint Lucy carry cookies and saffron buns in procession, which symbolizes bringing the Light of Christ into the world's darkness. In both Catholic and Protestant churches, boys participate in the procession as well, playing different roles associated with Christmastide.

New Year's Eve Party!



**Come along and see in the New Year with us
at the Community Centre
on Saturday 31 December 2022
From 7 till late.**

**Please come along and support this village event
and let's make some memories!**

Tickets available from:

Pat Rigby - 07776 142642 or
Geoff Harper - 07504 691509

Fancy Dress
Optional

Fun!

Buffet

Dancing



Prize for the
best costume

£10 Adult
£5 Child



December 6th is when Samichlaus, the Swiss Santa visits everyone in Switzerland

Unlike in the most places around the globe, Santa Claus, visits Switzerland not on 24 December, but on 6 December. He does not bring gifts – they get those on 24 December like everyone else – but a huge bag filled with chocolates, peanuts and mandarins for everyone to share.

On the evening of 6 December, the *Samichlaus* (or Santa Claus) visits every family with his helper *Schmutzli*, who is usually dressed in all-black clothes with a blackened face. Santa knocks on the door and is invited in. Sometimes, Santa has a donkey with him that carries his bag. Once inside, he orders his helper to put down the big bag with the treats and open it. He then calls everyone forward one by one and gives them a report on how they behaved in the last year. A good report and a good poem will get a child a big handful of treats whilst a bad report and no poem is said to endanger you of receiving blows from Santa's helper, or being stuck into Santa's bag and carried off with him. Promises to do better next year are said to save children from this fate. Santa also gives a yearly report about adults including parents, but in a comedic fashion not to be taken too seriously!

Letters to the Editor



March Distribution Centre and Store,
(Ely Foodbank)
A Trussell Trust Foodbank

12th November 2022

I'm happy to say that it's not simply tinned food or packets that we distribute, but toiletries, cleaning products, pet food, advice as to where to get help, a listening ear and a friendly welcome. All of these are important at someone's time of need.

Dear Editor,

I should like to congratulate the people of Christchurch village on proving me wrong!

In these difficult times of increased costs and stretched resources, I thought that we would see a downturn in donations at the March section of Ely Foodbank.

However, happily, we have seen a steady stream of food arriving at Centenary Baptist Church Hall this Autumn. The local schools and churches have excelled themselves in their Harvest time donations and we approach winter with renewed confidence. Donations received week after week from local communities like Christchurch village, are extremely important in meeting the needs in our area. Though we are known locally as March Foodbank, we do, of course, support people in the surrounding villages as well. We liaise with Wisbech and Chatteris to determine who can best help when a delivery is required, but on the whole clients find a way to come in person to collect their food parcel.

Thank you, Christchurch, for being part of this. We have just marked our 9th birthday. I won't say celebrated, as we would love to be able to close our doors and know that we weren't needed any more. In the meantime, if you would like to help us, and have a couple of hours to spare on a Monday or Tuesday, even if just once a month, I'd love to hear from you.

Current needs, as we approach Christmas are:

Tins of biscuits, chocolates, ham, corned beef, mince pies, Christmas puds/cakes, custard etc.
Thank you, in advance, for your support.

God bless,
Barbara

Mrs Barbara Taylor
Coordinator March Distribution Centre, Ely Foodbank

Email: march@elyfoodbank.org.uk or send a message via your editor



The Age UK **free, confidential, national** telephone service offers advice on everything from money and benefits to retirement and care. Help is at hand!

The nearest Age UK office to Christchurch is in **Chatteris; 2, Victoria Street. PE16 6AP. Opening hours: Monday – Friday 10am – 4pm.**

Here is a list of some of the things they can help you with:

- Filling in forms; calculation of which benefits you may be entitled to and how to go about claiming them
- IT training
- Help for carers, and finding and arranging care; foot care; dementia support
- Arranging home help
- Advice on energy
- Power of Attorney advice
- Help with shopping
- Handy-person services
- Transport door-to-door
- Addressing loneliness; social activities
- And anything else older folks and their families would like to ask about.

A message from Age UK: **WILL YOU JOIN US?**

Every day in so many ways, our volunteers give their time and effort to make an incredible difference for older people. Be there when a lonely older person needs to talk. Be part of your community and provide vital support for older residents. Be inspired to raise money so more older people can get the help they deserve and need. Whatever you choose to do, and however much time you have to give, you'll be making an incredible difference for older people at a time in their lives when they need help the most.

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk>

CHRISTMAS IN VICTORIAN TIMES



Christmas Cards - The "Penny Post" was first introduced in Britain in 1840 by Rowland Hill. The idea was simple, a penny stamp paid for the postage of a letter or card to anywhere in Britain. This simple idea paved the way for the sending of the first Christmas cards. Sir

Henry Cole tested the water in 1843 by printing a thousand cards for sale in his art shop in London at one shilling each. The popularity of sending cards was helped along when in 1870 a halfpenny postage rate was introduced as a result of the efficiencies brought about by those new-fangled railways.

Turkey Time - Turkeys had been brought to Britain from America hundreds of years before Victorian times. When Victoria first came to the throne however, both chicken and turkey were too expensive for most people to enjoy. In northern England roast beef was the traditional fayre for Christmas dinner while in London and the south, goose was favourite. Many poor people made do with rabbit. On the other hand, the Christmas Day menu for Queen Victoria and family in 1840 included both beef and of course a royal roast swan or two. By the end of the century most people feasted on turkey for their Christmas dinner. The great journey to London started for the turkey sometime in October. Feet clad in fashionable but hardwearing leather the unsuspecting birds would have set out on the 80-mile hike from the Norfolk farms. Arriving obviously a little tired and on the scrawny side they must have thought London hospitality unbeatable as they feasted and fattened on the last few weeks before Christmas!



WHERE IS THE MOST BASHED BRIDGE IN BRITAIN?

"A bridge that has been hit 33 times in the last 12 months has been named the most-bashed in Britain".

Well. SURELY you can guess the answer to this one!! Yup. Our very own Stonea Road Bridge along the 16ft.

