

FEBRUARY 2020

SEMINGTON  
PARISH



MAGAZINE

**Minister for Semington:**

**Rev. John Rees**

**22 Warren Road**

**Staverton**

**BA14 8UZ**

**Tel. 01225 764365**

## Semington Diary What's on Where



### **Village Hall**

Mondays	7.30pm	Bingo
Mondays & Thursdays	9.30am – 12.30pm	Post Office
Tuesdays & Fridays	9.00am – 1.00pm	Bridge Club
Tuesdays	8.00pm	Semington Ladies Skittles
Thursday	10.00am – 12.00pm	Coffee Morning
Fridays	6.00pm – 7.30pm	Semingtones
Fridays	8.00pm	Mens Skittles
Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup>	8.00pm	Parish Council Meeting
Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	Semington WI
Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	Village Quiz

### **Somerset Arms**

Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup>	8.00pm	Book Club
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### **St George's School**

Wednesdays	6.30pm	Zumba Fitness
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### **In and Around The Village**

Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am to 10.50am	Mobile Library Village Hall
Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am to 10.50am	Mobile Library, Littlemarsh
Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup>	2.00pm	Crafternoon, Highfield Close

### **Further Afield**

Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup>	1.15pm	Trio Paradis The Park Club
Saturday 8 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	Bath Gospel Choir St Katherine's Holt

## Contact Details for Semington Parish Magazine

Editor – Gillian Airey email: [semparmag@icloud.com](mailto:semparmag@icloud.com)

Advertising – As you will see we have a couple of spaces available please get in touch if you would like to place an advert email: [semparmagads@icloud.com](mailto:semparmagads@icloud.com)

## Christians in Semington

*Bev Woodward*

**Christians in Semington** - Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February, 7.45pm – 9.00pm, 9 Somerset Way. Join us to pray for our community.

**Housegroup** – Tuesdays 11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February, 7.45pm. Join us to drink tea/coffee, chat and have a laugh, and find out more about the Christian faith. The evenings are suitable for anyone. For more information, including venues, phone Bev/Jack 870784, Pam/David 870030 or Victoria 871936.

## Semington Weather 2019

*Jack Woodward*



There were no dramas in Semington in 2019 - I refer only to the weather of course! Temperatures for the year as a whole were slightly above average (due to global warming? or a part of normal variable differences?) The lowest temperature was -7°C on 3<sup>rd</sup> February and the highest 34°C on 26<sup>th</sup> July during a hot spell lasting about 2 weeks.

Rainfall this year was also a bit higher than average at 32.26 inches (819mm). But the interesting change was that the year was below average until 21<sup>st</sup> September, and then we had a very wet period from then until the end of the year (as we all know!). In fact the last 100 days gave us more rain than the first 265 days.

So what will 2020 bring us? We don't know, but I for one am sure it will be exciting!

## Editor's Note

*Gillian Airey*

Well here we are squaring up to February thinking surely it can't be long until Spring and the lighter nights are here. You'll notice that we have some new advertisers in the mag this month as well as our very loyal advertisers, so if you need something doing – we'd love you to repay their loyalty by keeping it local!

Deadline for contributions for our March edition is Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> February and to make sure you have plenty of warning the April edition will not be out until after 1<sup>st</sup> April so if you have any diary dates for the first week of April please can you submit them for the March edition – thank you kindly!

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## This Month I am feeling all warm and fuzzy

*Gilly Airey*

I know that Christmas is but a distant memory for all of us, but as you may recall I hate February with a passion, the shortest month and the longest grey days ever. So how come I am feeling all warm and fuzzy? Because I'm not going to lie I had the best Christmas Day ever and I keep reliving the memories.

In the run up to Christmas I try to make something by hand for each of the children (in fairness also for gorgeous hubby, this year it was homemade Bounty bars which quite frankly were awesome). For any ardent crocheters out there you will know that crochet animals are a great quick win. So ever the accommodating Nanny that I am – I let Princesses Ava and Bella choose which animal they wanted from my pattern book. For Bella it had to be Chardonnay the palomino pony. And as only Bella could do, it needed to be in pink so not really a palomino pony at all, but when you're five and utterly charming, what Bella wants – Nanny G delivers!

