# PARISH NEWS

OF

ST WEONARDS, GARWAY, ORCOP,
PENCOYD, TRETIRE, MICHAELCHURCH,
HENTLAND AND HOARWITHY

# DECEMBER 2025

If Santa looks a little strange
It's all because of climate change
In snow a sleigh is very good
But it doesn't work so well in mud

So if it's rather warm and muggy
He'll use instead a sturdy buggy
If the weather is foul
Or the weather is fair

## Fear Not, Santa will be there!



HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR READERS!

(Festive cover by Peter Garratt)

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#### **MAGAZINE CONTACTS**

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#### **PARISH COUNCIL CONTACTS**

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& Hentland: clerk@ballinghambolstonehentland-pc.gov.uk

Website: www.ballinghambolstonehentland-pc.gov.uk

#### VILLAGE INFORMATION, PHOTOS AND NEWS www.stw.org.uk

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**Samaritans** 

Hereford ...... 116 123 free calls

0330 094 5717 local call rates apply

jo@samaritans.org

#### **West Mercia Police**

Safer Neighbourhood Officers: PC 21260 Martin Gillett 07970 544262, PC 21349 Chris Yarwood 07773 042896, PC 21847 Jenny Rees 07929 783693, PC 21946 Jack Davies 07971 051386.

Police Community Support Officers: PCSO 6324 Carol Marsh 07890 524667, PCSO 40259 Hayley Warne 07773 052560, PCSO 40272 Lewis Thomas 07773 051508, PCSO 40559 Tally Hunt 07773 054156.

How to get in touch: 101 to talk to your local SNT or report a crime.

herefordsouthside.snt@westmercia.police.uk www.westmercia.police.uk

Only call 999 in an emergency, when a crime is in progress or life is in danger. Otherwise call 101.

# PARISH NEWS

#### THE ARCHENFIELD BENEFICE

For enquiries on baptisms, funerals and wedding please contact the Vicar: Rev. Angie Kateley <a href="mailto:revangiekateley@gmail.com">revangiekateley@gmail.com</a> 01981 345044 <a href="mailto:Rest day: Tuesday">Rest day: Tuesday</a>.

#### Vicar's Letter

Ah, December rolls around again, in all its outlandish luminescent gorgeousness. The year draws in, the light grows thin, and the world feels both weary and wonderful. Advent asks us to pause for breath, to let our hearts lean into the promise of God's coming - Christ born among us. Not distant or grand, but small, breakable, and full of bewildering love.

In a world heavy with injustice, conflict, worry and weariness, Christmas does not pretend everything is fine. The story begins in uncertainty, in displacement, under the shadow of empire. And yet—into that same darkness—God arrives as a child. Quietly, gently, defiantly. A love so determined it takes on flesh. A hope so bold it chooses vulnerability.

Maybe this year you come to Christmas with joy. Or maybe you come with questions, fear, grief, or numbness. However we arrive, the heart of Christmas does not change: God is with us. Right here. Not after we sort ourselves out. Not only when we feel "festive." But now, in the muddle and the mess, the laughter and the tears.

So let the lights and carols and Christmas cake work their small miracles. Let kindness surprise you. Let hope take root in the cracks. For the Christ-child comes bearing peace—peace that steadies the soul, peace that refuses to let darkness have the final word, peace that is for everyone, without exception.

Wishing you deep peace and sparkles of joy this Christmas.

With love and prayers,

#### Rev Angie x

I look forward to seeing you in our churches over the festive season. There's lots going on, from the quiet and reflective to the loud and raucous.. Whoever you are, wherever you've been—there's a place for you, and a warm welcome awaits.

# CHURCH SERVICES ROTA FOR DECEMBER

For any changes, please check the benefice website www.stw.org.uk

Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup>	10.00am	Orcop, Benefice Holy Communion
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup>	11.15am 3.00pm	Garway, Carol Service Hentland Carol Service
Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup>	6.00pm	St Weonards Carol Service
Saturday 20 <sup>th</sup>	3.00pm	Orcop Carol Service
Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup>	11.00am 5.00pm	Hoarwithy Family Carols Tretire Carols and Nativity
Tuesday 23rd	4.00pm	Garway Blue Christmas
Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup>	3.00pm	St Weonards Crib Service
Christmas Eve	9.00pm	Hoarwithy Bethlehem Midnight Communion
	11.00pm	St Weonards Midnight Communion
Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup>	9.15am	Pencoyd Christmas Communion
Christmas Day	11.00am	Orcop Christmas Celebration
Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup>	No service	
Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> January	10.00am	Hentland, Benefice Holy
Epiphany		Communion

Enquiries about baptisms, weddings or funeral services, please contact the Rev. Angie Kateley revangiekateley@gmail.com 01981 345044 *Rest Day Tuesday*\*\*Garway Hill Methodist Chapel - Sunday 14th December 3.00pm - Carol Service\*\*

Sunday December 7th
Orcop Church
Benefice Communion
10.00am
All are welcome

#### **Prescription Collection**



2<sup>nd</sup> December Tony Phillips 07971 550859

!!! Magazine News !!!