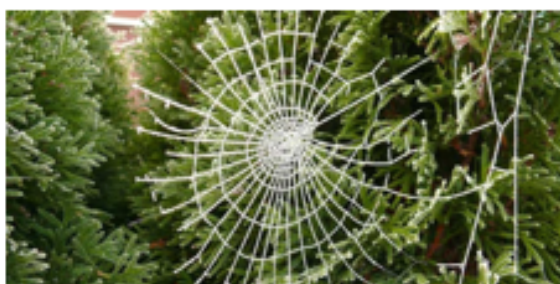
"The 7ft (2.1m)-high Stonea Road bridge near Manea, Cambridgeshire, has become well-known locally for being struck". That is certainly true...much to the annoyance of the locals who use that route regularly. We are not alone, though. "Lower Downs Road bridge in Wimbledon, London, and Harlaxton Road bridge in Grantham, Lincolnshire, had 18 and 17 strikes respectively. There were 1,833 bridge strikes across Britain's rail network in 2021-22, according to Network Rail". Can you believe it?



Hello everyone! Have a really lovely Christmas...and remember it isn't all about getting presents, it's about giving some too! Perhaps you could give a small toy to someone who hasn't got many things...you could put it in the Food Bank Box in Christchurch, outside Grasshopper Cottage, 5, Upwell Road. (See page 7). Some child will be delighted to receive it.



There are many children in Ukraine who will not have a normal Christmas because of the war in their country. But here is a lovely tradition that they have – they tell this story to each other, and, if they are able to have a Christmas Tree, they will decorate it with “cobwebs”.



A Cobweb Christmas – Ukraine

One of Ukraine's favourite festive traditions is not one for those with a fear of creepy crawlies! Where we would have baubles, tinsel and stars, Ukrainians use decorations that mimic the natural formation of spiders' webs shimmering

with dew. The tradition goes back to a folktale about a poor widow who could not afford to decorate a tree for her children. Legend has it that spiders in the house took pity on the family, and spun beautiful webs all over the tree, which the children awoke to find on Christmas morning. Spiders' webs are also considered to be lucky in Ukrainian culture.

TRY THIS GAME WITH A FRIEND - ROLL A FOOTBALLER!

Cut out the footballers below.
Roll the dice.... Score: 1 for the head; 2 for the shirt; 3 for the trophy; 4 for the football; 5 for the shorts; 6 for the feet. The winner of the game is the first one to get a complete footballer.



Jamie Oliver's "Get Ahead" Christmas Gravy

I use this recipe every year - it's quite fun to make, tastes delicious and freezes well.

Ingredients

2 onions
2 carrots
2 sticks of celery
2 rashers of smoked streaky bacon
2 fresh bay leaves
2 sprigs of fresh sage
2 sprigs of fresh rosemary
2 star anise
10 chicken wings
olive oil
60 ml sherry or port , optional
4 tablespoons plain flour
2 tablespoons cranberry sauce (optional)



GETTING AHEAD

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas 4.
2. Peel the onions, wash the carrots, then roughly chop with the celery and bacon. Put the veg, bay leaves, sage, rosemary and star anise into a sturdy high-sided roasting tray, then scatter the chopped bacon on top.
3. Break the chicken wings open, bash with a rolling pin to help release extra flavour as they cook, then add to the tray. Drizzle with oil, season with sea salt and black pepper, toss, then cook for 1 hour, or until tender.
4. Remove the tray from the oven and transfer to a low heat on the hob. Really grind and mash everything with a potato masher, scraping up all the goodness from the base of the tray (the longer you let it fry, the darker your gravy will be). If you want to add sherry or port, now's the time to do so; just leave it to cook away for a few minutes.
5. Gradually stir in the flour, then pour in 2 litres of boiling kettle water. Simmer for 30 minutes, or until thickened and reduced, stirring occasionally.
6. When the gravy is the consistency of your liking, pour it through a coarse sieve into a large bowl, pushing all the goodness through with the back of a spoon. Taste and season to perfection, cool to room temperature, then pour into containers or bags and pop into the fridge or freezer, ready to finish off on Christmas Day.

ON THE DAY

1. If frozen, take the gravy out to defrost when your turkey goes into the oven (I usually take mine out the day before).
2. When the turkey's perfectly cooked, remove it to a platter to rest for up to 2 hours, covered with a double layer of tin foil and a clean tea towel. Skim away most of the fat from the tray, cool, and place into a jar in the fridge for tasty cooking another day.
3. Pour your Get-ahead gravy into the tray with the rest of the turkey juices. Bring to the boil over the hob and scrape up all those sticky bits from the base. Have a taste, then stir in the Cranberry sauce to balance the flavours.
4. Once your gravy is piping hot, carefully strain through a coarse sieve into a pan, then leave it on the lowest heat until you're ready to serve. Skim away any fat that rises to the top, and add any extra resting juices from the turkey before serving.

Elaine Reed-Hughes

Coffee, Cake and Chat

Come along on Thursday afternoons from 2-3pm and catch up with friends and make new ones.
Held in the Community Centre while repairs are made to the church ceiling.





Church News

Hello All

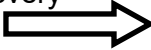
See you all at the Carol Service on the 18th December.

In God We Trust.

Advent and the Christmas Season is upon us.

We have 3 services in

December; Holy Communion on the 11th December at 10.30am, a carol service on the 18th December at 4pm and Holy Communion on Christmas Eve (24th

December) at 8pm. All services will be in Christchurch Community Centre. There is, of course, a service every Sunday somewhere in the Benefice as listed here. 

Our Carol Service will be a community effort and will appeal to people of all ages. I am beginning to put the service together and would love to include your favourite carols where possible. I am also looking for people who would like to take part in some way; there are readings, some Bible readings and others are poems. I am also looking for someone who can play the guitar who would be willing to accompany one of our songs. The service will be followed by light refreshments and all are very welcome. Or please see below for details.

I would also like to update you about our fund raising. Since September we have managed to raise £1800, not including money raised at the Christmas Fayre which at time of print is yet unknown. On behalf of the PCC and all church members I would like to thank Carly, Simon, David and Gemma who raised a staggering £307 braving the elements in their pyjamas while walking their dogs. What a wonderful village community we have here in Christchurch.