Ava chose Hamlet the cheetah, but in white and blue, odd coloured animals clearly run in the family..... Chardonnay got finished quickly (the pony I hasten to add, not a bottle of!) Hamlet was taken to the wire being sewn together on Christmas Eve morning. Rest assured Gorgeous George didn't miss out he became the proud owner of Cedric the Lion back in October. Although in fairness Cedric is also the most repaired lion I've ever known as George's preferred method of carrying him is by his tail while swinging him wildly over his head!

When the kids arrived on Christmas Eve – the very first thing Bella asked was where Chardonnay was (the pony – come on give me a break!) Chardonnay had been sent to Santa to be delivered on Christmas Day, which of course was perfectly alright by Bella. Santa duly delivered the presents – after all he did have a super plate of cookies, whiskey and carrots for Rudolph and despite having to wait for the grandchildren to wake up on Christmas Day, the stockings were opened and presents enjoyed. Except..... Bella had a very wobbly lip, 'Nanny' she whispered "Santa has forgotten Chardonnay" And in that moment the magic of Christmas through a child's eyes hit me, trust me my grandchildren want for little and they are so very lucky – but in that moment – all she wanted was Nanny's handmade pink palomino pony. Santa is a canny man, he'd popped Chardonnay into another sack of presents for Bella. And her face when she unwrapped the only pink palomino pony I know - her smile told me everything.

I am a very, very lucky Nanny G!



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## 2020 Concert Dates

first Thursday of the month at 1.15pm

6 February	Iberia!
5 March	Daughters of the Muse
2 April	What's in a Name?
7 May	Music in May
4 June	Fantasies, Serenades & Scherzos
2 July	The Classical Trio
6 August	Strictly Palm Court
3 September	The Water is Wide...
1 October	L'Entente Cordiale
5 November	Russian Masters
3 December	Sleigh Ride



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## Book Club

*Angela Grodzicka – 870756*

At the January meeting ten members met to discuss *Reservoir 13* by Jon McGregor. The author was born in Bermuda, grew up in Norfolk and now lives in Nottingham. His works have been short and long listed for various prizes and he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Nottingham in 2010.

It was a book which split the members - those who liked it appreciated the short sentences and the descriptions of nature together with the minute observations of the villagers in the story. Those who didn't like it found it tantalising and unsatisfactory with its failure to come to an ending. The book starts out as if it were a 'whodunnit' but does not pursue that line and as one member said 'It was the weirdest book she'd ever read!' A view shared by quite a few.

The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February at 8.00pm** in the pub to discuss *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles. All welcome!

## Keeping It Local - Forget Me Not Gardening

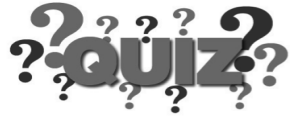
Hi – my name is Jessica Gale, I'm relatively new to Semington, having moved from Melksham just over a year ago with my husband and two teenage sons.

I established my gardening business when my sons were small. I soon built up a list of local customers, many of whom I've had regular contact with for many years. To begin with, I was fairly limited to mowing lawns and extensive amounts of weeding. Customers' plants (whether wanted or not) weren't the only thing to grow. I developed a thirst for knowledge about how to provide continual care for their cherished flora.

Initially, I joined Melksham Gardener's Society who continue to provide regular informative talks. Then I adapted further by enrolling at Lackham College to complete a series of workshops and training courses. Subjects covered ranged from pruning, garden planning, wildlife friendly gardening, vegetable growing, as well as plant classification and nutrition. This culminated in the success of obtaining an invaluable Level 2 Certificate in Horticulture.

If I can help you manage your garden, I'd be delighted to hear from you!

**Jessica - 07896 627428** or email **forgetmenot21@hotmail.co.uk**



Happy New Year to all you quizzers! We're looking forward to another year of conundrums and head-scratching! Christmas has been and gone but there are still a few tree needles lurking by the skirting board – how do they manage that?