COPY DATE DEC 10TH PLEASE 6.00PM

Do you read this online? Please consider a donation for costs. Acc: 70786276 20-00-85

#### **!!! YOUR MAGAZINE !!!**

As we near the year end, it is time to thank all those unpaid volunteers who brave the elements every month to distribute the magazines. We produce and distribute 420 copies each month to every corner of the benefice.

For many years, The Revd. Brian Phillips has handled the printing. He used a basic printer and did all the work himself at home. As a result, his costs were well below those of the commercial printers. The collation and stapling were originally done by a team of volunteers. Unfortunately, Brian has found it necessary to give up his printing business ("Pastorprint"). We are very grateful for the service that he has provided.

We have had to turn to a commercial company, Perpetua Press, of Newport, who now do the printing collation and stapling. They give an excellent service but, unsurprisingly, their costs are much higher than Brian's, with the monthly printing bill increasing from around £250 to £355, an increase of over 40%. Prior to the change, our production cost was about £8.50 per copy per annum, with the annual subscription of £7.00 topped up by a subsidy from advertising revenue. For the coming year our production cost will be £10.50 per copy, so the subscription rate is no longer sustainable.

Regrettably, therefore, we have decided to increase the 2026 annual subscription to £9.00, which will maintain the advertising subsidy at £1.50. Individual copies will cost 80p (up from 70p).

We trust you will understand the need for this increase and recognise that the magazine will still represent excellent value for money.

Following this increase, we expect to be in a position to maintain the distribution of profit to worthy local causes at about the same level as previously.

#### Peter Garratt on behalf of the Magazine Committee

Chair: I would like to thank Peter for his work in keeping our accounts straight and committee members Sue Thomas and Ruth Maskell. Also the team who collate the magazine, Peter, Lesley Wilkinson, Meg and John Oubridge. If you enjoy reading the magazine online, please consider a donation towards costs.

BACS 70786276 20-00-85

#### Applications for small grants from the magazine fund

Please send your application for a small grant to garratt peter@hotmail.com.

# VILLAGE PAGES

## ST WEONARDS

The change to wintertime always seems to come as a surprise with the afternoons getting shorter so quickly. Although daylight is limited, the weather is rather warm and suddenly very wet, and for the first time in months, mud has returned!

We are most grateful to Gillie and her team for the wonderful display in church for our harvest celebration. The Welsh Newton Young Farmers led our prayers and showed us the varied produce that is grown and processed locally. As usual we collected non-perishable items for the Hereford Food Bank. They were delighted to receive the six large bags of donated goods. The collection taken at the service, donations for the convivial supper and raffle raised an amazing £583.50 for the *Gaza Crisis Appeal* organised by the Christian charity *Embrace the Middle East*. The supper was delicious with a wide range of dishes to suit all tastes. Many thanks to all those involved in making this such a special celebration.

If you have visited the St Weonards Shop & PO recently you will have seen that it has many more shelves and a wider range of goods. Atok and Ashita Patel, who now run it, are keen to provide what people want and suggest that people should speak to them if there are things that would be useful.

We must thank Gillie and her team again for the amazing display for Remembrance Sunday. Poppies adorned the walls, windowsills, the altar and flower vases. During the All-Age communion service we remembered those who had made sacrifices for us all to live free. We shared with our neighbours in the congregation those who were on our minds today, grandmothers who had been widowed, fathers who had been in the forces and countrymen who had never travelled beyond their village or county before being sent abroad.

It was also moving to hear from one of my daughters, that at a Heathrow airport terminal on Remembrance Sunday when the announcement was made the noise was stilled and the two-minute silence was kept.

Looking forward we have plenty of excitement for the Christmas celebrations.

#### Wednesday 17th December 6.00pm Carol Service.

This is followed by mulled wine and mince pies! Come and enjoy singing your favourite carols and hearing the familiar Christmas story. Our organist Richard would welcome singers of all ages and abilities to join the choir for the Carol Service. Please speak to him or email at <a href="mailto:fionamynors@btinternet.com">fionamynors@btinternet.com</a> if you would like to sing.

#### Christmas Eve Wednesday 24th December:

**3.00pm The Crib Service** Families are particularly welcome to this short service as the nativity story is acted out.

11.00pm. Midnight Communion.

Best wishes for a wonderful Christmas and New Year on behalf of the PCC, Fiona Mynors.

## Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December 10am-12noon.

**Coffee Morning.** 

St Weonards Village Hall



Enjoy your coffee, homemade cake, or a mince pie, and a raffle.

Meet old friends and make new ones.