BENEFICE CHURCH **SERVICES FOR DECEMBER**

4th December

10.30 Morning Prayer, Manea
10.30 Holy Communion, Wimblington

11th December

10.30 Holy Communion, Christchurch
14.30 Carol Service, Welney
17.00 Carole Service, Doddington

18th December

16.00 Carol Service, Christchurch
18.00 Carol Service, Manea
15.00 Carol Service, Wimblington
15.00 Carol/Crib Service, Doddington

24th December

20.00 Holy Communion, Christchurch
14.30 Christingle Service, Manea
14.30 Crib Service, Doddington
23.45 Holy Communion, Doddington
16.30 Crib Service, Wimblington
23.45 Holy Communion, Wimblington

25th December

10.30 Holy Communion, Doddington

HAPPY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE!

For some weeks (months even!) now the shops have been displaying their Christmas wares and eager shoppers have been scurrying around stocking up their cupboards and scouring many a counter for those special presents. As the 'big-day' approaches our minds turn to parties, get-togethers, last minute goodies, wrapping presents and hoping that we have finally managed to post all the cards that we meant to send once again this year.



KING SIZE BED

At this special time, Christians remember and celebrate the good news of the birth of Jesus, so many years ago, in a cattle-shed in the village of Bethlehem. We shall hear once again the messages of Christmas through the Bible stories, and we shall sing along with numerous Christmas Carols as we joyfully thank God for that most precious gift of all time - Jesus Christ.

"For unto us a child is born, for unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

The churches of the Benefice - will be celebrating, as will Christians throughout the world, and you are warmly invited to join with us at any or all of our services - everyone is most welcome. Amid the mince-pies, tinsel and various trimmings do please find a little time and space to thank God for the true reason we celebrate on 25th December each year!

In closing a quote from an anonymous source: 'The first Christmas that little Linda learned to read, she was allowed to distribute the family gifts on Christmas Eve. According to the family custom, the one who distributed the gifts could open the first package. After all the gifts were distributed with loving care, Linda kept looking and looking around the tree and among the branches. Finally, father asked, "What are you looking for, dear?" To which Linda replies, "I thought Christmas was Jesus' birthday and I was just wondering where his present is. I guess everyone forgot him.'"

Please don't forget the true reason for the forthcoming celebration.

Sheila Cooke - Retired Priest – Six Fen Churches

Policing Fenland: Christmas Gift Appeal returns to Fenland

Each year, for various reasons, there are children who will wake up on Christmas Day with no presents to open. Social Care teams work hard to provide a gift to all the children they work with, but this isn't possible without help from members of the public. Inspector Andy Morris, from the Fenland Neighbourhood Policing Team, said he was delighted to take over the appeal and thanked Inspector Ian Lombardo for his work on the campaign over the past four years. Insp Morris said: "I'm pleased to announce we can run our Christmas toy appeal this year, when the hardship faced by families is more apparent than ever. "Past appeals have been extremely well supported by the community, with more than a thousand presents being donated last year. But I appreciate that times are difficult, and this year has been tough for a lot of people. Therefore, if you are in a position where you can donate, please consider doing so."

The appeal runs **from 15 November through to Friday, 9 December**, with donations being accepted at reception at either March or Wisbech Police stations. Last year, several items were donated via online websites such as Amazon and Argos. Those who want to donate in this way should put the delivery name as "Sally Fairbrass" and send to Cambridgeshire County Council, Awdry House, Ramnoth Road, Wisbech, PE13 2JD.

People dropping off a donation at either of the stations should make sure they are sealed within a carrier bag or bin bag. Insp Morris added: "We won't be accepting donations any later than 9 December to ensure they can be checked over and sorted in time for delivery. This year we are requesting that only new items are donated and that presents are not wrapped. Second-hand electricals, such as games consoles and tablets, will be accepted if they are in working condition and can be wiped down and cleaned."

Donations could be toys, puzzles, dolls, board games, sports equipment such as footballs, Lego, reading books, colouring books, male and female toiletry sets, or beauty sets such as nail polish and make-up. Blankets, hats, and scarves are also welcome, and these can be bought new, or handmade.

The age ranges for donations are:

Up to 2 years
3 to 5 years
6 to 10 years
11+ years



Presents for teenagers are particularly welcome as they are often in short supply. This could be toiletry sets for teenage boys and girls, sports equipment, and books.

Looking for somewhere to go? What's on in December 2022

December 2022 –Jan 3 2023 - Norwich Winter Wonderland at Norfolk Showground, Dereham Road, Norwich NR5 0TT undercover Ice Rink, Fairground, Santa's Grotto, Stalls, Christmas Market Stalls, bars, festive food, Wild Boar Bavarian bar. Online booking, for carers there is free entry and discounted skating www.info@winterwonderlandnorwich.com

3rd December 2022 Saturday 3.00pm – 7pm Skylark Christmas Market, Manea Road, Wimblington. PE15 0PE. Stalls, Santa's Grotto, late night shopping, local food and drink producers, bratwurst, burgers, German beer and waffles. Entertainment. Free Entry

4th December 2022 Sunday 10.00am- 4.00pm German Christmas Market at Welney Village Hall, William Marshall Centre, Herne Drove, Welney PE14 9SD. with lots of stalls, Santa's Grotto, Bratwurst, gluhwein, tombola, raffle, Village Cakery.

4th December 2022 Sunday 10.00am- 3.00pm March Christmas Market, Craft Fayre: in St Peters Church Hall, Free Rides and meet Santa on the Market Place, March Library open, Refreshments and Stalls Winter Wonderland in March Town Hall.

Live Entertainment, Mulled Wine, Speciality Foods, Quality Gifts. For more info visit www.fenland.gov.uk/events

Sun 11 December 4pm-5pm: Christmas carols. Cambridge Leper Chapel, Newmarket Road, Cambridge, CB5 8JJ. Christmas carols and the story of Christmas followed by refreshments. **Led by Christ the Redeemer Church with Cottenham Brass Band. All are welcome. Free event, donations appreciated.**

13th December 2022 Tuesday 7.30pm-11.00pm Upwell Village Hall, New Road, Upwell PE14 9AB . Open Mic Christmas Special, plug in and play any instrument at any level or sing but asking to include at least one Christmas number in your set, mince pies and sausage rolls available plus bar open. Contact Jules Wilkinson (See Upwell and Outwell Discussion Forum Facebook page) or email jules@satdat.co.uk with your song choice so to avoid 15 variations of Slade, Wizzard or Pogues numbers!

