

MARCH 2020

SEMINGTON
PARISH



MAGAZINE

Minister for Semington:

Rev. John Rees

22 Warren Road

Staverton

BA14 8UZ

Tel. 01225 764365



Village Hall

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Mondays | 7.30pm | Bingo (in the lounge) |
| 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 th | 8.00pm | Parish Council Meeting |
| Thursday 12 th | 7.30pm | Semington WI |
| Saturday 14 th | 12.00pm to 2.00pm | Book Sale with Bacon Rolls |
| Sunday 15 th | 7.30pm | Village Quiz |
| Saturday 28 th | 7.30pm | Food Night – Pie Night |
| Thursday 9 th April | 7.30pm | Semington WI |
| Wednesday 15 th April | 8.00pm | Parish Council Meeting |

Somerset Arms

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------------|
| 10 th to 13 th | All Day | Cheltenham Festival on the Big Screen |
| Saturday 14 th | All Day | 6 Nations Finale |
| Tuesday 17 th | 7.00pm | St Patrick's Day Quiz |
| Thursday 19 th | 8.00pm | Bookclub |
| Saturday 21 st | | Peaky Blinders Live Music |
| Sunday 22 nd | | Mother's Day – Special Menu |

St George's School

| | | |
|---------------------------|---------|---------------|
| Wednesdays | 6.30pm | Zumba Fitness |
| Saturday 21 st | 11.00am | Messy Church |

In and Around The Village

| | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Wednesday 11 th | 10.30am to 10.50am | Mobile Library Village Hall |
| Saturday 14 th | 10.00am | Village Litter Pick - meet at Village Hall |
| Wednesday 25 th | 10.30am to 10.50am | Mobile Library, Littlemarsh |
| Wednesday 25 th | 2.00pm to 4.00pm | Crafternoon, 29 Highfield Close |

Christians in Semington

Bev Woodward

Christians in Semington - Wednesdays 4th March and 1st April 7.45pm – 9.00pm,
9 Somerset Way. Join us to pray for our community.

Housegroup - Tuesdays 10th & 24th March, 7.45pm. join us to drink tea/coffee, chat & have a laugh, and find out more about the Christian faith. We're continuing with The Prayer Course - the evenings are suitable for anyone. For more information, including venues, phone Bev/Jack 870784 or Pam/David 870030.

Messy Church - is on **Saturday 21st March**, 11.00am -1.00pm in the school hall. There will be more activities, suitable for all ages, and lunch included so that you can forget about cooking for the day. (Suggested donation £1.00) Please let us know if you can come so that we'll have enough food! Phone Bev/Jack on 870784 or text 07922 105084. Please note that Messy Church is for all ages, but children must bring an adult.

Go On – You Know You Want To!

Gillian Airey

It's that time of year again – there's a cheeky little envelope with your magazine this month. We'd like you to put a little something in said cheeky little envelope to go towards the running of the magazine. The contributors and distributors associated with the magazine all give their time on a voluntary basis. Once the cheeky envelope is ready to go, drop it into the address on the envelope or with John, the Landlord John, at the pub.

Editor's Note

Gillian Airey

That's it, February is done and dusted and we can look forward to the lighter evenings and warmer days that March brings. You will probably notice that we have some April dates in the 'what's on where' and this is because the April magazine will be coming out a little later than usual after 9th April. The deadline for submissions for the April magazine is **Friday 27th March** – but I promise normal service will be resumed for May onwards! My E-mail as always is **semparmag@icloud.com**

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This Month I Have Boots Made for Walking

Gilly Airey

I don't think I told you my big news? I have retired – oh I hear you cry surely you're too young to retire? And the truth is I am indeed too young to retire but I have given up full time work and gone back to the world of temping, although only for one company and on regular days – so in fact that makes it part time doesn't it!!

Gorgeous hubby and I always had a plan which was for me to stop working a few years after him and 2020 was the year. The grandchildren are growing up and all too soon we won't be cool enough for them and whilst I am still blessed to have both of my parents, we have had some difficult news to come to terms with, so time is precious and I want to have the freedom to dedicate more time to my parents while we still have it.