Every one welcome, just turn up.

#### **Editor's Comment**

A while ago, it was suggested that the magazine might be made more dyslexia friendly. I thought it might be worthwhile writing about this specific learning difficulty. As someone who taught English for many years, I have always been interested in this challenge for people. The NHS definition- 'a common learning difficulty that mainly causes problems with reading, writing and spelling.

Coming from a large family, with different ways of understanding, I realised how varied our brains could be. Like my father I am a words person who enjoys reading and writing but find maths quite challenging. My

doctor mother, with her science brain, could never quite understand how difficult I found O Level maths' problems!

Dyslexia was not mentioned during our teacher training, but we were encouraged to consider different learning styles. I recognised that something was wrong for some pupils in my first teaching post. An extremely able pupil was quite unable to spell or write properly, and her handwriting resembled a wayward spider. It made me alert to the information beginning to appear about dyslexia. Bangor University set up a research project which found that people with dyslexia were not unintelligent but saw things differently. We now know that many who had been labelled as 'thick' or disruptive in school, and dismissed as unteachable, were in fact dyslexia.

It is thought that 3-7% of the population have serious dyslexia and 20% of the general population have aspects of it. At its most severe, people find reading or writing extremely difficult with words seeming to jump about on the page. Sequencing is impossible. For children a list of instructions is impossible to follow, and for all ages, left and right directions are hard.

Early identification is helpful, and people learn strategies to cope. Careful planning and keeping lists seem helpful, and modern satnavs, with aural instructions, have made driving much easier.

To ease reading of the magazine, we use justification, Calibri font 12 for articles, and larger separate bold headings with sufficient space between articles. Larger print is not possible as it would take up too many pages and significantly increase the price of printing.

Dyslexia is now properly recognised with little or no stigma attached. This was demonstrated for me recently when my granddaughter and her cousin were staying. Forgetting they were both dyslexic I instructed them to find a particular fruit tree 'on the left' in the garden. They laughed and both held up their hands as a question. 'Which way?' I suggested their non-writing hands, they are right-handed, and we identified the correct direction. Cheerfully they went off without a trace of anxiety to find the tree. What a change to the embarrassment/shame of former times!

#### **Fiona Mynors**



#### **Garway Church**

#### Carol Service Sunday 14th December @ 11.15am

Join us for your favourite carols on the 14<sup>th</sup>. And stay for mince pies and mulled wine.

#### Blue Christmas Tuesday 23rd December @ 4pm

Last year at Garway church the benefice held its first Blue Christmas. It was so well received that we thought we would hold another one again this year. Each year when we begin celebrations for Christmas, we can find ourselves with very little time to stop and reflect.

This service will offer a space around all the busy-ness and festivities during the Christmas season, for a quiet time of reflection. This will be particularly important for those who find Christmas a difficult time. It allows us to pause together in the comfort and light of God's love.

Even if you do enjoy the all the preparations and anticipation of Christmas, sometimes we need to take a break and find a place of rest.

Everyone is welcome. Bring a blanket for extra warmth and comfort and to help warm is through, hot drinks will be served at the beginning of the service.

Wishing you all a peaceful Christmas.

Tracy Somerville, churchwarden.

#### **Christmas events in Garway Village**

#### December 2nd, 10am, Garway Village Hall

Coffee Morning - Christmas crafts and picture quiz, and mini-Christmas market

#### December 5th, 5pm, Garway Village Hall

Village Christmas with Christingle

Garway School Choir with The Singing Tree, mince pies and drinks

Join us for this happy family event. Free entry.

#### December 6th, 10am, Garway Church

Decorate the church and sing carols with the Spice Girls

#### 18th December, afternoon

Decorate your windows ready for the School Village Walk. Join the children at The Moon to sing carols -don't forget to bring your mug for hot chocolate! Further details to follow.

#### 18th December 7.30pm, Garway Church

The Singing Tree will be sharing some gentle carols in an open rehearsal – free entry —all welcome

#### 22nd December

Village carols, mulled wine, hot chocolate at the Moon for everyone young and old. Bring the family and join in with the motley band and singers. Further details to follow.

#### **Hilary Smallwood**



Many events are happening in the village hall during December. Do come along and join in!

#### **Green Garway Book Group**

#### The Outrun by Amy Liptrot

Time was up for Amy Liptrot. After living a life to excess in London and going down a dangerous road of alcohol and drug abuse and losing friends, jobs, homes and her dignity repeatedly, she heads back home to the Orkneys, off to the edge of the map and away from a lifestyle edging to the brink of disaster.

The gentle and simple way of life eventually heals her. Although the battle against falling back into the lure of alcohol never leaves her, she takes one day at a time and appreciates the wonder of the landscape around her. This is a beautifully written book that we all enjoyed.