14th December 2022 Wednesday 4.45pm-8.00pm BBC Gardeners Question Time at Upwell Village Hall, 6 New Road, Upwell PE14 9AB Tickets 4.50 further info available from www.upwellvillagehall.co.uk.

Wed, 21 Dec, 19:30–20:45: John Rutter at The Church of Our Lady and the English Martyrs, Cambridge, Hills Rd, Cambridge. John Rutter leads Bach Choir Voices with David Hill at the organ in a programme of traditional Christmas favourites.



Carol Singing in Christchurch 40 years ago.

About 40 years ago, in December - when Carol Singing was still alive and well in the village - a large group of volunteers would meet at The Old Vicarage to go Carol Singing. There was always a large enough number to be split into three groups. Two of these groups would go in cars, in different directions, to reach the outlying dwellings. The third group would stay in the village. The Carol Singers were of all ages, from young children to Pensioners.

In the village, we would visit both Pubs and the Old Vicarage. Once, we were invited inside The Old Vicarage to sing, where there was a dinner party in full swing. (At that time, The Old Vicarage was being used as a Christian Religious Retreat House). After singing several Carols we would then carry on to sing round the village. There was an American Airman - Mr Fishbach, and his family, who, for several years, had been living in a rental property in the Village. One year they joined us Carol Singing. When we started to sing "Away in a manger", it was obvious that they were singing the same words, but to a completely different tune! Their "Traditional Tune" was quite different from ours. Very bravely, Mrs Fishbach sang the Carol as a solo in the American style.

The money raised, which was a considerable amount, went to a different worthy cause each year. One year, it was decided that it should go to a Children's Home in Wisbech. I went with Ann Hicks to deliver the money. We were shown round the rooms and bedrooms. The support worker showing us round explained that the money we raised would go towards buying bedside lights, which were sorely needed.

At the end of the Carol Singing, we all ended up at The Vicarage for a hot drink and a mince pie.

Sue Norman



Sing along!

Here is the American tune to this familiar Christmas Carol, as mentioned in Sue Norman's article above.

William James Kirkpatrick (27 February 1838 – 20 September 1921) was an American hymnwriter of Irish birth. He partnered with John R. Sweney to produce and publish over 1,000 gospel hymn songs and over sixty hymnal books. Kirkpatrick was born in the Parish of Errigal, Keerogue, County Tyrone, Ireland to a schoolteacher and musician, Thomas Kirkpatrick and his wife, Elizabeth Storey. The family emigrated to Philadelphia on 5 August 1840, living first in Duncannon, Pennsylvania. William did not accompany his parents on the initial immigration as he was too young and they wished to be settled before bringing him to America.

Murray's tune, often known as 'Mueller', is the more commonly heard setting of 'Away in a Manger' in the United States and predates William J. Kirkpatrick's setting of the same text by about a decade. Kirkpatrick's tune, often referred to as 'Cradle Song', is more widely recognisable in the UK and is a staple of choral carol services.

Here is a YouTube reference for you to listen to the US tune ... *sorry about the ads. Skip them asap!*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yнул3OS_5dY



Away in a Manger MUELLER

Anon, Philadelphia, 1885, 1892

James R. Murray, 1887

1. A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a bed, the lit - tle Lord
 2. The cat - tle are low - ing, the ba - by a - wakes, but lit - tle Lord
 3. Be near me, Lord Je - sus, I ask thee to stay close by me for -

Je - sus lay down his sweet head; the stars in the bright sky look
 Je - sus no cry - ing he makes; I love thee, Lord Je - sus! Look
 ev - er, and love me, I pray; bless all the dear child - ren in

down where he lay, the lit - tle Lord Je - sus, a - sleep on the hay.
 down from the sky, and stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.
 thy ten - der care, and fit us for heav - en to live with thee there.



CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION ENTRIES



Sue Norman
Media: Embroidery



Sue Norman
Media: Embroidery



Annie Nason
Media: Collage



Sandra Kay
Media: Watercolour



Sandra Kay
Media: Watercolour



Sandra Kay
Media: Watercolour



Elaine Reed-Hughes
Media: Pen & Watercolour



Julie Maragoudakis
Media: Watercolour



CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION WINNERS



Alfie Amess (Age 5)
Media: Felt Tip Pen



Isla McGonagle (Age 5)
Media: Felt Tip Pen



Julie Maragoudakis
Media: Watercolour



Helen Chappell
Media: Needle Felting



Cleide Silva
Media: Watercolour



Hollie Dorward
Media: Acrylics



Sam DeVanche
Media: Photomontage

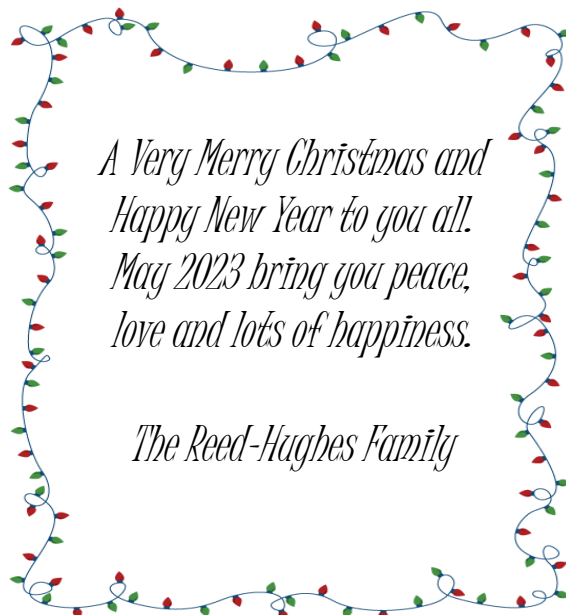


Elaine Reed-Hughes
Media: Watercolour

SEE PAGE 5 "HERON NEWS" FOR DETAILS ON HOW TO ORDER YOUR CHRISTMAS CARDS. £4 PER PACK OF 8 OR 3 PACKS FOR £10 (MIXED).

We would like to wish family and friends a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy 2023.

Sandra & Brian Kay



A Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all. May 2023 bring you peace, love and lots of happiness.

The Reed-Hughes Family

We would like to wish all our lovely Christchurch friends a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Missing you.