Many thanks to Pete Vooght for setting the Christmas Quiz, assisted by his trusty elf, Lesley. Sadly, there was a low turnout, which was disappointing. Was a Saturday not a good night for it? Anyway, those who were there enjoyed it, and the winners, by 3 points, after 121 questions, were The 5<sup>th</sup> Element team of Sue, Andy, Linda and Keith.

The January quiz was set by Sue and Steve, so many thanks to them for an excellent quiz. The Marathon was based on the programme 'Only Connect' so we had to solve 3 'walls' of connecting words and identify the sit-com titles and airports & cities from clues with missing vowels. For example, from the list of sit-coms: THGDLF and NTGNGT and, the airport & city JHNLNNNDLVRPL. Answers below. The winners of the Marathon were the Panto Dames team. At the half way stage of the main quiz the top two teams were just 1½ points apart, with Terry's Turnips ahead of 5 Gold Rings. By the end there was just HALF a point between them, but Terry's Turnips were the winners.

We remember with affection Neil's Mum, Margaret, a stalwart of their team for many years, who recently passed away. It was fitting that the Turnips – Neil, Jackie and guest Turnip, Barbara – should win this time. Well done to all the teams.

**The next quiz dates are: Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> February, 15<sup>th</sup> March and 19<sup>th</sup> April, at 7.30pm, for a 7.45pm start.** If you want to have a go at the Quiz, then why not come and join in? If you come alone, we can easily put you in a team, so please do give it a try.

**Answers: The Good Life, Not Going Out, John Lennon and Liverpool,**

This is Thomas Hardy's **The Darkling Thrush**. It was published right at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is a reflection on the loss of faith and certainty. By contrast, the thrush, though old and insignificant, seems to have a more positive outlook.

I leant upon a coppice gate,  
When Frost was spectre-gray,  
And Winter's dregs made desolate  
The weakening eye of day.  
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky  
Like strings of broken lyres,  
And all mankind that haunted nigh  
Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to me  
The Century's corpse outleant,  
Its crypt the cloudy canopy,  
The wind its death-lament.  
The ancient pulse of germ and birth  
Was shrunken hard and dry,  
And every spirit upon earth  
Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among  
The bleak twigs overhead,  
In a full-hearted evensong  
Of joy illimited.  
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt and small,  
With blast-beruffled plume,  
Had chosen thus to fling his soul  
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings  
Of such ecstatic sound  
Was written on terrestrial things  
Afar or nigh around,  
That I could think there trembled through  
His happy good-night air  
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew,  
And I was unaware.

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## At The School Gates

*Emma Groom – Acting Head of School*

Hello, I would like to introduce myself to the village. My name is Emma Groom and I am the new acting head of school at St. George's. I'd also like to take the opportunity to introduce our new admin officer Mrs Polly Malone, Mrs Lorraine Prince our new Teaching Assistant in Herons class (Year 1/2) and and we have a new supply teacher Giles Stone covering Swans (the Year 3/4 class). There is quite a bit of information on TWHF website if anyone would like to have a read and find out more.

As a school we'd also like to send out a request for drivers to be extra vigilant when driving near school at the key arrival and departure times. We have had two near misses with pupils - one where a pupil's bag that she was holding got knocked out of her hand by a van reversing and didn't see her and another where a car didn't notice two small children getting out of the car and almost knocked them over.

## Melksham Foodbank

*Julia Wade*



On behalf of all the clients of Melksham Foodbank, and the volunteers who run it, thank you for your generous donations of food and other items before and after Christmas. The need continues, so please do continue to donate, if you are able. There is a collection box is at the back of St George's Church, and there are points in Melksham where you can take donations. All **in date** tinned and packet food will be welcome. No fresh food at all, please.

And another reminder that if you know of someone who needs a safe place to relax and chat with a cuppa, come to Lifeline, Melksham. Lifeline is open on Mondays from 1.30pm-3.30pm and on Thursday mornings from 10.00am to 12.00pm, except on Bank Holidays, at Melksham Baptist Church on the Old Broughton Road, SN12 8BX (opposite entrance to Lidl's car park). This is a drop-in centre for tea, coffee, a friendly chat and advice, if required. You can also bring food donations.