Rating - 8/10

**Next Group:** Monday 8 December to talk about *Winterdance* by Gary Paulson Fuelled by a passion for running dogs, Gary Paulsen entered the Iditarod, the eleven-hundred-and-eighty-mile sled-dog race through the Alaskan wilderness in dangerous ignorance and with a fierce determination. This is his enthralling account of a stunning wilderness journey of discovery and transformation.

If you're interested in coming along to the next book group please join our Facebook group <a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/489872936450081">https://www.facebook.com/groups/489872936450081</a> or send an email to <a href="mailto:greengarwaybg@gmail.com">greengarwaybg@gmail.com</a>. We read books about the outdoor world, nature, social issues, travel, fiction and non-fiction. Everyone is welcome and you can dip in and out as necessary.

#### Julie Hudson



#### TUESDAY DECEMBER 9th 7.30pm GARWAY HALL £5.00 WONKA

Hands up who *doesn't* want to start Christmas by seeing Hugh Grant playing an orange-faced, green-haired Oompa Loompa dancing up and down singing a ditty whilst trapped in a bottle? Well, that's one of the many treats in WONKA, our wonderfully festive film for December. WONKA also stars Timothee Chalamet as the young Willia Wonka whose main ambition in life is to open a chocolate factory and bust the ruthless business monopoly of the candy cartel who operate in a dark city where daydreaming is subject to a three-shilling fine.

Director Paul King, (who also directed the Paddington films), pulls off a tour-de-force of special effects to create what really is a world of pure imagination, (albeit one which manages some savage digs at greedy capitalism). It's also, of course, a musical which easily rivals the best that have ever come out of Hollywood. Add to the mix Rowan Atkinson as a chocoholic monk who's in league with the baddies, Olivia Colman as a greedy launderette owner who enslaves her workers and Matt Lucas as a bewigged member of the chocolate mafia, and you have two hours of sheer fun. Oh – and do stick around for some surprises in the credits. As well as all this, we'll undoubtedly have some suitably chocolatey cake, warm mince pies and mulled wine on offer. Free entry for all Oompa Loompas.

A CINEMATIC NOTE OF THANKS – to everyone who has supported Flicks in the Sticks, Garway during 2025. You've helped make the second Tuesday evening in the month a real community event. And the funds we have collected have been used to give donations to all of the following: ARTS ALIVE, BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL, GARWAY VILLAGE HALL, MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY UK (sponsoring Sam Weale), THE MS SOCIETY (sponsoring Ella Harris), THE RED CROSS HURRICANE MELISSA RELIEF FUND, SKENFRITH VILLAGE HALL FLOOD APPEAL. We look forward to seeing you in 2026!

#### **Corinne Westacott**



We've come to the end of a wonderful year of entertainment in the village, with live acts and our new venture, showing National Theatre Live, which is a recording of a performance filmed live on a London Stage. This has proved to be very popular with 51 people coming to see Rosamund Pike in *Inter Alia*.

If you enjoyed any of these performances, we've got lots for you to look forward to in the coming year. We always strive to find the best artists that we can for the village and January is no exception.

We are proud to announce that outstanding guitarist Remi Harris and friends will be performing his *Man of the World the music of Peter Green*. on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup>. If you like early Fleetwood Mac, you'll love this. Peter Green was the man who formed the band after a stint with John Mayal's Bluesbreakers, and Remi will be playing songs from both bands. Although we try to keep the admission prices as low as we can, sometimes we have to charge a bit more as in this case where the artist has stipulated the price. Because Remi has a large following and tickets might be well sought after, we have had to raise the price to £18 for this one night only. If you have seen him before you'll agree that he's worth every penny. The doors will be open at 7.00pm with the band on stage at 8.00, this will give you chance to enjoy one of Chris's light suppers before the show. Tickets are on sale now and we expect a large take up so go to <a href="https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/atgarway">www.ticketsource.co.uk/atgarway</a> to make sure you get one.

Some other acts to follow are Nuahda, back by popular demand. The Pantaloons, a lively theatrical performance, plus some more National Theatre Live. The Garway Live team wish you a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

#### Graham Bevan

GARWAY HERITAGE GROUP Tuesday 16th December Garway Village Hall, 7.30pm

#### Party & Quiz

Join us on Tuesday 16th December, at Garway Village Hall, for our annual get-together and our Quiz presided over by everyone's favourite quizmaster, Mike Brewer. We don't know what type of questions they will be, but they are not exclusively about local history.

Bring along a plate of snacks to share and enjoy a complimentary glass of wine - it's bound to be a convivial evening. Donations are welcomed for our quizmaster's chosen charity.

Dates for your diary: 20 Jan 26- All Our Yesterdays / Lesley Whistance. www.garwayheritagegroup.co.uk

#### ! Garway Youth Group Needs You!

Volunteers to help with maintenance of the Club House, administration and to share in supporting the

young people's activities.