Sandra and Richard Lloyd x



Janet & Geoff Harper would like to wish all of our friends and neighbours 'A Very Happy Christmas!'



To all our friends in Christchurch, we have not forgotten you here in Bourn and we wish you a very Merry Christmas and all the best for the New Year.

Hope you are all well.

Margaret and William Beswick (and of course Bandit)



Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year. Special thanks to folks that have supported me during this difficult year. You have been very kind and helpful. Love from Wendy Yates.

We would like to wish all our friends and neighbours a Merry Christmas and a Happy and healthy New Year.

Love from Peggy & Graham Warby



**Christchurch Parish Church
Carol Service
Sunday 18th December 2022 at 4pm
Christchurch Community Centre**

This will be an All-Age Event.
Would you like to take part?
We need people to read bible passages, poems and stories.
A guitarist would be great!

What is your favourite carol...let me know so that I can try to include it in the service.
(Helen 07702 225259)

After the service there will be light refreshments.

All welcome!





A Right Royal Mint

Some 50 years ago, the late Queen Elizabeth II granted Bendicks—a purveyor of after-dinner mint chocolates—a Royal Warrant. It's no surprise, really – she was described as a chocoholic.

Ah – so you actually meant the *other* ROYAL MINT...

The **Royal Mint** is the United Kingdom's oldest company and the official maker of British coins. As well as minting and circulating coins for the UK and international markets, The Royal Mint is a leading provider of precious metal products. The work has begun to change the coins from having the late Queen Elizabeth II on them, to using the portrait of King Charles III, facing in the opposite direction.

After Dinner Mint Trivia:

- The Royal Mint operated within the Tower of London for several hundred years before moving to what is now called Royal Mint Court, where it remained until the 1960s.
- As Britain followed the rest of the world in decimalising its currency, the Mint moved from London to a new 38-acre plant in Llantrisant, Glamorgan, Wales, where it has remained ever since.
- The history of coins in Great Britain can be traced back to the second century BC when they were introduced by Celtic tribes from across the English Channel.
- The first record of coins being minted in Britain is attributed to Kentish tribes such as the Cantii around 80–60 BC.
- After the Romans began their invasion of Britain in AD 43, they set up mints across the land, which produced Roman coins for some 40 years before closing.
- A mint in London reopened briefly in 383 AD until closing swiftly as Roman rule in Britain came to an end. For the next 200 years, no coins appear to have been minted in Britain until the emergence of English kingdoms in the sixth and seventh centuries. By 650 AD, as many as 30 mints are recorded across Britain.
- In 1279, the country's numerous mints were unified under a single system whereby control was centralised to the mint within the Tower of London.
- After London was selected to host the 2012 Summer Olympics, the Royal Mint put in a successful bid to manufacture the Games' Olympic and Paralympic medals. 4,700 gold, silver and bronze medals were produced by the Mint; each medal was struck 15 times with 900 tonnes of force.



CrimeStoppers.

Speak up. Stay safe.

RURAL CRIME WAVE

A new phone number has been added to the list of useful telephone numbers on page 3.

There have been a number of comments on local social media sites highlighting people's anxiety about crimes being committed in our area. The advice is to stay safe at all costs, but if it's possible, take a photo of anything that concerns you. Call 999 or Crime Stoppers. There appears to be a crime wave in our area at the moment. Be on the lookout for people or vehicles behaving in a suspicious manner.

Private security patrols are being used to protect crops and expensive farm equipment amid a rural crime wave in England and Wales. Farmers say that police rarely solve rural offences and are not doing enough to tackle organised crime. Suspects are almost 25% more likely to be charged for crimes in urban areas than in the countryside, BBC analysis of data has found. The Home Office says forces plan to tackle the "challenges" of rural crime.

Last year, Evey Hunter's farm, in rural Hertfordshire, was devastated by a crime wave targeting machinery. One night in late summer, GPS components costing

£20,000 each were cut out of all three of her tractors, halting work for three weeks. "We got back to the field at seven o'clock in the morning after leaving at one o'clock in the night and my brother said over the radio 'we won't be doing any farming today'," she says. "We would have finished harvest the next day." Evey says she's since learned, through her own detective work, that more than 30 other tractors also had the components removed on farms nearby as well as in East Anglia on the same night. She believes organised crime groups are now targeting farmers and using ports to take the equipment abroad.

"I drive the tractors at night and I'll be there in the dark on my own and I don't want to be faced with these people, it's scary," she says. "All we're trying to do is feed the nation," she adds. Evey says she reported the thefts immediately to the police but a forensics team wasn't sent until two days later. By the time they arrived, she had been forced to send the tractors away for repair.

Crimestoppers Trust is an independent crime-fighting charitable organisation in the United Kingdom. Crimestoppers operates the 0800 555 111 telephone number, allowing people to call anonymously to pass on information about crime.





CHRISTMAS TRIVIA QUIZ

1. How many presents were given in total in the '12 Days of Christmas'?
2. Name the famous Christmas Ballet.
3. How many Scrabble points for the word CHRISTMAS?
4. What was Frosty the Snowman's nose made of?
5. What should you do under the mistletoe?
6. How do you say Merry Christmas in Spanish?
7. How many candles go on an Advent wreath?
8. Which President was the first to decorate the White House Christmas Tree?
9. In what year was "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens published? a) 1799 b) 1801 c) 1837 d) 1843
10. What was the name of Scrooge's dead business partner?
11. Which ocean is Christmas Island situated in?
12. Which continent does Christmas dinner favourite, turkey, come from?
13. One of the most popular Christmas toys of 1971 – who or what "wobble, but don't fall down"?
14. If you were born on Christmas Day, what is your Star Sign?
15. What country has the tradition of filling children's clogs with candy and treats on December 5th?
16. The most popular toy of 1980 was actually designed by a professor of Architecture in Budapest to teach his students about spacial awareness. What was it called?
17. In which Pacific Island nation is Father Christmas known as Santa-son?

stationerytree.com

Answers at the bottom of page 19

Christchurch Stargazers



Hello Christchurch Stargazers.