For the full list of what items to donate, please see the notice in the church porch or contact me on 01380 870137. There is also a Facebook page and website.

## Parish Council Minutes

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*Abridged minutes from meeting held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020*

**Present:** Councillors B Smyth (Chairman), R Blake, P Bowyer, M Kasasian, R Oglesby, S Rimmer, W Scott, C Wade and the Clerk Roger Coleman. There were two members of the public present initially.

**Apologies:** Apologies for non-attendance were received and accepted from Parish Councillor P Smith and from PCSO Maggie Ledbury.

**Community Policing:** CSO Ledbury of the Community Policing Team had sent the Clerk the January monthly report that he had subsequently sent to all councillors. Four crimes were reported in the Littleton area for Semington. Full details available in the full Parish Council minutes on the Semington Village Website.

**Wiltshire Council Report:** In the absence of Cllr. Seed no report was given.

**Planning:** Cllr. Scott advised the Council that recently there had been a significant addition to the information relating to Planning application 19/07938/REM placed on the Wiltshire Council website, this is pursuant to 16/01678/OUT for the erection of 24 dwellings and associated works on land at St Georges Road. It was noted by the Council that no date had yet been allocated for the Planning Appeal in respect of planning application 19/02147/OUT. Cllr. Scott commented that it would be informative for parishioners if the Webmaster could put the latest planning applications/decisions on the Semington website. The Clerk stated that he would send the Weekly Lists from Wiltshire Council that he received each Monday for Cllr. Scott for him to send to the Webmaster.

**Finance: Total balance in hand at 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020 £26,833.86**

The Council **resolved** to request a Precept of £13,500 for FY2020/21.

**Environment:** Cllrs. Rimmer and Smyth explained the current and proposed grass-cutting programme for Semington that will be undertaken by Wiltshire Council during the current year and commented that it was premature to discuss any details regarding the possibility of establishing 'Wildflower Meadows/Areas' in Semington. Cllr. Rimmer commented that further discussions with Wiltshire Council were necessary regarding the grass-cutting regime and whether or not it would be sympathetic to such areas being established as 'Wildflower Meadow/Areas' in Semington. Cllr. Scott reported that the brambles from the field owned by the Church in Pound Lane were overgrown and that the supporting fence and fence posts were broken and needed repair/replacement. The Clerk was asked to contact St Georges PCC to request that action is taken

**World War 2 – End of Hostilities Commemoration:** Cllr. Rimmer proposed that this commemoration could be marked by the planting of five further oak trees alongside those that had been planted to commemorate the end of World War 1. Such a gesture, he argued, could also allow recognition for those fallen in the Korean War. Councillors commented that this was a possibility but that some parishioners had objected to the use of parish funds being used for the original oak tree planting and that local sentiment must be considered before a decision is made. Cllr. Rimmer was requested to produce a costed plan for this proposed planting and a planting scheme for consideration by the Parish Council.

**Footpaths:** Cllr. Scott stated that a Database of Public Rights of Way in Semington was being created by the Footpath Working Group that detailed each path, its present condition and whether or not maintenance work was required and such records would include the condition of stiles/gates etc. He invited all councillors to add to that Database if they are traversing any of the Rights of Way. The Chairman added that it would be necessary to prioritise any actions because of the limited funding available.

**Melksham Community Area Board/Community Area Transport Group Meetings:** Cllr. Wade confirmed that he had attended the CATG meeting and although the subject of speed limits/traffic calming in Semington was too late to be included on the agenda he did have a conversation with the CATG Chairman after the meeting. Cllr. Wade was advised that it would be necessary to provide evidence of the need for traffic calming and such evidence could be accrued by implementing a traffic survey – a task undertaken by Wiltshire Council at no cost to the Parish Council – and that such a request could be made to Wiltshire Council now by the Clerk to the Parish Council. The Clerk and Cllr. Wade agreed to make further enquiries and the Clerk was requested to put this subject on the Agenda for the next Parish Council meeting.