I also need to address the balance of three years sat at a desk and get myself proactively active. I am still a dedicated follower of Aquafit, having graduated to deep end Aquafit at Bradford on Avon, but my commitment this year is to walk more. Gorgeous hubby loves walking – that's what shorts were made for he says and therein lies the Venus/Mars difference. For gorgeous hubby the correct attire is shorts, woolly socks, fleece and Timberland boots, for me it meant spending hours surfing online for the very best big and bouncy girl lycra wear I could lay my hands on. In my head, if you have the good looking fitness gear you're already practically fit!

I have even invested in some snazzy lightweight walking trainers. I think the clue was in the name, they're called 'Go Walk'! The only obstacle to my new walking habit has been the weather, I'm not going to lie I am a fair weather walker of that there is no doubt, but as better weather surely must be on its way I am making a promise to myself that I will be out walking more often than not.

So how's it going then I hear you ask? I managed 20 miles over three days on a recent visit to Edinburgh – which also included climbing up to the Castle – via the Royal Mile of course not actually via the rock face and today I followed the Semington Slog route around the village. My time was nowhere near those amazing runners who will be whizzing round the village in May, possibly because we kept stopping to have a chat with people we met on the way round, it was all terribly sociable!

So excuse me while I get my Nancy Sinatra on.... 'these boots were made for walking....'

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MON - SAT
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LUNCH - 12.00 - 15.00
DINNER - 18.00-21.00

SUN
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LUNCH - 12.00-16.00

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To highlight our work, former patients whose lives we have saved, are featured in videos each month throughout 2020 on our social media channels and website, along with an opportunity to make a donation. We are only able to provide our vital service thanks to the generosity of people, community groups, schools, businesses and grant-making trusts who make donations.

Our charity is not funded directly by the Government and receives no National Lottery grants. It costs £3.75 million a year to keep our lifesaving service operational. We moved to our purpose-built airbase in Semington in May 2018. Last year we undertook 1,233 missions – an increase of 12% on 2018. We are honoured to serve Wiltshire and surrounding counties and with your help we can be here to save the next generation.

To donate, head to our website www.wiltshireairambulance.co.uk/generation

Registered charity number: 1144097



The Village Fete will be held on **Saturday 4th July**. More details to follow. Any contributions as always welcome.

Email: Sheralyn direct at **3milburns@gmail.com** or see any of us in the village, including John (the Landlord, John) at the pub.

Fete Committee; Sheralyn, Bev, Elaine, Victoria, Ian and John

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Read Easy – Volunteers Wanted!

David Williams – Read Easy Management Team Leader

Reading is Not Always Easy! If you are reading this, you are (obviously!) a reader. You may have been one of the lucky ones who found learning easy, or it may have been more of a struggle. It is a sobering fact that many people don't master this vital skill during their school days. The reality is that 2.4m adults in the UK cannot read, while a further 2.5m struggle to read. For such people, this means that carrying out everyday tasks can be challenging, if not impossible.

Read Easy is an expanding national organisation that tackles this issue by offering free, one-to-one coaching, using resources specially developed for adult learners. The local group started in Melksham in 2016 and has now expanded to cover all the surrounding towns – Bradford on Avon, Calne, Chippenham, Corsham, Devizes, and Trowbridge.

We need to recruit new volunteer members to our Management Team to develop this vital work. In particular, we are looking for a Team Leader who would initially be supported by our existing incumbent. Another key post for which we are recruiting is that of Joint Coordinator. People in this role take care of Coaches (tutors) and learners. Each Coordinator devotes up to 15 hours per week. We also need reading Coaches who are able to work in Trowbridge, Devizes, Chippenham or Corsham. Volunteer Coaches need to be confident and passionate about literacy and have the equivalent of about one day per week to spare. No previous teaching experience is necessary as support and training are provided.