Contact Fiona Mynors for more information fionamynors@btinternet.com

#### **ORCOP**

The "creative" Harvest Service and Supper on 10<sup>th</sup> October went well and thanks go to all who contributed to their success. The church was beautifully decorated, and the supper was excellent. There were a variety of "creative" items, from the sublime to the ridiculous, but all seemed well received!

Please note the dates and times of our Christmas services and also that on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December we host the Benefice Communion Service in the morning and at 3pm that afternoon Viv. will be leading the ever-popular carol service at the Orcop Hill Baptist Chapel.

We wish all our parishioners a Happy and Peaceful Christmas.

Margaret Fletcher, Churchwarden

Flowers and cleaning rota: Rosie Wilson

#### Owl Good Neighbour Christmas Lunch Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December

There will be a two-course lunch with roast turkey and home cooked gammon, roast potatoes, seasonal vegetables, stuffing, pigs in blankets, gravy and bread sauce. There will be a choice of Christmas pudding or sherry trifle. An aperitif will be served before lunch and wine with it. The cost of this meal will be £15. All are welcome. If you are not a regular at the community lunch, please let me know so we can adjust the servings accordingly. Also please let me know if you have special dietary needs such as vegan or lactose free. There will be a raffle.

As in other years we will be entertained by the choir from Garway school with some songs of their own and some favourite carols for us to join in.

All are welcome to this event whether you have been to a community lunch before or not, come and enjoy the food make new friends and have fun.

#### Jane Lockhart 01981 241310



#### **ORCOP VILLAGE HALL**

Warm Winter Coffee Mornings

Our last monthly coffee morning of this year will be Wednesday 17th December

10.30 - 12-30

In January, February and March 2026 we will resume our weekly Wednesday coffee mornings - except for the first Wednesdays of these months when OWLs host a Community Lunch.

As always, everyone is welcome to come and share our friendly warm space with coffee, cake, companionship and much laughter.

**Gill & Tim Bannerman** 01981 580685

# Apples and Pears at Orcop Village Hall

Did you know that there are around 7,500 apple varieties in the world today? And we must have had quite a few of them brought along to our Community Apple Pressing event back in October. The weather was kind, we had lots of young people running around and joining in, and we were kept busy all afternoon. We must thank Tom McEwen, too, for bringing his faster and fancier pressing equipment. Thanks to donations, raffle, refreshments and stalls we raised around £300 towards our windows replacement fund. Fun competition certificates were awarded to:

Meg Oubridge for The Rosiest Apple. Richard Mynors for The Biggest Apple Richard Urbanski for The Most Unusual Apple. William Barrel for A Group of 3 Apples And Bert Simpson (aged 10) for his poem.

We plan to press again next year. Come and join us! *Gill Bannerman* 

#### Season's Greetings from Orcop Parish Hall!

Orcop Parish Hall would like to wish the whole community a **very Merry Christmas and a Happy 2026**. We look forward to seeing you at the various Hall events throughout the coming year.

Save the Date! Orcop Village Hall will be holding a Valentine's Day Party on Saturday, 14th February — please look out for more details closer to the time.

## HENTLAND AND HOARWITHY

The concert by Hoarwithy Singers for the Brain Tumour Trust, in memory of Roger Hanson, was much appreciated and raised £600.00. Roger's wife Sue asked the Hoarwithy Singers to sing at his funeral service at the Forest of Dean Crematorium on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October - a fitting tribute to him from his fellow singers.

Our Harvest Festival on 19<sup>th</sup> October saw young and not so young take gifts to the altar. Thanks also to all who brought nonperishable items for Ross Community Larder along with the offering. We then enjoyed Harvest Lunch at the New Harp with thanks to Katie and Simeon for a splendid meal.

The following week we enjoyed Hentland Harvest Festival followed by lunch courtesy Jil and James Jay and their helpers.

The Bishop and Dean came to the New Haro for the "Spiritual Question Time" which was well received by the 35+ who attended.

We welcomed Mike Wikkinson and Steve Grisman from "Good News for All" formerly Gideons UK to the benefice communion in November. They brought some bibles for Hentland and Hoarwithy churches which are much appreciated.

As usual on Remembrance Sunday we joined with Kings Caple and Sellack at Kings Caple Church for our combined Remembrance Service.

#### Peter Pember Churchwarden

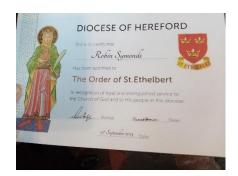
#### **Harvest Thanksgiving at Hentland**

The annual Harvest service took place at St Dubricius on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> October, there was a good attendance of 35, including 5 children. The service was led by the Revd Angie who has very much endeared herself to us as our leader and friend. Offerings were brought to the Altar by various individuals, which made this service feel very much a community event. David our organist was missing due to illness, therefore we needed to improvise and were grateful to Gareth Watkins for stepping in with his technical wizardry.