**Wessex Close Play Areas:** Cllr. Smyth stated that the meeting between Wiltshire Council, Semington Parish Council and Cllr. Seed to discuss the issues arising out of the concern for the poorly maintained Wessex Close Play Area is to take place on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

**Tennis Court:** Cllr. Wade stated that he had attempted to obtain a quotation for replacing two of the three tensioning wires on the tennis court boundary fence that had broken and needed replacing but had, so far, been unsuccessful in obtaining a quotation.

**Any Other Business:** Cllr. Scott observed that the recent Primary School League Tables showed that St Georges Primary School was amongst those few schools topping the tables and that the Parish Council may wish to write a letter to the Headteacher congratulating those teachers and students involved in that success.

**Date of Next Meeting. Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February**

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## Your Wiltshire Councillor News

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*Jonathon Seed*

How things change in political circles. Only a matter of weeks ago our Country was in chaos and our future uncertain. Then came a general election and whatever your political affiliation we at least have stability for the foreseeable future.

The General Election has happened and we at last have stable Government. By the time you read this Brexit will have happened and we will be Great Britain once again, a sovereign state outside the European Union.

How rosy our future becomes will depend on how well our newly strengthened Government negotiates with the EU. However all of this has an effect on all of us and especially our national fiscal strength directly affects our local government fortunes. Wiltshire Council is once again setting a balanced budget with a rise of 2% in council tax and an additional 2% social care levy; so a total of 4%.

The Police and Crime Commissioner is struggling to set a budget for the police precept in the absence of a national police budget settlement. However it looks as though he will opt for a 5.5% rise meaning an additional £1 per month on a Band D Police Council Tax precept.

Talking of Police and Crime Commissioners, I have decided to run for that office myself in May of this year. Many people ask me what the PCC does. It really is quite simple in that police forces in England have their local policing policies and local police budgets overseen by a Police and Crime Commissioner elected by local people. Chief Constables are accountable to and appointed by the local Police and Crime Commissioner.

However operational policing is entirely separate and is the sole responsibility of the Chief Constable. So it is a big political job. Most PCCs are also local Councillors but I want to see how the role works out before I make a decision on whether to I stand again as a Councillor in 2021.

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## In Support of Steeple Ashton Films

*Francis Ash*

Serendipity! We never intended to move to Steeple Ashton. Call it serendipity or sheer good luck, we were desperate to buy somewhere, anywhere, after a number of close misses and narrowly avoided disasters with potential houses in East Wiltshire. Our buyers in London were threatening to pull out if we didn't make an offer and soon; and so on a cold and blustery day in early January 2018, we found ourselves eating carrot cake and drinking coffee in the village shop prior to our appointment with an estate agent. We were served by a charming gentleman in an apron, who provided us with a bewildering and exhaustive list of all the community activities that we could participate in should we decide to buy. But, the one that stuck in our minds throughout the viewing and over the next few days was Steeple Ashton Films. How extraordinary that the village had it's own cinema. Clearly, this was a very special place.

There's something about sharing the excitement, intensity and emotional rollercoaster ride of a film in the dark and in companionable silence with others in our community: so much more powerful than watching it on the telly at home. The delight in walking round the corner to the village hall and having a drink and a chat in heady anticipation of the story to come; and then, whilst still in the afterglow, sharing our thoughts and feelings of what it meant to us before toddling home.

A little caveat: I need to confess that we have not attended as much as we should have done; and it will be my New Year's resolution to address this. I do hope that it may be yours too. Steeple Ashton Films deserves our continuing support. It's a wonderful, shared, community experience that cannot be allowed to wither and die.

### Paws for Thought



Worry can rob you of  
happiness, but kind words  
will cheer you up

It's in the Bible; Proverbs 12, verse 25

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## Parish Council Matters

*Brian Smyth – Chair of the Parish Council*

### **Support Semington Post Office**

With the ongoing closure of local bank branches, it's a good time to remind everyone that most of the banking services we use on a day to day basis are available at Semington Post Office in the Village Hall. These include;

**Banking services** such as paying in cheques and cash, withdrawing cash with debit card, payment of bills such as Council tax, water rates, utility bills and many more. **Full postal services** such as sale of stamps and postal orders, sending parcels, shopping returns and foreign currency which can be collected the next time the post office opens. You can even buy tickets for the Health Lottery!

