

DECEMBER 2020/JANUARY 2021



**Christmas Cover By Molly King – Heron's Class St George's**

## SEMINGTON PARISH MAGAZINE

**Minister for Semington:**

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Su 6th Dec	ADVENT COMMUNION		Pre-recorded Online
Su 13th Dec	CAROL SERVICE		Pre-recorded Online
	10am	ADVENT COMMUNION	St Michael's
	8am/3pm	HOLY COMMUNION	St Mary's Whaddon
Su 20th Dec	10am	ADVENT COMMUNION	St Mary Magdalen's
	3pm	CAROL SERVICE (an opportunity to watch the pre-recorded Service (see 13th) on the big screen)	St Michael's
	BENEFICE ONLINE MESSY CHRISTMAS with Christingle and Crib Celebration		Pre-recorded Online
	11.30pm	CHRISTMAS MIDNIGHT COMMUNION	St Michael's
F 25th Dec CHRISTMAS DAY	10am	CHRISTMAS MORNING COMMUNION FOR ALL AGES	St Mary Magdalen's
	10am	CHRISTMAS MORNING COMMUNION	St George's

To watch any of the above pre-recorded services please click on this link [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQFGHE4r6\\_0gkW1J4lxHsBty2mF\\_6pbFn](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQFGHE4r6_0gkW1J4lxHsBty2mF_6pbFn)

**PLEASE NOTE:** If you would like to attend any of the above 'Live' Services (highlighted in yellow) in Church you **MUST BOOK BEFOREHAND** to ensure that we can accommodate everyone safely and in keeping with Government and Church Covid guidelines. To Book please contact Michael Gamble on 07795400262 or [canalsideoffice@gmail.com](mailto:canalsideoffice@gmail.com)



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## Christians in Semington

*Bev Woodward*

**Christians in Semington** - We will be meeting via Zoom in our own homes, to pray for our community, on **Wednesdays 2<sup>nd</sup> December and 6<sup>th</sup> January** at 8.00pm. Please contact Jack Woodward, 870784, for the Zoom link.

**Housegroup** - This will continue on Tuesdays, via Zoom, at 8.00pm, every other week. So if you'd like to discuss how the Bible helps us to live as God wants us to, please phone Jack/Bev 870784 or David/Pam 870030 for more details and the zoom link.

## Edna's Christmas Message

*To all my friends in Semington,*

*I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Hope you are staying fit and healthy in these strange times and hope we can all meet up in early 2021 for a cuppa and a chat.*

*Edna*



## Christmas Litter Pick

One for your diaries, volunteers all. Covid rules and weather permitting, a pre-Christmas litter pick will take place on **Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> December**, gathering as usual at 10.00am at the Village Hall.

## Editor's Note

*Gillian Airey*

Yay – we made it, we've got to December! Our fabulous Christmas cover comes courtesy of Molly King who is in Year 2 at St George's School. Thank you too to Andy and Roxi at A M Print & Copy who sponsor our colour covers for Summer and Christmas. This is a double issue so our next edition will be February 2021, deadline for submissions is **Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January**.

My e-mail is: [semparmag@icloud.com](mailto:semparmag@icloud.com)

Have a safe and happy Christmas and New Year! See you on the other side!

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## This Month I've Been in Pieces

*Gilly Airey*

I'm not going to lie I'm feeling a little bit smug this month – why, I hear you cry - 'Have you managed to make acorn coffee?' Happily the answer to that is no – even happier I have only gone and got me an 'Ology' (If you're old enough like me, you'll remember the BT adverts when Maureen Lipman proudly proclaimed her grandson had got an O Level in an 'Ology') So what's my 'Ology'? Well it's nothing highbrow like psychology or anthropology or even archeology (that one just screams mud and cold to me....) No my 'Ology' is dissectology, oh yes and that means I am a dissectologist.

So just to put the record straight I am not into chopping things up – although the oak tree threw a massive sulk after I was rude about acorns last month and promptly fell over one weekend meaning that gorgeous hubby had a chance to play with his new boy toy and we spent two days chipping branches – but I digress. No I have learnt that if you love doing jigsaws you have a proper nom de plume.... a dissectologist. In my much younger days I loved doing jigsaws, buying them as I recall with Christmas and birthday gift vouchers from WH Smiths in the Eagle Centre in Derby. My dear old Dad made me a jigsaw board so I could sit and do my jigsaws in front of the TV and by the time I left home to go to university, Mum and Dad were left with a wardrobe full of jigsaws that gathered dust.