After the service, most of us repaired to James and Jil Jay's, who we are indebted to for opening up their lovely house year after year, for the Harvest Lunch where we were joined by other friends from the parish. The ladies of the parish had prepared excellent Shepherd's Pie with an array of puddings to follow.

#### **Order of St Ethelbert**

We were so pleased that Robin Symonds was awarded the Order of St Ethelbert which was presented by Bishop Richard at a special service at Hereford Cathedral, on Sunday 28th September. The Order of St Ethelbert is awarded to those in the Diocese of Hereford who have given long and distinguished service to the diocese.



For twenty years, Robin Symonds served as a Churchwarden and Treasurer of Hentland with Hoarwithy. He oversaw major restorations, secured grants, and sustained worship through long vacancies. A passionate musician, fundraiser, and generous host, he has kept parish life vibrant and faithful, embodying wise and devoted Christian service.

**Dates for the diary:** St Dubricius Church, Hentland looks forward to welcoming all to the carol service which takes place on **Sunday 14th December at 3pm** followed by sherry and mince pies.

#### Val Lilwall, Churchwarden

# Book Review This is your Brain on Music by Daniel Levitin

Daniel Levitin, is an American-Canadian <u>cognitive psychologist</u>, <u>neuroscientist</u>, writer, musician, and record producer. He is the James McGill Professor Emeritus of <u>psychology</u>, <u>behavioural</u> neuroscience and music at McGill University in Montreal.

Once you get past the bizarre title, brace yourself for a dense read. He begins by lamenting that people are put off science and then proceeds to bombard the reader with minutely detailed facts that scramble the brain. But they are interesting facts – about how the brain perceives and learns music, about what music means to us, about the extraordinary complexity of the brain's response to music, about aesthetics – and about what it means to be human.

For me the central important message of the book is that music and singing are for everyone, regardless of skill. When people say they cannot sing they mean they feel they cannot sing like Maria Callas or of a standard to join an auditioned choir — but they can sing of course. They have just been conditioned into thinking that their singing ability has no value. A colleague of Levitin's visited a primitive tribe whose astonished response to his assertion that he could not sing was "What do you mean you don't sing?! You talk!" It was as odd to them as if he told them that he couldn't walk or dance, even though he has both his legs functioning.

"Throughout most of the world and for most of human history, music making was as natural an activity as breathing and walking, and everyone participated. Concert halls, dedicated to the performance of music, arose only in the last several centuries."

He talks too of the power of music: "Musical activity involves nearly every region of the brain that we know about, and nearly every neural subsystem." And it evokes responses via "structures deep in the primitive, reptilian regions of the cerebellar vermis, and the amygdala—the heart of emotional processing in the cortex."

I was fascinated by this assertion: "The octave is so basic that even some animal species—monkeys and cats, for example— show octave equivalence, the ability to treat as similar, the way that humans do, tones separated by this amount."

Inevitably music education gets a mention, and his insistence that music should be taught for its own sake is summed up here in his response to governmental reactions to studies that show music has positive academic spin-offs: "The implication was that music should not be studied in and of itself for its own right, but only if it could help people to do better on other more important things. Think how absurd this would sound if we turned it inside out – if I claimed that studying mathematics helped musical ability, would policy makers start pumping money into maths for that reason? Music has often been the poor stepchild of public [state] schools, the first programme to get cut when there are funding problems ...."

Fascinating revelations and insights pepper this book – if you have ever wondered why music means so much to you, then this is the book for you. But be prepared to devote a fair bit of time and brain power to it.

#### **Hilary Smallwood**

#### **Garden Notes**



I always think of the spring as seed sowing time, but my brother telephoned to say he was sending me a seed pod which he had plucked from his beautiful Clivia houseplant - or Natal lily. Whilst waiting for it to arrive, I watched a YouTube video (what did we do without YouTube?) to learn how to sow the seeds.

The seed pod arrived safely packaged in an old film canister - remember those? The pod contained five decent seeds and three others that had already germinated inside the pod. Only one of the tiny plants had a decent root but being ever hopeful, I planted all three - they are obviously keen to grow. I sowed the seeds in a mix of 50:50 compost and perlite, leaving the top half of the seed projecting above the compost surface.

They are now in my studio where it is consistently warm and should germinate in about six weeks. Clivias originate in the woodlands of southern Africa, so they enjoy indirect light, warmth and regular watering. The advice is to give them a cool, dry spell in winter to initiate flowering. My brother's plant is positioned on a northeast-facing windowsill at a temperature of 18º in summer and 14º in winter. The flowers are a glorious orange with yellow anthers, but Clivias are also available in cream, pale yellow and red. I may have to wait five years to see my plants flower and ten years until they are full-size - I am sure that it will be worth it.