The survival of the small local post office sub-branches depends upon how well they are actually used. So please support Semington Post Office because at the end of the day if we don't use it we will lose it.

Opening hours - 9.30am to 12.30pm on Mondays and Thursdays

### **St George's Primary School**

A recent SIAMS inspection (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) has resulted in an extremely positive rating that emphasises the dramatic improvements in standards and wellbeing made at the school over the last 18 months. This follows on from the excellent Key Stage 2 results achieved by St George's School in reading, writing and mathematics which puts them amongst the best primary schools in Wiltshire. So congratulations to the staff, governors and pupils in for their achievements in providing a school that Semington can be proud of.

## Crafternoon

*Pam Wildsmith*

Come along and join us at Crafternoon on **Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February** from 2.00pm to 4.00pm, regardless of how crafty you are - knitting, tapestry, crocheting or sewing – all crafts, levels, ages welcome. If you're stuck there's sure to be someone to help or give advice!

Please let Christine know if you're intending to come along. 29, Highfield Close  
Tel: **01380 871979**; email: **whites1966@btinternet.com**

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## Semington WI Meeting

*Deb Hurn*

theWI  
INSPIRING WOMEN

It would seem that we have been quite busy over the last three months and thats not including Christmas!!

We had a very successful Cream Tea in November alongside a concert by the Semingtones in the Village Hall. A huge thank you goes to the ladies that made the scones, the ones that made the tea, the ones who did the setting up and clearing up, and the one who did the raffle. Thank you to the choir, the Village Hall and to all who came. (Apologies to anyone that I've forgotten to mention) It was a very enjoyable afternoon and very well supported. A donation from the proceeds will be given to the Wiltshire Air Ambulance from the Choir, WI and Village Hall.

In December we had our WI skittles evening and Christmas quiz. A lot of fun was had. Once again thanks to Marilyn and Gerald for organising the food etc, Steve for setting the quiz, Sue for the raffle and our very good Sticker-Upper.

January 2020 seems to have appeared rather quickly. Instead of having our usual meeting we had our Semington WI birthday meal at the Westbrook in Bromham. All of us had a good time and the food was tasty and plentiful.

Our next meeting is **Thursday February 13<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm** in the Village Hall. Where we will be having a go at candle making. To anyone whose thought about giving WI a go, come and see us in the Village Hall at one of our meetings. You will be made very welcome with no pressure to join.

## Armstrongs Angels make Semi-Final



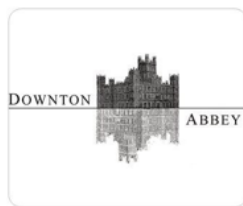
A big shout out to ladies skittles team Armstrongs Angels who made it to the semi-finals of the Melksham Skittles League Knock Out Cup.

This is the first time the team has got this far in the competition, but despite a very hard fight lost by five pins in their semi-final.

Well done ladies!

## Steeple Ashton Films

*Alison Wilson 01380 871345*



**SATURDAY 15<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2020 – 7.30PM**  
**(DOORS OPEN AT 7 PM FOR REFRESHMENTS)**  
**AT THE VILLAGE HALL, STEEPLE ASHTON**

This film version of DOWNTON ABBEY needs little introduction. The much loved and incredibly successful series has transferred admirably to the big screen. The full cast is back including Maggie Smith (everyone's favourite!) together with some new but well known faces including Imelda Staunton, Simon Jones, Geraldine James and David Haig. The story continues shortly after the last series ended.

The Crawley family and their staff prepare for the most important moment of their lives – a royal visit from the King George V (Simon Jones) and Queen Mary (Geraldine James). This is a film you are guaranteed to enjoy even a second or third time. It is always a pleasure to spend an evening at Downton Abbey especially in royal company!

Tickets £6 from Steeple Ashton Village Shop.

Reservations can be made, please ring Alison Wilson on 01380 871345

For your personal comfort, you may like to bring a cushion!

## Birthday Presents!

John Gibbs recently celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and said that instead of buying him presents friends and family could make a donation to Wiltshire Air Ambulance (WAA). Through their love for John and generosity his friends and family raised the magnificent sum of £706 for WAA.