So what has prompted the rekindling of this love affair of jigsaws? Well I blame Mrs W and Mrs C and the first lockdown. As part of my prepping for the impending second lockdown you may remember I got me some jigsaws. What I hadn't realised in the preceding thirty odd years, when I was a lapsed dissectologist, is just how fiendish jigsaws had become! The fabulous Mrs W extolled the virtues of a Wasgij puzzle and how much 'fun' they were. I accepted the challenge readily only to realise the picture on the box bears some (though very little) resemblance to the picture you are assembling – it simply is there to provide 'clues'. The lovely Mrs C has bamboozled me completely by attempting a glow in the dark puzzle, although I suppose in the gloomy days of November it may make lots of sense really....

So I have joined the ranks of eager villagers checking out the jigsaws in the Village Hall every Monday and Thursday as well as counting the days until the charity shops reopen. In the meantime Mrs W and Mrs C and I have formed the Semington Dissectologist Club and slowly but surely we're piecing it all together!

**CHRISTMAS  
MENU**

**THE SOMERSET ARMS**

**STARTERS**

**Prawn cocktail**

Paprika seasoned king prawns, green salad, mary rose dressing

**Festive Salad**

Toasted wild mushrooms, chestnuts and pomegranate salad. Mulled wine reduction

**Bitesize Pork**

Mini Belly pork paigas in a balsamic glaze, cranberry infused cous cous and apple jelly

**Soup**

Roasted beetroot and watercress soup, homemade thyma seasoned bread rolls

**MAINS**

**ROASTED TURKEY CROWN**

**VEGAN NUT ROAST**

**PAN SEARED SIRLOIN**

all served with roast potatoes, yorkshire pudding, stuffing, pigs in blankets, carrots, honey glazed parsnips, sprouts, kale and gravy bread sauce £1.60

**SALMON EN CROUTE**

Fondant potatoes, tenderstem broccolli and a hollandaise sauce

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## Parish Council Matters

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*Peter Smith, Vice Chair of Parish Council*

**Land North of St George's Planning Appeal** – we learned last week the result of this appeal. The Planning Inspectorate has granted outline planning permission for the “residential development of up to 20 entry-level affordable dwellings”. Details of this decision can be found on the Wiltshire Council planning portal. A link to this is available under “Planning” on the Semington Village Website. The Parish Council is considering how best to work with the developer and Wiltshire Council to ensure the village gets some benefit from the decision.

**A350 Melksham Bypass** – the council has just learnt that the deadline for responding to Wiltshire Council's preliminary consultation has been extended to: **17<sup>th</sup> January 2021**. Vicky Bodman has posted a link on the Support Group's Facebook page (it's dated 13<sup>th</sup> November, just type “A350 Melksham Bypass” in the search box and you'll find it) that takes you to the Wiltshire Council A350 consultation page. There you will find a questionnaire where you can comment. It only takes about 10 minutes to complete, although the interesting background reading takes a bit longer. The background reading includes 12 route options, all numbered and lettered, some of which could be built in combination with one another. The initial evaluation done by Wiltshire Council suggests that the best Value for Money (VfM) options are two full bypass routes to the east of Melksham, although it is important to stress that all options are still “in the frame”. These full bypass options are route 10c in combination with part of 7c, and route 10d. To help inform your response, the Parish Council at its 25<sup>th</sup> November meeting thought these features would be part of the response that it sends, which will be decided upon at the next council meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021:

- We want Wiltshire council to recalibrate its VfM model to take account of new data including: the impact of the new Farmer's roundabout traffic system on road safety; changed home working patterns post Covid-19; and the impact of the Government's new climate change agenda.
- We strongly oppose the development of route 10d, and will make common cause with all who agree with us.
- We prefer Wiltshire Council to back options which reduce the impact on the rural environment. If a full bypass is option is preferred, we see option 10c/part of 7c as the least worst. This comes with a big proviso: we would want to see an extensive and deep “no development” buffer along the entire northern length of the K&A canal, running parallel to the entire southern length of the new bypass.

Please, looks at the consultation documents and have your say.