This month I am going to talk about Bible Astronomy. Why did the Magi – Wise Men – follow The Star of Bethlehem for hundreds of miles to chart its course? In other words, how much did the people of the Bible know about astronomy? The answer is that they were not really aware of astronomy as we know it. The Israelites' view of the universe is what you see. The Bible gave a picture of an orderly cosmos, huge and awe-inspiring, but completely under the control of the laws fixed by God. Within it, the stars were innumerable, but God had counted and named them all (Isaiah 40:26). There are references in the Bible to the stars, but they were never seen as having any mythological life of their own. The stars mentioned in the Bible are 'The Bear', or Ursa Major; the Pleiades – 'Kema' and 'Ksil' in Hebrew - a group of seven stars in the constellation Taurus; and Orion, the 'Hunter'. 'Kaiwan' in Amos 5:26 possibly refers to Saturn or Mercury; 'Day Star', 'Son of Dawn' in Isaiah 14:12 is mentioned, which is Venus. There were no theories about what might cause the movement of the stars, or what there might be that could not be seen.

Remember - never ever look at the sun without the correct protective equipment.

Mark.

Christchurch Art Group



We meet on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month 1.30 -3.30 in the Village Hall (term time).

- Our focus is to explore and experiment with the various painting and drawing media
- To enable participants to develop their own style
- Above all to have fun and enjoy the sessions
- The sessions are planned and adjusted to suit, depending on the experience and interests of the group
- The group leader is experienced in a wide range of media, and has some art materials for you to try out if they are new to you. *We have suitable paper for a reasonable cost to purchase and materials can be borrowed until you have your own*. Our group is friendly and relaxed and we love to welcome new folk.



If you would like a programme, please contact Jan and one will be sent with any further information.

Please contact Sandra 01354 638478 or Jan 01354 638217. (clifford.jjr5846@gmail.com)

Christchurch Book Club



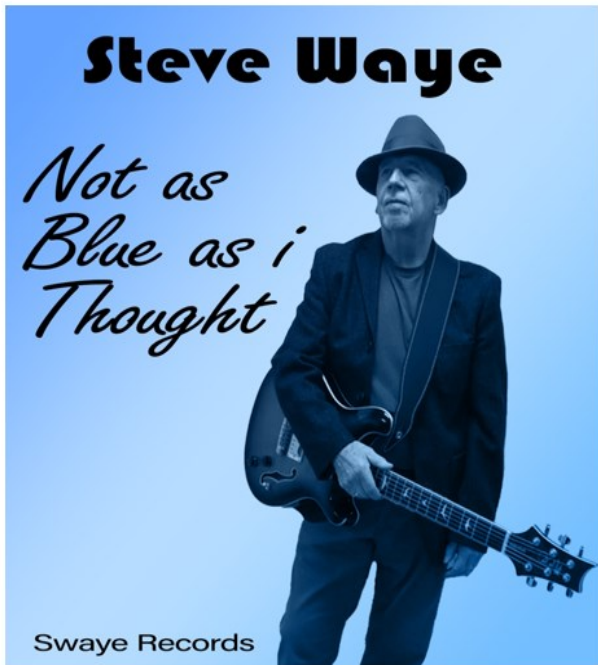
Book Club was cancelled in November. We had been reading "Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine", by Gail Honeyman.

Feedback from the group was that it was very enjoyable but also a sad book, with a good twist at the end. The book deals with loneliness, obsession and social isolation. The main character has a complex personality due to a traumatic event in her life.

The book we are now reading is "The Lantern Men", by Elly Griffiths, who writes fictional crime stories set in the Fens. Some members of the book club had already read it and had really enjoyed it, so will see what the feedback is from others who have not read it yet.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 6th December at 7.30pm at Kay Millers house at Brimstone Manor, 16ft Bank (almost opposite the old Wheatsheaf) where we will discuss the latest book. The next book in December will be "A Song for Dark times", by Ian Rankin.

New members always welcome. For further details please contact Pat Rigby on 07776 142642.



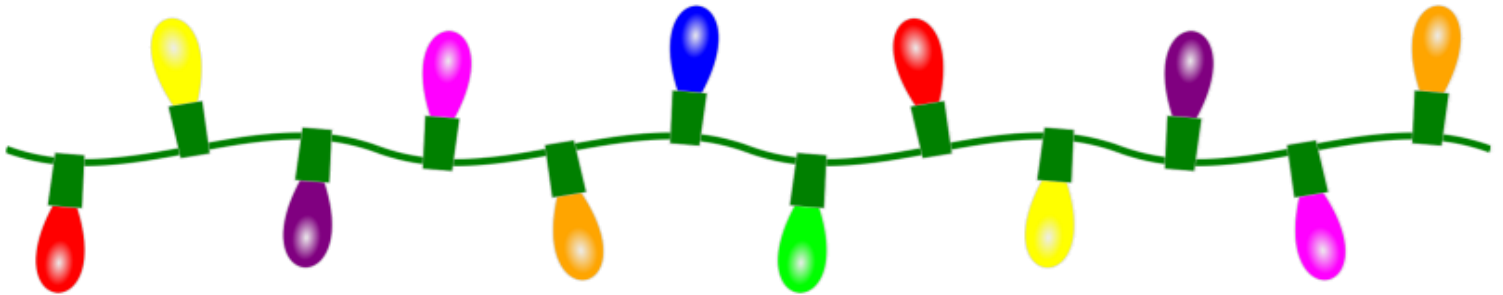
PRESS RELEASE

Steve Wayne Released his second solo album on November 29th, 2022.
 Not as Blue as I Thought

The follow up to 2019's Vocal album *World in A Tangle*, is a much jazzier affair, featuring twelve self-composed instrumental tracks with Steve's guitar playing to the fore. From Jazz swing to Latin, these tunes are composed in the tradition of many Jazz Standards that we know and love, with the title track *Not as Blue as I Thought* featuring the violin playing of Steve's good friend Charles Berthon, a master of the instrument.

Available for Download from all major platforms including CD baby, Amazon, Apple Music and all streaming services including Spotify, Amazon and Apple music. Physical CDs are available direct from stevewayeguitarist.com or stevewayeguitarist@gmail.com. Check out the videos on Steve Wayne YouTube channel.

Deezer



Calling all Country Music Fans

Well - here I go again. Annie has asked me to do a follow up on my earlier article on Country music. I'm not sure if she liked the first one or just has some space to fill in our popular, well produced Heron. Either way here I go!