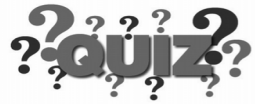
As a Read Easy volunteer, you will find it fascinating, rewarding and enjoyable to help people whose lives are being transformed, often after years of frustration. If you'd like to play a key part in helping to radically improve the lives of adults near you, while developing your own existing skills and learning new ones in a supportive environment, then why not get in touch?

To learn more about becoming a Read Easy volunteer, please contact me at melksham@readeasy.org.uk or on 07939 556541.

Books Wanted!

Village Hall

Any donations of paperback books for the bookcase in the village hall would be greatly appreciated. Drop off at the village hall during coffee morning on a Thursday. Many thanks!



February's Village quiz was attended by four teams, despite some truly horrible weather. Unfortunately, Esme and Philip couldn't make it through the floods from Bradford-on-Avon, courtesy of Storm Dennis, who was definitely a menace! The quizmasters were Neil and Jackie, and they set an interesting and enjoyable quiz, so many thanks to them.

The Marathon was to name the three original members of The Police (band), the SDP Gang of Four, five New York districts, six Australian states, the Magnificent Seven actors, Santa's eight reindeer, nine UK Prime Ministers, ten US presidents, eleven 1966 England World Cup Team members and twelve signs of the zodiac. A real mixture!

It was originally thought that the Knights of Camelot team had won by half a point, but they generously pointed out a slight error in the marking, and so the win went to Busy Gassing team – Sue, Steve, Helen and Howard. That team clearly was not too busy gassing, because they also won the main quiz, by 6½ points from, guess who, the Knights of Camelot!

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.

Down at the pub what's not to love about a love quiz? Traditionally the after-Christmas quiz has been a little sparse but not this one. A bumper 11 teams turned out and enjoyed another fantastic set of questions from the ever ebullient quizmaster Mr Simon Tyler.

To be honest there were a couple of stinker rounds (English Lit and great British lovers never a strong point) but as always a diverse range of questions to suit all abilities. The reigning champs and hard to beat Orchard Pigs were out in force but could only manage 4th with the eventual winners being Charlie's Angels in a very close fought contest.

Congratulations to Sharon, Mel, Sheralyn, Paul, Simon, and of course their manager Charlie. With a bumper rollover from the Christmas quiz the team were delighted to choose the cash envelope over the crisps and wine. Be sure to book your table for the next quiz.

Village Quiz dates are Sunday 15th March and 19th April, at 7.30pm, for a 7.45pm start. Pub Quiz date is Tuesday 17th March 7.00pm

Nature's Notes

This is **February** by **Michael Field**. Field was the pseudonym used by Katharine Harris Bradley (1846–1914) and her niece Edith Emma Cooper (1862–1913). This short poem captures the in-between nature of February: not quite Spring, but with the hope of an end to Winter, all tempered by the thought of what the ever-unpredictable March will bring.

*Gay lucidity,
Not yet sunshine, in the air;
Tingling secrets hidden everywhere,
Each at watch for each;
Sap within the hillside beech.
Not a leaf to see.*

Meanwhile, here's some very practical advice about dealing with February (and March) from **Edward (Ned) Ward** (1667-1731). Drab-de-berry was a French fine but hard-wearing woollen fabric.

*He who would, in this Month, be warm within,
And when abroad, from Wet defend his Skin,
His Morning's draught should be of Sack or Sherry,
And his Great Coat be made of Drab-de-berry.*

Great Bulkington Railway

Nev Boulter – Station Master 01380 828101

The GBR will be open to the public on **Easter Monday 13th April** from 1.00pm until 4.30pm for train rides for children and adults of all ages – all profits from the railway will go to the Wiltshire Air Ambulance Funds.

Light refreshments, including lovely homemade cakes in the village hall will be provided by the good ladies from Christ Church Bulkington. We already have several children's birthday parties booked this summer and look forward to many visitors.