**Christmas Tree** - will be up and lit by the time you read this, bringing a bit of Christmas cheer to us all.

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## At The School Gates

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*Sue Cook – St George's School*

The children and staff at St Georges have had a busy start to the year not only with their work but also supporting some charities. For Remembrance Day, as well as selling poppies and other Royal British Legion items, the children came into school in their Cadet/Scout/ Brownie uniform, or something red. Raising an amazing £204.07. For Children in Need the school council came up with the idea of 'wearing something that makes you happy or others smile' which proved to be popular. We had a huge variety of themes, from Superheroes, Christmas, and sports gear.

But one little girl in Ducklings had the best idea and she came dressed in chocolate wrappers! All credit to her and Mum for originality (plus, who doesn't love chocolate!)



The children of St Georges then supported 'Anti-bullying week' by wearing odd socks for the day – this was enjoyed by all and was nice to see all the bright coloured socks.

It was decided that rather than bring money, the children were asked to bring food donations for the local foodbank. We were overwhelmed by the generosity of the parents and the local foodbank was grateful to receive it.

If you are passing the school on your travels, do take time to have a look over the gate at the amazing rainbows of hearts that are up under the front windows – the hearts were created by the Children when they returned after lockdown to show 'Something they are grateful for'.



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## Natures Notes

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The *Triolets* poetry form goes back at least to the thirteenth century. They are short, usually witty poems. The name comes from the repetition of the key line three times.

Though popular at several times on the continent, the form is not much used in English poetry, but here's one by **Thomas Hardy** with a Winter feel to it:

*Around the house the flakes fly faster,  
And all the berries now are gone  
From holly and cotoneaster  
Around the house. The flakes fly! - faster  
Shutting indoors that crumb-outcaster  
We used to see upon the lawn  
Around the house. The flakes fly faster,  
And all the berries now are gone!*

Of the triolet's eight lines, the first is used three times and the second is repeated once. As a result, the eight lines really are only five and the requirement for rhyme words is easier than it first seems.

Here's a clever parody by **Calvin Towle** on the Hardy original:

*Around the clock I read old Hardy  
Until the pages all are done.  
My dogs will call me worse than tardy  
Around the clock. I read old Hardy  
Prose and poem as mind grows lardy  
And half my sanity is gone.  
Around the clock. I read old Hardy  
Until the pages all are done.*

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## Parish Council Meeting

### *Abridged Minutes From Meeting Held via Zoom Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November*

**Present.** Councillors P Smith (Vice-Chairman and Acting Chairman for the meeting), V Bodman, M Kasasian, R Oglesby, W Scott, C Wade, R Bruges, S Chown and the Clerk Roger Coleman. Wiltshire Council Cllr. J Seed attended (Part-time). There was one member of the public present. The Chairman stated that Cllr. Blake had resigned and that Wiltshire Council had been notified. Cllr. Smith expressed the Council's appreciation for the work undertaken by Cllr. Blake, whilst a councillor and wished him well for the future.

**Wiltshire Council Report:** Cllr. J Seed gave a report on the current position regarding the proposed new Melksham (A350) By-pass road. He stated that he chaired the Area Board meeting at which this subject was addressed. He stressed that no decisions had yet been taken with respect to the preferred route and that the various questions raised at the Area Board meeting were recorded in those minutes with the answers to those questions given and that he had passed the 'political' questions to the Wiltshire Council Cabinet member, Cllr. Wayman, to address. He added that the final decision will rest with the Department of Transport (DfT) but that one of the proposed routes, Route 10d (Refer to the Appendix to these minutes) would be politically unpopular especially to those living in Seend and Seend Cleve. Cllr. Bruges proposed that the Parish Council investigate the rationale for the political objections from those villages as they may assist Semington Parish Council in formulating its own views. Cllr. Seed concluded his report by commenting that the date for the end of the initial consultation period had been extended to **17<sup>th</sup> January 2021**.

**Highways and Environment:** Cllr. Wade confirmed that a Christmas tree had been ordered and that it was due to arrive on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November. He had planned that a Working Party would meet on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> November to erect the tree and that it would be decorated, this year, with lights only.

The Chairman reported that two parishioners – Ian and Laura Parsons - had been very active in improving the Wessex Close Play Area by cleaning and repainting the play equipment and installing 'anti-pigeon' deterrents on the top of the frames. The Council **resolved** to thank them for their work. The Council noted that finally, after the best part of two years, an estimate had been received from Wiltshire Council for the repair of the Ludus Spinning Disk. The Council **resolved** that the repair be undertaken at a price of £517.50. The Clerk was asked to contact Wiltshire Council and to authorise the repair.