As mentioned in my earlier article (May 2022), Hank Williams could be worth a column on his own. Like so many Country Music artists, his early life was not easy. He seemed to draw a lot of ideas from Gospel music and early blues, although a prolific song writer with an almost magical way of stringing words together; e.g., 'the silence of a shooting star lights up a purple sky'. He could not read music, but somehow managed to become probably the greatest influence on Country Music for the 40/50's. In fact, his work is still recorded today.



He was worshipped through the South although not so much by the Nashville hierarchy. He had a weakness for alcohol, medication drugs/painkillers. His reliance on them was probably bought on by a spinal defect, but in spite of that, he still became the foremost Country Music star in his lifetime. His legacy of great music passed on to his son, Hank junior who carried on the family tradition.

Anyway - enough of old Hank for now. John Lennon, who was a fan of Marty Robbins and the Beatles, also recorded a Buck Owens number. In fact, he performed it in his show on one of their US tours, so the influence, as I said in my earlier article, just shows the impact of Country Music on mainstream Pop in the late 50's and early 60's.

Peter Owen

for what it's worth, Peter, I enjoyed the first article AND this one! Ed.



Our WI meeting on November 8th was a crafty one...with Margaret Sparrow. Prior to the meeting, we had all been given a circular board to cover at home, and at the meeting we assembled an Autumn floral arrangement on it. Margaret also supplied containers with oasis, in which flowers and greenery would be arranged. She brought along some flowers, and members supplied their own greenery. She then guided us through the arrangement with hints about what to do to make our arrangement look great, and we all continued to complete our arrangement. It was a very enjoyable evening.



The December meeting will be on Tuesday December 13th. It will be our Christmas Party. Everyone needs to bring a Secret Santa gift, to the value of about £5. The December Competition colour is white.



“Another Season,
Another Year”

As in Nature, the Gardening Club moves through the year and changes with the seasons featuring different speakers, with differing expertise and opinions. On Tuesday 15th November the club hosted its final meeting of the year with a traditional Fish and Chip Supper. The food was supplied by Ravens' in Upwell and very good it was too. I think I can say with confidence “A good time was had by all”. Throughout the year - beginning in February with the A.G.M and continuing in March with David Wheatley's Petite Peony's. A brilliant talk from David Reeve in April explaining how the Sandringham Flower show is organised. Mark Mooney held forth in fascinating fashion about Bonsai, followed in short order by our Summer Buffett and Alan Shipp.

Christchurch Gardening Club

“The Hyacinth Man.” Magazine Editor Liz Wright put us straight on Market Gardens, in which talk we learned even more about the history of our area. Finally, Don Potten explained the nitty gritty of bringing new plants to market in October, bringing us back to this month and the Fish and Chips supper. An excellent program organised by our Secretary Marion Hawthorn, who I know is beavering away organising next year's diary of events.

So should this article have piqued the interest of any of the magazine's readers, the club will re-convene for the A.G.M on Tuesday 21st February 2023 Just come along on the evening we will be happy to see you. Don't worry I know it's a way off, but I will remind you. Alternatively call 01354638230 for more information.

Steve

LUNCH BREAK

JUST ONE LUNCH BREAK THIS MONTH – 14 December from 12 noon – 2pm, in the Community Centre. **IT'S FREE!**



BYO Lunch. Catch up with old friends, make new ones. Chat over lunch with Tea or Coffee and relax. Or just come for a cuppa.

Always the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month. Our Covid plan is to be cautious.

Contact: Annie on 01354-638088



Indoor Short Mat Bowls

New club meeting every Monday
7-9pm at Christchurch
Community Centre.

ALL WELCOME! (Spare bowls available to loan.)

For further details call Janet Harper on
07941 465319.



Forthcoming Events Call Nikki on 01354 638323

Book your Christmas Event/Party with us.

Fury vs Chisora Fight - From 6pm - 3 December.
Come and watch the fight live with us.

Christmas Eve - 3pm-6pm - Join us for a
Pre Christmas Drink

Kids Christmas Party - 20th December - 6pm-8pm
**(TO BE HELD AT CHRISTCHURCH
COMMUNITY CENTRE)**

New Year's Eve Disco
See in the New Year with Us - 7pm-1am

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Saturday 9am-12am
Sunday 12pm-11pm

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Monday Breakfast 9-11am
Tuesday 6-9pm
Fish Fridays 6-9pm (unless an event)
Saturday Breakfasts 9-11am
Saturday Pizza Night (unless an event)
Sunday Lunch 12:30-3pm

Christmas Opening Times:

Christmas Eve - Open as usual - Breakfast at 10.00am
Bar Open 11.00am - 1.00am
Christmas Day - Open from 12.00pm - 6.00pm
Pre-Booked Christmas Lunch - 12.30pm - 3.00pm
Boxing Day 12.00pm - 10.00pm
Bank Holiday Tuesday (27th) - 12.00pm - 10.00pm

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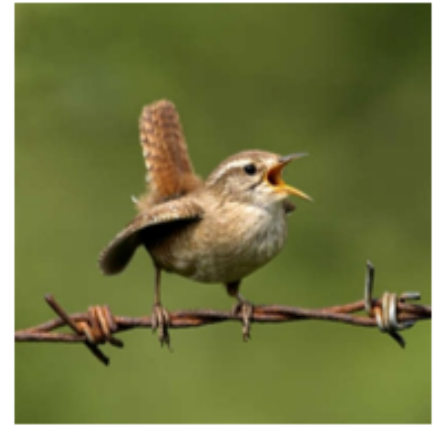
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Wildlife Watching in December

December is a perfect time to talk about one of my favourite garden birds – the wren. Wrens are tiny, round birds. Despite this, they have a beautifully loud call often heard in the dark winter months, symbolising life and light even in the darkest times. Fascinatingly, their complicated songs often have two notes being sung at once. This endearing bird has gathered a lot of attention across Europe and, in folklore, is considered lucky and sacred – even being called the king of the birds in several European languages for its cunning! Irish sailors and fishermen used to purchase wren feathers as they believed it would stop them from being shipwrecked. Wrens mainly eat small insects, so if you want to give them a treat, things like mealworms are just the ticket.