Pictured are John and Sue presenting the cheque to the Wiltshire Air Ambulance back in January.



## Trees, Flowers and Fruit as Liturgical Symbols

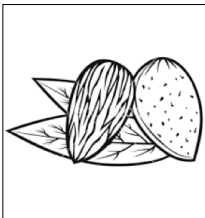
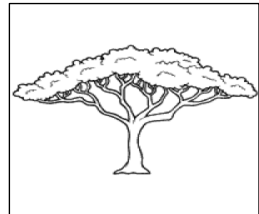
*Francis Geraghty*

Throughout the Spring and Summer, the flower beds and gardens around the villages, together with the floral arrangements in the Churches have merited appreciative comment from villagers and visitors alike. The accolade of Best Kept Village is ever the quest.

Reflecting on the glorious floral displays in the Churches, prompts consideration of the ways in which a wide variety of plants and fruit are used as liturgical symbols in both Old and New Testaments. The Bible reflects both the nomadic herding of livestock and the settled agricultural lives of Jewish peoples. It is not surprising therefore that plants and animals feature strongly as symbols in their history and religious practices. These powerful symbols were reinforced by the medicinal curative properties of herbal remedies whose actions were, but little understood.

Over the next few issues a selection of plants (alphabetically listed) will be described in their liturgical symbolism. And so to the journey of exploration.

The acacia tree represents immortality of the soul and is, on occasion, associated with the burning bramble bush of Moses encounter with God in Exodus 3:2.



The almond tree signifies Divine approval and favour. It is the symbol of St Mary the Virgin in Numbers 17:1-8.

The apple is used to symbolize both salvation and sin. Salvation when shown in the hands of Jesus or the Blessed Virgin. A group of three apples represents St Dorothea, circa 4th century, patroness of gardens, particularly known in small villages of southern Europe. Sin is symbolized by an apple held in Adam's hand.



## Catholic News

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

**Weekly Timings: Check newsletter for changes**

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

**Sunday Masses:** Saturday: (Vigil) 6.00pm; Sunday: 10.30am & 6.00pm

**Holy Day of Obligation:** See newsletter online at [www.stjohnthebaptist.co.uk](http://www.stjohnthebaptist.co.uk)

**Weekday Masses** Monday: 9.00am, Tuesday: 6.00pm, Wednesday: 12.10pm, Friday: 6.00pm, Saturday: 6.00pm (Vigil);

**Rosary:** Weekdays before Mass.

**Confessions:** Sat: 10.30 - 11.00am; 5.00 - 5.45pm and anytime on request.

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

**Sunday Mass:** 9.00am

**Holy Day of Obligation:** Vigil Mass 6.00pm

**Weekday Mass:** Thursday 10.00am

**Confessions:** Before Masses and any time on request.

**BATH COMMUNITY GOSPEL CHOIR** :Why not brighten a cold February day by enjoying an evening of fun and uplifting music with The Bath Community Gospel Choir. A foot tapping fund raising concert with all proceeds going to St Katharine's Fabric Fund and Sightsavers. So why not come and join us, refreshments available. **February 8<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm** at St Katharine's Holt. Tickets available £10 on the BCGC website, at Holt Superstore or contact Angela or Daniel on 01225 783047.

**THE GIVING MACHINE:** St John the Baptist, Trowbridge is on The Giving Machine. Simply shop online via The Giving Machine at 1000's of shops such as Amazon, Argos and John Lewis, and raise a cash donation for St John the Baptist, Trowbridge, at no cost to you. Go via the website or mobile app every time you shop online. Once registered, mark St. John the Baptist, Trowbridge as the cause you wish to support. Quick Sign up code is 266718 it's completely free and easy to join [www.thegivingmachine.co.uk](http://www.thegivingmachine.co.uk) St. John's Quick Sign up code is 266718.