**Planning:** 20/07304/FUL and 20/07850/LBC St George's Court, proposed conversion of entrance lobby into new dwelling is approved. Cllr. Scott confirmed that the Inspector had made his ruling in respect of the appeal hearing for 20 entry level affordable dwellings north of St George's and had decided that the appeal had been allowed. Councillors expressed their disappointment with the Inspector's decision and Cllr. Scott reaffirmed his determination that in future such planning applications must continue to be vigorously opposed – a view supported by all councillors. In respect of this appeal, he commented that the developers had successfully argued that the absence of an agreed Wiltshire Council 5-year Housing Supply figure supported their contention that the Appeal should be allowed. Cllr. Scott invited Cllr. Seed to offer his comments on this statement. Cllr. Seed acknowledged that it was difficult to state an exact Housing Supply figure because of the manner in which such calculations were made.

Cllr. Seed added that as the Appeal decision related exclusively to ‘entry-level affordable dwellings’ it was unlikely that further such planning applications would be successful in Semington because the ‘affordable dwelling’ proportion for Semington had now been exhausted. Cllr. Wade commented that it was said at the Melksham Area Board meeting that the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan had indicated that it was only committed to a 3-year Housing Supply figure but he was unsure whether this figure would apply to Semington.

Cllr. Wade stated that he had attended the Melksham Area Board meeting at which the proposed new Melksham (A350) By-pass road was the main topic. He gave a full report of that meeting. He stated that proposed routes 10c and 10d (Refer to the Appendix to these minutes) appeared to be the most favoured routes and that both would affect Semington Parish. (See also Chairman’s report on page 7 of the magazine)

**Finance: Final balance as at 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 £40,552.77.**

**Strategic Framework Guiding Semington Parish Council Activities:** Chairman reported that this document had been published and following comments received some minor amendments will be made in due course. Cllrs. Bruges, Smith and Scott agreed to amend the document accordingly.

**Chairman/Parish Council Roles:** There was a general discussion on the nature of the proposed roles and the Chairman stated that to assist councillors he had previously sent a note to all councillors explaining the nature of the various roles. He added that the various roles accorded with those key elements in the Parish Council Strategic Framework document. He encouraged each councillor to adopt a role or to support other councillors in the roles adopted by the other councillors. The following roles/councillors was agreed:

- Planning and Development – Cllr. Scott, supported by Cllr. Bodman.
- Transport and Traffic – Cllr. Wade, supported by Cllr. Bruges.
- Environment and Street Scene – Cllr. Bruges, supported by Cllrs Smith and Scott (Rights of Way).
- Community and Communication – Cllr. Bodman, supported by Cllr. Chown and Cllr. Bruges
- Recreation and Wellbeing – Cllr. Chown, supported by Cllr. Bodman.
- The roles for Cllr. Kasasian and Cllr. Oglesby – to be agreed.

The Council endorsed the continuation of Cllr. Wade as the Parish Council representative on the Village Hall Management Committee. Cllr. Chown expressed an interest in being nominated as the other representative and stated that she wished to investigate the responsibilities of such a representative before making a final decision.

**Semington Website:** The Council noted that the **semington.org.uk** domain name has been purchased on behalf of the Parish Council. The Council **resolved** to base the style and structure of the Semington PC website on **westlavington.org.uk** The Council **resolved** that the page structure of the new website is to accord with that previously sent to all councillors for comment. The Council **resolved** to commission Dominic Muns to develop the new site in line with the specification he has presented to the Council at a price not exceeding £1240. The Clerk was asked to write to him formally and to place the order.

**Date of the next meeting: Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021 7.30pm via Zoom**

## Down The Local

---

*John, The Landlord, John*

Or not, as seems to be the case these days. Where to start – let's be positive for a second, by the time you are reading this we will know how December is going to pan out. Hopefully the pub will be open so come on down and enjoy the open fires, lunchtime offers and our Christmas menu.

It was a real shame to have to close again, but needs must. I refuse to do politics but was it the right thing to do? Overall no because we have good systems in place and the pub is a lot safer than supermarkets and schools. As the nights were drawing in and it became too chilly to utilise the garden, trade noticeably dropped off and November forecasts weren't looking good. We have faced some difficult decisions it must be said.