There is, of course, a more obvious winter garden bird – the robin. You'll likely also hear robins singing this time of year. However, in contrast to the wren (who become more tolerant of their kind and gather together for warmth), the robin gets very territorial and sings to ward off other robins. So, despite their lovely and distinct appearance, they can be surprisingly aggressive to other robins, with an estimated 10% of their population killed each year by their own kind! The red breast is also

developed to warn other robins, who will pose and sing loudly to deter intruders. Robins also have their own set of interesting folklore. The phrase "When robins appear, loved ones are near" comes from the belief that robins are messengers for lost loved ones and the sight of the robin means they are at peace. In Norse mythology, they are believed to be protectors from storms and lightning. The robin eats insects, seeds and fruit and is a confident little bird, often the first to show up to our bird feeders.

Winter is a busy time of year for foxes. It is breeding season, so you're likely to hear their mating calls and see them wandering around in pairs. Most people probably know foxes make a loud screaming call, but did you know that they make up to 40 different sounds? The most common of which is a chattering sound. Foxes are a controversial topic. As our streetwise wildlife, they are often considered vermin. Although I have experienced the annoyance of having bin bags ripped open and hearing their screaming calls while trying to get to sleep - I can't help but respect them for learning to live in environments that are hostile to most wildlife. And, for me, there is little more magical than glimpsing a stunning red fox on a quiet, dark street (even better if they leave footprints in the snow).



The 2022 Harvest was a challenge ...

Here we are, going into Winter already - the months go by so quickly! Harvest was at least 2 weeks early this year, starting in July with yields of Wheat, Barley and Rape good to average, with low moisture. Peas and Beans suffered from the drought – small in size and a lower yield, but no drying costs this harvest! Next year's cereals were drilled into very dry soils and were rolled to retain any moisture. Wheats now are looking very good and green. Rape, not so good; 50% has been lost due to Flea Beetle attacks and poor germination in some parts of the country. The Potato harvest began, in general, for the fresh market trade, but yields were lower due to lack of moisture – **only 20% of normal rainfall** – the lowest recorded since records began. Main crop Potato lifting also started in September, for long term storage. The Potatoes were generally smaller in size than usual, due to the drought. Even irrigated crops suffered, and where growers ran out of water, yields were down on the usual average. Onions and carrots also suffered – smaller in size due to drought conditions. The Sugar Beet harvest began, then was delayed due to hard and dry conditions. Yields were very low on the lighter soils, reported the Bury St Edmunds factory. Better reports from the Wissington factory, but sugar percentages were slightly lower due to drought conditions.

Cattle and sheep farmers had cut early grass in Spring, with good yields, but since then, with no rain, there was drought, which meant no grass has grown for the normal second cut this year. This will mean a shortfall in feed for the animals and as a result, farmers are having to feed their Winter rations now, which is proving to be costly. Poultry farmers are having a terrible time with the outbreak of Avian Flu mainly in East Anglia. As a result, thousands upon

thousands of birds are being culled to try and stop the disease spreading further to any remaining, unaffected flocks. All remaining flocks which are disease free are being kept indoors, with farmers fearing to answer their phones in case its bad news for them or their neighbours.

Going through the winter, let's hope we have some rain. Even if we get above the average amount, we will still be short in the reservoirs and aquifers across East Anglia. We have to be careful what we wish for, of course, as we don't want flooding. However, nature has its own way of getting 25" of rain within the 12 months.

I will end this year hoping that the terrible war in Ukraine will end. The people are living in hellish conditions, due to that terrible man, Putin. How can he sleep at night?

Working on the farm.

I would like to pay a huge tribute to the late Ron Bruce – a most loyal, hardworking and happy man. Ron worked with us on the farm for 47 years (1956 – 2003). He was presented with his LONG SERVICE MEDAL at The Peterborough Agricultural Show, by Royalty, in appreciation of his achievement. Ron's son, Jimmy, now works on the farm.



Wishing you all an 'early' Happy Christmas, and a Healthy New Year.

Gabriel and Jill Bliss.

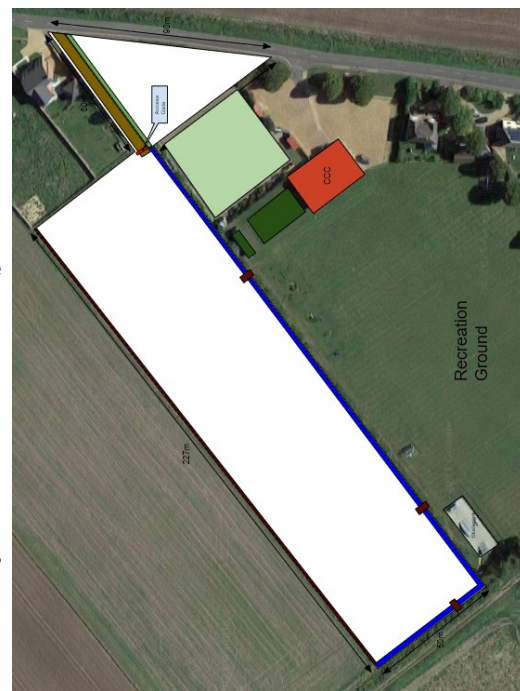
NEW COMMUNITY FIELD PROJECT

On Saturday 19th of November, a village meeting took place in the Community Centre to discuss the new field project and get some names of people who can take the project forward. There was a fair turnout of villagers.

Chair of the Parish Council, James Hughes, gave a short presentation - showing the location of the field, some prospective thoughts on what could go on the field, and giving a status update. The field has been partially ploughed, the ditch grubbed out, and there are 420 saplings being delivered in March next year. The rest of the field needs some debris removal, and the ploughing finished off. There was some great discussion on how the field could be developed, and at the end of the meeting, those villagers who were happy to be on a committee to run the projects put their names down on the dotted line!

It was decided that a meeting should be scheduled for sometime in the next month, where a committee could be ratified. There is some urgency here as we do need a site plan to be put in place as quickly as possible so that it can go to the planning department for conversion from agricultural to a community area.

If you would like to help contribute to this fantastic village project, please email projects@christchurchparishcouncil.org.uk.



Any views expressed in The Heron do not necessarily reflect the views of The Heron Editorial Team. The team aim to provide a balanced view of village opinions where such views are expressed. We reserve the right to edit any submissions where we feel this is appropriate.