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Michelle Donelan MP

Post Offices are a vital resource for all local communities up and down the country. But this is even more true in rural communities like Semington, where the Post Office currently provides mail, travel and financial services for residents two days per week. Statistics show that rural consumers use post offices significantly more often than urban consumers and moreover they are more likely to use a range of the services offered. On top of this, rural businesses like pubs and village shops often rely heavily on there being a Post Office open nearby at least once per week, so the knock-on effect of rural Post Office closures can be significant.

With this in mind we cannot underestimate the importance of Semington's Post Office service and anything that threatens the future of this service needs to be addressed quickly, in my view. In my conversations with local people in the area, I know that there is some concern among residents that the license for the current Post Office may not be renewed and as a result, the service could end. I know how much of an impact this would have on Semington residents and I have already begun action to make sure that we keep the Post Office open.

This week I wrote an urgent letter to the Post Office's Franchising and Licensing Department and requested that the Post Office in Semington have its license renewed under the terms of the current arrangement. I set out the various reasons for why this is so important to the local community and the potential implications were this license not to be renewed. So I will working very hard in the coming weeks to keep the Post Office going in Semington, as I have previously. I know how much of a cherished asset it is to the local community and that is something we need to protect. If you would like to contact me about any issues raised here or any other issue that may be concerning you, please do not hesitate to send me an email at michelle.donelan.mp@parliament.uk or call 01249 704465.

At The School Gates

Polly Malone

On the 6th February a small group of pupils from year 5 and 6 took time out of school to walk to the village coffee morning at the village hall. This was a marvellous opportunity to socialise with villagers of all ages, play games together and simply have a chat and a hot chocolate with different generations. All involved thoroughly enjoyed it! On 11th February some of our pupils performed a dance routine at The Bath Forum's Dance Festival. All involved have worked tirelessly to produce a dance reflecting Climate Change and we are sure they will be absolutely fantastic!

Parish Council Minutes

Abridged minutes from meeting held on Wednesday 5th February 2020

Present: Councillors B Smyth (Chairman), R Blake, P Bowyer, M Kasasian (from Agenda item 6), R Oglesby, S Rimmer, W Scott, P Smith, C Wade and the Clerk Roger Coleman. Wiltshire Council, Cllr. J Seed attended. There were six members of the public present initially.

Following discussions previously held with Wiltshire Council officers and Cllr. Seed, Adrian Hampton (Wiltshire Council, Head of Local Services) and Wiltshire Council, Streetscene Manager) were invited to attend the Parish Council meeting and for Adrian Hampton to give a presentation, during the Adjournment, on the subject of 'The Future of Children's Play Areas' with particular reference to the Wessex Close Play Area. The Chairman decided that a presentation would take place during the Adjournment as this would give all those present (including members of the public) the opportunity to raise any points of interest/concern with Mr. Hampton.

Adjournment: The Chairman adjourned the meeting for Wiltshire Council (Adrian Hampton) to give his presentation and for members of the public to raise any matters of interest.

Wiltshire Council Report. Cllr. Seed stated that Wiltshire Council Cabinet had agreed a 3.99% increase in the Council Tax for FY20/21 – a general increase of 1.99% - and an increase in the Social Care levy of 2%. He commented that the Police Precept increase was to be the equivalent of £10/year for a Band D Council Taxpayer and that the Fire Authority was to impose a 1.99% increase in their Precept. He added that the Wiltshire Council Council Tax proposals will be presented to the full Council for approval on 25th February 2020.

Planning. Cllr. Scott reported that the Semington Village website now included details of the latest planning applications and decisions. He also advised councillors that the proposed Settlement Boundary around the village had been approved by the Government Inspector and that it now included the parcel of land at The Knapps – as had been recommended by the Parish Council. Councillors noted that Wiltshire Council is now taking enforcement action in respect to the breach of planning permission at one of the traveller sites.