So how has lockdown been? It's been different this time as a lot more is open, for some its very much business as usual – take the kids to school, go to work , go shopping etc. This has had a noted effect on take outs - we started with limited hours to see how it went but have been cutting back as it hasn't been busy enough to sustain. Feedback has however been good and we are looking in to the feasibility of continuing if/when we reopen for those unable or not comfortable coming out.

So looking forward dare we get excited about Christmas? I'm going to hazard a guess we will still be tables of 6 max but that shouldn't be a reason not to enjoy a Christmas meal and drinks with the family. Hopefully once we get the green light we will be able to put a few decorations up and create a bit of atmosphere. Again waiting on yer man Boris but if we are back in the game for December we have some heat lined up for the marquee.

For the big days (Christmas Eve and Day and New Year's Eve) it's a given that a socially distanced pub just won't be the same and certainly won't be having the usual party. It will either be much more subdued or perhaps simply some family time as it seems as though families may be allowed to mix by then. Keep an eye on Facebook and newsletters for what might be on in December – we will do our best to entertain as best we can within the rules – maybe the odd coffee morning, quiz or even a spot of bingo! You know me I like to see the positive in everything, so whether we're fully open or just a bit open in December please look after your local – we both need each other!

As always much love and look forward to seeing you down the pub real soon.



## The Kindness Project

Siobhan Chown

Random acts of kindness are being played out across the country and one of our villagers has decided that Semington deserves some of the same and wanted to "give something back" and feel like he is contributing in some way to the support and care of the village and its residents.

He has purchased six colouring therapy books and tins of pencils that he would like to donate to anyone who feels that they would benefit from a little relief of their anxiety, stress, or loneliness through these difficult days. He has also bought some pencil grips that help people with less nimble fingers to hold the pencils.



I did pop a post on the FB group about a week ago asking for nominations of people to receive such a lovely gift, but to date no one has come forward.

Colouring therapy has been shown to promote mindfulness, reduce anxiety and give people the opportunity to 'be kind to themselves'. You can get in touch with me via the Support Group FB page or email me at [s.chown@bearlythere.co.uk](mailto:s.chown@bearlythere.co.uk)

To find out more about Kindness Projects – search Cirencester Kindness Project on the Internet or take a look at their Facebook page – be inspired to make someone's day in our village!

## Quiet Garden at Great Chalfield

*Julia Wade*

The next Quiet Garden day was due to be on December 1<sup>st</sup>, as advertised in the last magazine, but the date has changed to **Tuesday December 8<sup>th</sup>**. This new date is dependent on lockdown not being extended, of course. Any queries, please contact me on 01380 870137.

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## Semington Stones

*Oscar (7 years old) and Hazel (4 years old) with Mum Katharine*

Semington Stones have been a wonderfully positive feature in 2020 with regular postings on social media as new ones are found and re-hidden. Oscar and Hazel Way are the brains behind the outfit says mum Katharine. In particular the Remembrance Day stones were beautifully poignant and appreciated by everyone in the village. So who's up for some Christmas Stone searching? The Parish Magazine has been given a sneak preview of some of the Christmas Stones that are going to be out and about in the village waiting to be found.... How many will you find?



## Semington, Little Marsh and Littleton Support Group

*Vicky Bodman*

As I write this, we are currently in Lockdown 2 and who knows if it may happen again. The Semington, Little Marsh and Littleton Support Group, would like to thank everyone for all that they are doing to support each other at this time. We have built such a strong community. The road leads are available if you do require help. If you do not know who your road lead is, please let me know and I will get the details to you.

We've seen some marvellous window displays for Halloween and Remembrance Day. For December we would like to encourage everyone to bring a little cheer and decorate their windows with the theme of advent or why not put some lights up for people to admire as they go for walks around the village.

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## Semington WI

*Deb Hurn*



It certainly feels a long time since writing in the Village Newsletter. Who'd have thought in January 2020 that this year would have turned out the way it has.

As a WI we haven't been able to meet since March when we were lucky enough to hold our AGM. Some WI groups have only been able to do this on Zoom etc., where not many of their members have access. We were able to have a committee meeting at the pub and then using Zoom in the first lockdown.

We have as a group been able to keep in contact with the help of WhatsApp, e-mail, messenger and using the telephone. Some of the members took part in a couple of competitions where they were asked to make Elephants out of plastic milk cartons, a flower or flowers that could be made out of any material that could be recycled and guess the number of buttons in a jar. We were making plans to meet in groups of six when the 2nd lockdown began. Hopefully, we will be able to return to this plan in the near future. In the meantime WI members will receive a new challenge for Christmas.