**A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY:** July is a long way off but please note that St. John's Parish will be hosting the National Exhibition of the Turin Shroud between **5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> July**. We welcome the Exhibition as it will invite us to reflect on the sufferings of Christ and the prelude to the glorious Resurrection of Jesus's Body from the Tomb. Pope Francis recently called the Shroud 'An Icon of Love'. More information can be found on [www.shroudofturinexhibition.com](http://www.shroudofturinexhibition.com)

**Mass Times At Nearby Catholic Churches** Immaculate Conception, Devizes (01380 723572) Mass on Saturday 6.00pm and Sunday 10.30am and 5.00pm.

St Anthony Melksham (01225 702128) Mass on Saturday 5.30pm and Sunday 9.30am.

Bradford on Avon (01225 862739) Mass on Saturday 6.00pm, Sunday 10.30am.

## Thought From The Curate

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*Joy Albone*

What excites you? What challenges you?

At the start of a New Year we are encouraged to try new things, to improve our health, our diet, and/or our lifestyle. For me, my 'new year' started last July as I begun my ordained ministry in Staverton, Hilperton and Semington. It has already been six months of doing new things, or at least of doing things new to me, such as leading services in each of our churches, including funerals and baptisms, Messy Church, leading Remembrance Day commemoration and so much more, and I know I have many more 'new' things to experience in the coming months! It has already been a six-month period of challenges and excitement, and I can honestly say, not a single regret. I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting so many of you and hearing your stories.

One of the real joys though, has been going into schools to meet with the children of Semington, Hilperton and Staverton Schools, to lead Collective Worship and experience the growing spirituality of children. Children are so open and honest in their approach to matters about God, they are not afraid of asking questions, and some of their questions can be very challenging indeed. Earlier today, I had one young girl ask me which came first, God or the Big Bang, and I could only answer her question in the way I understand faith and science, that is, that I believe that God created the world with the Big Bang. A simple and for many a too simplistic explanation, I know, but that is because none of us really can understand the mystery of God, and that is what faith is all about.

Faith is accepting that there are things about God we cannot understand, and realising that understanding them does not matter, we just have to believe in the mystery of God, that God can do things, and be things, even when we do not understand or know how God does them. This for me is what really challenges and excites me, continuing not just on my own journey of faith, but encouraging others to explore, begin or continue their own journey. To get to know God, who is not afraid of the questions we might ask him (or her). To begin to realise for themselves that God loves them unconditionally and longs for a relationship with each and every one of us to show us that love.

So, this year, as you consider what excites you or challenges you, you may wish to consider where God comes into your life. If you want to know more, never be afraid to ask. Perhaps you might wish to come to one of the services in the coming weeks, such as our new tea-time service, *Tea@TheTin* on the third Sunday of each month, where all are invited to come and find out more about God and God's love for you! Each service will start at 4.00pm in the Tin Church on Horse Road, Hilperton Marsh. We look forward to seeing you there and getting to know you!

# *St George's Church Semington*



## **Services February 2020**

**Sunday 2nd - Candlemass  
9.30am - Holy Communion  
Rev Maureen Allchin and  
Anthony Matthews**

**Sunday 9th - 9.30am  
Morning Worship**



**Sunday 16th - 9.30am  
Holy Communion - Rev John Rees**

**Sunday 23rd - 9.30am  
Morning Worship - Rev John Rees**

**Ash Wednesday - 26th February  
10.00am St Michael's, Hilperton**

### Contact Details for The Canalside Parishes

Administrator – Michael Gamble, please contact Michael for initial enquiries about baptisms, weddings and general matters on **07795 400262**

E-mail: [canalsideoffice@gmail.com](mailto:canalsideoffice@gmail.com)

PCC Secretary/Treasurer - Jack Woodward **01380 870784**

Church Warden – Mr David Wildsmith

Lay Pastoral Assistants are co-ordinated by Marilyn Stubbs. Please contact Marilyn on **01225 753118** or John if you would like a visit.

Curate: Revd. Joy Albone **07931 638524** email [canalsidecurate@gmail.com](mailto:canalsidecurate@gmail.com)

Rev John Rees, Rector, Canalside Benefice **01225 764365**

Email: [canalsiderector@gmail.com](mailto:canalsiderector@gmail.com) [www.canalsidebenefice.org.uk](http://www.canalsidebenefice.org.uk)