Finance. Total balance in hand at 5th February 2020; £26,175.55 The Council **resolved** to make all the payments under 'Payments to be authorised'. The Council noted that the hedging cuttings had not been removed by Simon J White and that the payment to him, agreed at the last meeting, had been cancelled.

Environment. Cllr. Smyth confirmed that the Litter Pick will take place on **14th March and those individuals taking part should meet at 10am, Village Hall.**

Wessex Close Play Areas: Cllr. Smyth, stated that he had the meeting with Wiltshire Council officers and Cllr. Seed to discuss the issues arising out of the concern for the poorly maintained Wessex Close Play Area on 13th January 2020. He added that he had also consulted more widely, including having a discussion with West Lavington Parish Council members where a mixed group of councillors and parishioners have established a working group to manage their play area facility. He gave a full report of those meetings and commented that it was clear that under the Service Delegation and Transfer of Assets initiatives, Wiltshire Council would cease to be responsible for Town and Village Play Areas within the next two years and that Parish Councils and local community groups were being encouraged to take over that responsibility. He added that it was important for the Parish Council to decide the future of the Wessex Close Play Area and in particular the specific area under threat, namely the area containing the play equipment. Councillors commented that there was a very good area comprising play equipment at St Georges School and that now, unlike the situation many years ago, it could not be used either by members of the public (i.e. local children who did not attend the school) or during out of school hours. It was agreed that enquiries would be made by the Chairman to see if the situation could be reversed.

The decision whether to acquire the Wessex Close Play Area was deferred until the views of parishioners were known.

Editor's note For further detail – please see Peter Smith's article on page 21

Any Other Business. Cllr. Oglesby explained that the future of the Post Office at the Village Hall, Semington was uncertain. He commented that the Semington facilities are run from Seend, and the current change of ownership/management of the Seend Post Office is causing some uncertainty about the future of the service at Semington. It was feared that Post Office Ltd might take the opportunity to reduce the service at Semington when changing the current arrangements at Seend.

Councillors expressed their concern at this news and commented that the Post Office at Semington is a valuable and well-used service and any change, such as a reduction in days it operates (i.e. reduced from two to one) and/or a reduction in the hours it is open would be most unwelcome – especially for the more elderly customers who rely on the service it offers. The Chairman invited councillors to make their own representations to those directly concerned in the current negotiations.

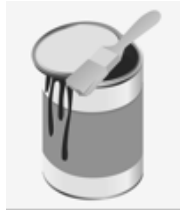
Next Meeting: Wednesday 5th March 2020 at 7.30pm

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Your Wiltshire Councillor News

Jonathon Seed

By the time you read this, unless something very surprising has happened, Wiltshire Council will have approved its budget for the coming year 2020-2021. This does not attract the headlines or political machinations that other budgets both national and political attract. Indeed, the budget discussed on 25th February was approved by the Cabinet of Wiltshire Council without any amendments or criticism from opposition parties. That in itself is tribute to the energy and effort that goes into producing a balanced budget for a Council that has an annual income of £344million. This is made up of £260M from Council tax, £24M from Social Care Levy, £57M business rates retention (this figure is only 35% of the total raised in Wiltshire) and £3M from other income. When it comes to spending roughly two thirds is spent on adult social care, public health, education and children's social care with the remaining one third being spent on all other resident's services. Schools are funded separately.

Managing the budget is clearly a big task but the underlying principle is the same as your own financial management. As Dickens' Mr Micawber said if you spend only what you can afford, the result is happiness! The full story is a bit more complicated than I have described. If you want to find more, the best place to look will be the documents for Council of Wiltshire Council which can be found on the Wiltshire Council website.

Wiltshire Council is the unitary authority that is responsible for most of the services that residents use in the county. Town and Parish Councils provide other, more local services and raise a precept for these as do the Police and Fire and Rescue service. All these local tax or precept raising services may seem independent of each other and clearly their management is separate but they all have a responsibility to cooperate in the interests of the people of Wiltshire who they serve. Generally, that works well our local service providers cooperate well with each other.