This Christmas will be different for all of us. Many of us will not be able to see family or close friends but will hopefully be able to keep in touch. Just think how enjoyable those much needed hugs are going to be when we can all get together again. Semington WI wish everyone a peaceful Christmas and a brighter happier New Year. Stay safe, stay well.

## Melksham Foodbank

*Julia Wade*



At the end of this incredibly difficult year for so many, one bright light has been the response by people in this village to the Melksham Foodbank. Week after week a car bootful of donations has been taken to Melksham, to help those in need in our area. Having a regular supply of food is so helpful to the volunteers who run it, and they are very grateful indeed for the support you have provided.

Let's help make this Christmas special: Christmas cake, selection boxes, nice biscuits, etc., are very welcome during December and the usual in-date tinned and packet food are needed all the time, of course. There is a special Melksham Foodbank Advent calendar in the church porch to inspire ideas for what to donate. Special thanks to John at the Somerset Arms and to St George's Church, for being the collection points for donations. Thank you everyone!

## Your Wiltshire Councillor News

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*Jonathon Seed*

I write this local update during the second national COVID lockdown but also as a glimmer of hope for our future emerges. This has not been an easy time for any of us and we have had to learn new ways of carrying out our daily business, be this in our home life, our business life or even in politics. Like many of you I had never heard of Zoom or Teams before the COVID pandemic struck but many of us now find these to be new tools of our daily lives. This is certainly the case in local government where virtually all meetings are taking place using Zoom or Teams. This has ranged from large meetings of Wiltshire Council to smaller Committee and Parish Council meetings. Most Parish Councils are now successfully meeting on Zoom and often with decent public attendance. This was certainly the case at the last Melksham Area Board where 98 people attended the virtual meeting in November. This may well have been prompted by the launch of the A350 Melksham By Pass consultation and the detailed brief on the Melksham Campus progress and access plans for construction traffic. These are important projects that affect our community. It is particularly important that if you have an opinion on the Melksham bypass you state it through the Wiltshire Council Website searching for A350 Melksham bypaass.

Next year will see changes in local politics and local political boundaries and this will affect your local council area. Government is determined that in 2021 both Local Government and Police and Crime Commissioner elections will take place. The current council Division of Summerham and Seend disappears and a new Division of Melksham Rural West emerges within the Melksham Community Area. This new Division will consist of Steeple Ashton, Great Hinton, Keevil and Semington to be joined by Berryfields and Broughton Gifford. I decided to seek the nomination to fight this seat for my Party because that is the Division where the majority of my current residents will be. Sadly we say farewell to Seend, Bulkington and Poulshot who leave in May next year to join Potterne and Coulston in Devizes Rural West. I do not know who will be elected as the new Councillor for this new Division but I do know that my party has selected an excellent and very experienced candidate in Tamara Reay to fight this election.

Perhaps as we move out of lockdown in early December we should think about some Christmas cheer and hope for the New Year. By the end of the year we hope the COVID R rate and case rate will be falling and that all parts of our United Kingdom will be able to celebrate Christmas with their families and friends. We also have the hope that the emerging vaccines may allow us to return to some semblance of pre COVID normality in the New Year.

On this basis I wish all residents a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

## Melksham Remembers

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*Raymond Heard*

In 2017 I was asked by the Parish Council to represent Semington in the group Melksham Remembers. This was formed to create an exhibition at Melksham Town Hall showing the effect that WW1 had on Melksham and the surrounding villages. It was very successful and came to St George's Church. Following this the group decided to create a book from all the information that we had gathered.

To raise funds one of our group, a serving officer with two friends, decided to run a marathon from the war memorials on Remembrance Sunday 2019.



The aim was to raise £1944 (D-day) which was to be split equally between The Spirit of Normandy Trust and our group. He started at 5.30am at Beanacre, passing through Whitley, Atworth, Broughton-Gifford and Whaddon arriving in Semington at 8.30am, going on to Seend and then home. He was on parade in Melksham at 11.00am. The run was just over 4hours and 20minutes and raised almost £9,000 far in excess of their original target. We decided the the group would have £1944 and the balance to The Spirit of Normandy Trust.

## Action For Children

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*Eric Clifford*

Just before Lockdown 2 I was able to present a certificate of merit to Mrs Janet Arnold on behalf of Action for Children for the fantastic sum of £375 raised for face masks.