Have you been enjoying the autumn colour? A spectacular autumn had been predicted this year, due to the warm summer causing the trees to produce more sugars which resulted in more colourful leaves. I find the science of autumn colour quite fascinating. It is hard to believe that when we admire our trees and shrubs in summer, those green leaves already contain all their lovely yellow and orange autumn colour. Chlorophyll, the green pigment in the leaves, is the prime pigment involved in photosynthesis, converting carbon dioxide and water into sugars to feed the tree. The carotenoids i.e. carotenes (orange pigment) and xanthophylls (yellow pigments), absorb light energy for the chlorophyll to use and also protect the plant from sun damage. Reduced sunlight and cooler temperatures in autumn cause the chlorophyll to break down and the orange and yellow pigments hidden by the chlorophyll are revealed. When conditions are right, species that come from America and Asia (as opposed to Europe), such as the maples, liquidambar and red oaks, produce red pigments (anthocyanins). Unlike the yellow and orange pigments which are present in the leaf all summer, the red and purple colours are only produced in late summer and autumn in years when there are bright sunny days and cool dry nights to boost sugar production. As the leaf veins close, the concentration of sugar trapped in the leaves then triggers the production of anthocyanins. Before trees drop their leaves, they do their own bit of recycling. They break down various compounds in the leaves to reclaim the nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus (phosphate), which they transport to the branches and roots to store for the winter. In spring they are used for the new growth. The lower level of phosphorus is also linked to the production of the red pigments.

There are various theories as to why only certain species produce anthocyanins, some of which don't really make a lot of sense to me. Nevertheless, we can just enjoy all that glorious colour and perhaps, due to our changing climate, where once we would have dreamed of venturing over to America to see the spectacular colours of fall in New England, we might have more and more wonderful autumn colour over here.

#### Julie Davies

#### Seasonal recipe from Isabel's Bakehouse

#### www.isabelsbakehouse.com

The recipe can be a festive addition to the traditional Christmas pudding. It combines homemade mulled cider, festive spices, caramel and apples with a crisp puff pastry base

#### **Mulled Apple Tart**



#### **Ingredients**

- 1 x 500g pack of puff pastry
- <u>Mulled cider</u>: 2 litres of cider, 5 tbsp of sugar, 1 cinnamon stick, 1 star anise, 2 cloves, 1 bay leaf, 1 pinch of nutmeg, 1 orange (zest and juice), 1 lemon (zest and juice), 1 tbsp brandy
- **7 apples** (eating apples hold their shape better for this recipe when sliced)
- <u>Spiced caramel</u>: 4 tbsp light brown sugar, 1/2 cinnamon stick, 4 tbsp of brandy, 1 slice of orange zest, 1 slice of lemon zest, 2 cloves, 1 star anise
- Icing sugar for dusting

#### **Method:**

- 1. **Preheat the oven** to 180°C/gas mark 4. Line a large baking tray with baking paper
- 2. **Make the <u>mulled cider</u>**: Place everything into a large pan. Stir over a gentle heat until the sugar has dissolved, no need to boil. Keep it in the pan.
- 3. **Make the** apple purée: Peel and core three of the apples and slice them roughly. Place them into the pan of hot mulled cider and allow them to soften. Remove from the pan and purée the apple until smooth with a hand blender, allow to cool.
- 4. **Make the <u>spiced caramel</u>**: Place all the ingredients into medium pan. Stir over a gentle heat until the sugar has dissolved. Increase the heat and boil until the liquid becomes a smooth caramel sauce and a dark golden colour (heat to approx. 107°C with a thermometer). Allow to cool slightly.
- 5. **Prepare the puff pastry:** Roll out the puff pastry to ½ cm thick. Using a sharp knife cut out a large circle (you could use a round 8" or 10" baking cake tin as a template). Place the pastry circle onto the lined baking sheet and prick the base all over with a fork.
- 6. **Assemble the tart**: Spread the cooled apple purée over the pastry. Cut the remaining apples into quarters and removed the core (by leaving on the apple skin the tart will have a more colourful finish). Finely slice the apples and lay them over the purée in overlapping concentric circles.

  Drizzle ¾ of the spiced caramel over the apple layer.
- 7. **Bake**: Placed the tart into the hot oven to bake for 20–25 minutes, or until the pastry is golden brown.
- 8. **Finishing touches:** Transfer the tart to a large serving plate and pour over the remaining spiced caramel sauce. Dust with a sprinkle of icing sugar.

This tart is delicious served with brandy butter, Chantilly cream, vanilla custard or even ice cream!

#### EVENTS AT HEREFORD CATHEDRAL DECEMBER

Hereford Cathedral Christmas Fair: Sat 13 December, 9.30 am - 4 pm Join us for our annual Christmas Fair with over forty stalls selling a range of festive gifts. Admission free, with a collection to support the work of Hereford Cathedral. Please join us in the Cathedral Close at 12 noon for carol singing.