It is a pity that the same cannot always be said of neighbouring authorities and it was particularly disappointing to see the Cleveland Bridge in Bath closed to traffic over 18t and forcing several hundred extra heavy lorries a day to divert along the A350 through Chippenham, Melksham and Westbury. It was even more annoying that BANES Council announced that this was a temporary measure pending bridge repairs and then within days the ruling party from BANES launched a petition to PERMANENTLY close the bridge to heavy traffic. Many Wiltshire residents are rightfully angry at this duplicity and are demanding answers. Watch this space!

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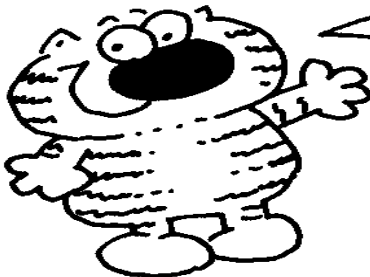
So hand ups, who, missed me last edition? Reverse marketing in action as several people asked where my little piece of Semington had gone. So what have we been up to post Christmas festivities? Plenty of food specials going on including another superb gourmet night at the hands of Jon Furby and a treat for all those romantics with a tasty Valentines Menu. Both were well supported and enjoyed by all.

Coming up its time to treat the Mums and how better than our delicious Mothers Day menu, remember to book early as even with 3 sittings we always fill up fast. March sees some great sport to watch; the climax of the 6 Nations, Cheltenham Festival, EFL Cup Final and the start of the F1 Season as well as all the Premiership and Champions league action. We will be showing them all on the big screen. As an English country pub its always nice to support our Irish cousins on St Patrick's Day and this year we are doing it with an Irish themed quiz - as always book your table early and quizmaster Simon Tyler is already hard at work in preparation for **Tuesday 17th March**. Head to the quiz page for a write up of February's quiz. To wrap up the month we have live music planned for **Saturday 21st March**.

We are now on first name terms with the local delivery drivers as the Semington Parcel Intake Service (SPINS) grows in popularity. Never miss a parcel again. Don't forget its not all lunch, dinner and a cheeky pint, we are open for breakfast and morning coffee as well.

The team and me look forward to seeing you 'Down the Local' very soon!

Paws for Thought



God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.

It's in the Bible; Psalm 46, verse 1

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The Future of the Wessex Close Play Equipment

Peter Smith – Vice-Chair of the Parish Council

The Parish Council has been told by Wiltshire Council that, as a matter of policy, the children's play equipment behind Wessex Close will not be inspected or maintained by Council staff after March 2022. Currently, the equipment is only being inspected and any faulty items are not being fixed.

Wiltshire Council would like the village to assume responsibility for the play area after that date. If that doesn't happen, the area will be closed and locked, and the equipment eventually removed. The Parish Council values the play area and wants to see the equipment continue to be available to children who live in or visit the village. Ideally, over time, the equipment might be upgraded.

The Parish Council would like to see a community group formed to manage, maintain and develop the area and equipment. This group would be made up of villagers who have a strong interest in its use (the majority membership) together with parish councillor representatives. Its remit would include: general oversight of the area, mandatory safety inspections, insurance provision, refurbishment and replacement of existing equipment, and the provision of new equipment.

The group would need to seek grants for this work. A grant of £1000 from Wiltshire Council will accompany the transfer of responsibility, and Wiltshire Council has agreed to transfer £6000 of central government funds to the parish council for the improvement of the area. These funds would be available to the community group to draw on.

The Parish Council is calling for volunteers to establish and be members of the community group to take responsibility for the play area. If you want to be involved (at any level), please contact me on 01380 870888 or via e-mail **pnmssmith@mspnsmith.plus.com** There will then be a meeting for everyone interested in April.

Crafternoon

Pam Wildsmith

Our next Crafternoon is **Wednesday 25th March 2.00pm to 4.00pm**. Come along and join us – regardless of how crafty you are, knitting, tapestry, crocheting or sewing. All crafts, all levels and all ages welcome! If you're stuck there's sure to be someone to help or give advise.