We thank all who contributed and donated to this excellent cause.

**Semington Camera Club**

*Roy McDine – Founder*

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**Credits clockwise from top left:**

Georgia Gregson

Raymond Heard

Sue Wilthew

Sue Wilthew



## Catholic News

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*St. John The Baptist Trowbridge & St Bernadette's Westbury (inc villages)*

**Please check weekly newsletter for any changes to timings**

### **St John the Baptist - Trowbridge**

*Sunday & Weekday Masses:*

For the duration of the Corona Virus Mass times are:

Saturdays 12noon & 6.00pm (Vigil Mass)

Sundays 10.30am & 12noon

Monday/Weds/Friday 9.00am

Tuesday 6.00pm

### **St Bernadette's - Westbury**

Mass times are:

Sunday 9.00am

Thursday 10.00am

In the event that Churches remain closed Masses will be Live Streamed each day at 7.30am and will be recorded for later viewing but Churches will be open for private prayer at Mass times above.

### **Christmas Mass Times**

**Christmas Eve** Mass 3.00pm, 6.00pm, 12 Midnight Mass

**Christmas Day** Mass 9.00am (St. Bernadette's) 10.30am, 12 noon (St. John's)

**St. Stephens Day** 12noon & 6.00pm

For social distancing & safety protocols the one meter+ distancing will be followed, and face masks are required to be worn whilst in church.

**Live streaming:** All masses are streamed live on **[www.churchservices.tv](http://www.churchservices.tv)** or on You Tube 'Mass in Trowbridge'

**THE NEW 300 CLUB 2020:** The monthly draws Subscriptions: £50 annually - £13 quarterly - £4.33 monthly. New members are most welcome to join at any time.

Monthly Prizes are: £200-£70-£50-£10.

**For information on any of the above contact Francis Geraghty 01380 871083  
[f.geraghty303@btinternet.com](mailto:f.geraghty303@btinternet.com)**

## Thought From The Rectory

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*John Rees*

'Is Christmas cancelled?' has been a regular headline across newspapers and on social media in the last few weeks. It is certainly true that this Christmas, for most of us, is going to be very different from usual.

Although we are hoping we will be out of lockdown and able to meet some family and friends, many families, including mine, are having to come to terms with the fact that traditional gatherings can't happen. I'm also very aware that many people are suffering great financial hardship, along with health worries, and sadly some are coming to terms with bereavement.

And yet in all this there is hope. At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus. He was born to an ordinary family, in a humble stable. God chose a star to lead both the poor and outcast shepherds and the wealthy and educated wise men to see and worship his son Jesus. The star was a symbol of how God sent Jesus to bring light into the darkness of a struggling world and the shepherds and wise men were signs that Jesus came to earth to show us God loves everyone.

The Angel Gabriel announced to Joseph *"Mary will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save his people from their sins"*. Jesus invites us all to turn to him for forgiveness when we make mistakes, and through this to be freed to make a new start.

Jesus came alongside humankind through his birth at Bethlehem. Jesus *chose* to leave the perfect joy of heaven to come to earth for us. Through this he has made it possible for us to know hope in uncertainty, purpose in confusion, peace in turmoil and life in death.

Jesus taught us how to love God and one another, and in particular to care for the disadvantaged and vulnerable. This year it has been wonderful to see such love in action through the dedication and care of those working in our hospitals, care homes and schools.

## Thought From the Rectory continued

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Through Jesus we do not have to face the turmoil of Covid life on our own, we can turn to him in prayer, asking for his support and the strength to cope in these challenging times. We have been leading online assemblies on the Lord's Prayer in our schools this term. It is a prayer, taught us by Jesus, in which we are invited to place our lives in his hands, to trust him with our needs and the needs of the world, and in which we offer ourselves to share in his care for all creation.

I believe the answer to the question "is Christmas cancelled?" is a resounding "no". Because of the first Christmas Jesus is alongside us in all the challenges we face, bringing light and hope to our lives and challenging us to be agents of light and hope for others.

Do join our Christmas services this year; either by coming to our Church Christmas services or by joining our online Carol, Christingle and Communion services. Details of them all may be found on our website:

**[canalsidebenefice.org.uk](http://canalsidebenefice.org.uk)** or by emailing me.

With my best wishes to you all for this Christmas and a hope filled New Year.

## Paws for Thought



Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'

It's in the Bible; Matthew 1 Verse 23