**St Michael's Hospice: 'Light up a Life' Service. Sun 14 December, 6 pm** Light up a Life offers a chance to come together with others who understand the experience of grieving the loss of a loved one. At the service, candles are lit, each representing the life and memories of someone special. Please visit st-michaels-hospice.org.uk for more information.

ABF Christmas Family Concert: Wed 17 December,7 pm. Among those performers will be the Herefordshire Veterans Choir, the Herefordshire Youth Concert Band, Vocalise Choir, Marches Military Wives Choir, the Hereford Fanfare Trumpets, and STARS Military Youth Choir. Tickets can be purchased from The Courtyard Theatre box office 01432 340 555 or online at <a href="https://www.courtyard.org.uk/abf">www.courtyard.org.uk/abf</a>

**Toddler Carol Service: Thurs 18 December, 10 am – 11 am** Bring your little ones to a special carol service just for toddlers in the Lady Chapel. Enjoy a delightful Nativity with storytelling, drama and beautiful Christmas songs. Dress up as your favourite Nativity character – a sheep, Joseph, Mary or even a donkey!

Festival of Lessons and Carols: Monday 22 & Tuesday 23 December – 7 pm. Everyone is welcome to join us for our festival of Lessons & Carols. Admission by ticket only. Tickets are free and can be booked via the cathedral website, the Ticket Desk or by calling 01432 374 202





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# Curiosities and Chuckle Corner

The power of punctuation: a letter from a doctor stating this 77 year old lady, sounds so much older than this 77-year-old lady.

A Yorkshire saying? An apple without cheese is like a cuddle without a squeeze.

#### Courtesy of Peter Garratt:

Paddy and Mick stagger out of the zoo, dripping blood. Paddy says: "Last time we go lion-dancing then".

Since the snow came, all my wife has done is look through the window. If it gets any worse, I'll have to let her in.

I've been charged with murder for killing a man with sandpaper. To be honest, I only wanted to rough him up a bit.

A mummy covered in chocolate and nuts has been discovered in Egypt. Archaeologists believe it may be Pharaoh Rocher.....

#### Dates for the diary:

#### **DECEMBER**

- 2 Coffee Morning, Garway Village Hall
- 3 The OWL Christmas Lunch
- 5 Village Christmas, Garway
- 6 Spice Girls carols and decorating the Church
- 8 Green Garway Book Club
- 9 Garway Flicks in the Sticks
- 11 Coffee Morning, St Weonards
- 14 Garway Church Carol Service/ Hentland Carol Service/ Garway Hill Methodist chapel Carol Service
- 16 Garway Heritage Group
- 17 St Weonards Carol Service/ Coffee Morning Orcop
- 18 Garway Decorated window walk with the School/ Singing Tree open rehearsal
- 20 Orcop Carol Service
- 21 Hoarwithy Carol Service/ Tretire Carol Service
- 22 Christmas Carols at the Garway Moon
- 23 Blue Christmas at Garway Church
- 24 Crib Service, St Weonards

#### **JANUARY**

- 13 Flicks in the Sticks, Garway
- 20 Garway Heritage Group
- 24 Garway Live!

#### **FEBRUARY**

14 Valentine's Party at Orcop

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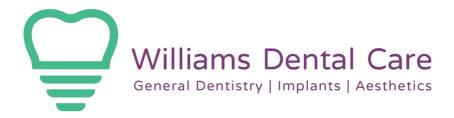
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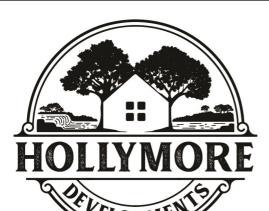
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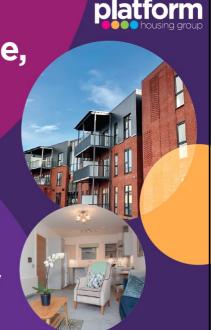
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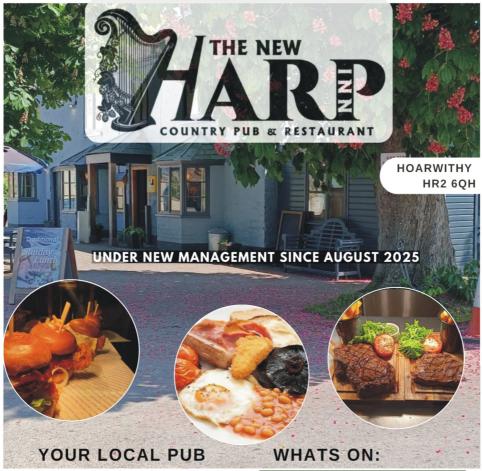
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