Please let Christine know if you're intending to come, venue is 29 Highfield Close, tel: 871979 email **whites1966@btinternet.com**

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Semington WI Meeting

Deb Hurn



February has seen us welcoming two new ladies and having a go at candle making. We had a very interesting talk and demonstration by Claire Barnett. Claire showed us how the new eco friendly wraps are made for keeping food fresh without using cling film etc., and how to make candles.

She had some great items for sale as well and I for one will be trying the food wrap. Claire also showed great patience helping us to make our own candle, so that we all managed to take a lovely one home. Many thanks to Claire for her time and patience.

Our next meeting will be our AGM starting at 7.30pm on **Thursday 12th March**. April's meeting will be on the **Thursday 9th April** also at 7.30pm where we will be crafting for Easter. Both meetings are in Semington Village Hall.

Steeple Ashton Films

Alison Wilson 01380 871345

KNIVES OUT (12) SATURDAY 21st MARCH 2020 7.30PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL, STEEPLE ASHTON

A modern take on a murder mystery, written, produced and directed by Rian Johnson. This homage to an Agatha Christie whodunit has a glittering cast of actors including Christopher Plummer, Daniel Craig, Chris Evans, Jamie Lee Curtis, Don Johnson and Toni Collette to name a few. In the setting of a mansion, the family and staff are gathered for Harlan Thrombey's 85th birthday. Renowned crime novelist Harlan Thrombey's body is discovered. Debonair detective, Benoit Blanc (Daniel Craig) is faced with a long list of suspects with opportunity, motive, a web of lies, twists and turns and red herrings. His challenging task is to uncover the truth behind the untimely death.

Nominated for an Oscar, BAFTA and Golden Globe, this film has been well received by both critics and audiences. So much so, that a sequel is in the planning stages.

Tickets £6 available 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!

Parish Council Matters

Brian Smyth – Chairman Parish Council

Semington Post Office

As you're probably aware, Semington's Post Office facilities are run from Seend at two mornings a week. The current change of ownership has triggered a review of the future of the service by regional Post Office management and there is a risk that Semington's Post Office opening times could be reduced.

This is a much valued service and a lifeline to many in the village, one which the Parish Council wishes to maintain. If you feel the current service level should be preserved then it would be helpful if you made your views known to the regional office for attention of **Rachel.chidgey@postoffice.co.uk** with a copy to our MP Michelle Donelan, **michelle@michelledonelan.com**

Litter Pick

A village litter pick has been arranged for **10.00am Saturday 14th March** and if any parishioners would like to volunteer to help it would be appreciated. We plan to meet at the village hall where litter pickers and bags will be made available for all. Just bring some suitable gloves and hope for a sunny day.

Right of Way Re-opened

Recently a Wiltshire Council/Ramblers working group assisted by a number of Semington parish councillors cleared an overgrown stretch of footpath SEMI 14 and so providing a walkable route from behind the crematorium, across the A350 and leading out to the road to Strangers Corner. This helps to open up a 4 mile circular route from Little Marsh to Great Hinton, Littleton and back to Semington village via the K&A canal. So ignore the mud, get your walking boots on and enjoy the exercise.

And Finally...

This will be the last contribution to the magazine from me as Chairman before I step down completely after over 20 years on Semington Parish Council. I will be leaving it in the capable hands of Peter Smith and would like to thank colleagues past and present for making it an interesting and enjoyable experience and I wish the current councillors every success for the future.

Book Club

Angela Grodzicka 870756

The Book Club met on 13th February to discuss *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles. Everyone enjoyed it although not all had finished it as yet. It is a very rich and meaty read with a good ending. The characters are excellent, it is historically interesting and well written. One member felt it could become an 'A' level text for schools and would take its place as great literature in the future. A quote from the Mail on Sunday says it all - 'A propensity for elegant sentences, wonderful characters and inventive storytelling ... This is everything a novel should be: charming, witty, poetic and generous. An absolute delight'.

The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday 19th March at 8.00pm** in the pub to discuss *Dead at First Sight* by Peter James. All welcome.

Holy Baptism

Linda Hillman

Evelyn Grace Parsons (Evie) of 25 Highfield Close was welcomed into the church at her baptism on Sunday February 16th 2020.



We pray God will bless her and her family, and as she grows, she will experience God's love for herself.

From The Church Register

Victoria Shackleton

Funeral of Douglas Albert Howard Burbidge - A Celebration in Thanksgiving for the Life of Douglas Burbidge was held at St George's Church on Tuesday 21st January 2020. We pray that Diana, Susan, Gary, Sarah, Nicola and Michael, their families and friends will know God's love and peace at this sad time.

Cover Star

Many thanks to Mr W for this month's cover picture. If you have a photo or picture you'd like to propose for our front cover I'd love to hear from you. Email images to semparmag@icloud.com

Catholic News

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

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.

Deanery Service of Reconciliation: Bishop Declan will be joining us and leading our Lenten Deanery Service of Reconciliation on **Tuesday 17th March at 7.00pm**. There will be other visiting priests for individual confessions. All welcome.

Sick and Housebound: Any catholic who is sick or housebound should let Fr. Tom Finnegan (01225 752152) know as he would be pleased to arrange a visit and bring Holy Communion, if desired.

The Giving Machine: St John the Baptist, Trowbridge is on "The Giving Machine" Simply shop online via The Giving Machine at 2000'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

The New 300 Club 2020 Subscriptions: £50 annually - £13 quarterly - £4.33 monthly. New members are most welcome to join at any time. **Prizes are: £200-£70-£50-£10.** For information and application form contact Francis Geraghty 01380 871083 email: f.geraghty303@btinternet.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 Rectory

Anne Rees

I am writing this in the days after Storm Ciara has wreaked havoc over the country with its strong winds and torrential rain. As we breathed a sigh of relief that the storm had passed, the weather forecasters started warning us of the approaching Storm Dennis, which was set to bring even more torrential rain, flooding and strong winds. Like me, you are probably really wanting spring to come with a period of settled dry, warm weather.

The Bible relates an account of a storm. Jesus was asleep in a boat on Lake Galilee when a fierce storm broke out. His companions, the Disciples, were frightened – they thought they were going to drown and woke Jesus, begging him to save them. He said “Peace be still,” and the storm ceased.



Most of us experience storms in our lives – we face difficulties and challenges as we journey through life. It may be our health or that of our loved ones, or we may have financial worries or concerns about employment. Sometimes our emotional life is in turmoil because of the circumstances we find ourselves in or the actions of other people, or we may be struggling to cope with the grief caused by bereavement. We may think that God doesn't care, that he is asleep in the boat. As a Christian, I believe that God does care, that I don't have to face these storms on my own. Jesus can give us peace and strength to deal with the storms in our lives. He doesn't always take them away, but he can help us face them and survive – and sometimes we survive the storm and come out stronger than when it started.

We are now in Lent, the time running up to Easter when many Christians make extra space to pray, to read the Bible and reflect on God's love. I recommend spending time during Lent praying that God will help you not to be afraid when the storms of life hit you but to trust him to bring you peace and comfort amidst the difficulties. If you want support to survive the storms in your life you will find a warm welcome in our Churches or you can contact the Rector, Revd John Rees whose details are in this magazine, for a confidential chat.

St George's Church Semington



Services March 2020



1st March - 9.30am
Holy Communion

8th March - 9.30am
Methodist Service

15th March - 9.30am
Holy Communion



Saturday 21st March
11.00 am - Messy Church
St George's School

29th March - 9.30am
Benefice Communion
St George's, Semington



5th April - Palm Sunday
Holy Communion - 9.30am

Morning Prayer 9.00am 31 Pound Close
Thursday 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th

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

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

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

Email: canalsiderector@gmail.com www.canalsidebenefice.org.uk