

NOVEMBER 2023



SEMINGTON
PARISH MAGAZINE



Post Office

Mondays 11.00am to 12.00pm

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Thursdays 10.00am to 12.00pm

Village Hall

Bingo

Mondays 7.30pm

Village Hall

Semington WI

Thursday 9th November 7.30pm

Village Hall

Semingtones Choir

Fridays 6.00pm

Village Hall

Semington Crib Club

Fridays 8.00pm to 10.00pm

Village Hall

Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday 15th November 7.30pm

Village Hall

Semington Quiz Night

Thursday 16th November 7.30pm

Village Hall

Zumba in Semington

Wednesdays 6.15pm to 7.15pm

St George's School

Semington Winter Fete and Bonfire Night

Saturday 4th November starting at 4.00pm

Fireworks at 6.00pm

Live Music at 7.00pm

Outmarsh Farm

Christians in Semington

Bev Woodward – 870784

Thanks to everyone who helped to make the Church building look so beautiful at harvest last month!

Christians in Semington - are meeting via zoom, to pray for our community, on **Wednesday 1st November at 8.00pm**. Please contact Jack Woodward, 870784, for the zoom link.

Housegroup - we meet every other Tuesday, at 8.00pm. Now we have finished looking at the book of Luke, we are starting the Bible Society course on the book of Romans. Now is a good time to join us at the beginning of a course, and details of this course can be found at: <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/resources/the-romans-course/> If you'd like to join us please phone Jack/Bev 870784 or David/Pam 870030 for the venue.

The next Breakfast Church is on **Sunday 10th December**.

Advent Calendars - I will be ordering Real Advent Calendars again this year. This is the only one with Fairtrade chocolate, a copy of the Christmas story and which supports charitable projects. The cost is £4.50 each, more details from <https://meaningfulchocolate.co.uk> To ensure we have them for 1st December please get orders to me by **Sunday 5th November**.

Editor's Note

Gillian Airey

Steve Turpin has sent me a fascinating piece on the history of Littleton Mill which I am delighted to share with you on page 20 onwards. This month's Remembrance Day cover comes courtesy of St George's Primary School and was one of the winning images for the 'Melksham Remembers' book that Raymond Heard has written about.

Our next edition is the double issue December and January. Do you have a fabulous Christmas or winter image that could grace the cover of our magazine if so I'd love to hear from you.

The deadline for that and everything else is **Sunday 19th November**. I'd love to hear from you all my email as always semparmag@icloud.com

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This Month I'm On A Road to Nowhere

Gilly Airey

October half term is our week with the little people, although in fairness none of them are so little anymore. Princess Ava is already 12 years old and turning into a fine young lady, Princess Bella is 9 years old and is already much better at make-up application than me. In fairness to me I am so bad at remembering to wear make-up 90% of my cosmetics are dried up or are ever so slightly sad. I was heartbroken when I tried to replace my Miners eye shadow to find out that the company had gone out of business 15 years ago. I digress, as always, bringing up the rear is Gorgeous George who at 7 years old is tall enough to be wearing clothes for a 10 year old!

When we both had proper jobs Gorgeous Hubby and me drove thousands of miles each year and thought nothing of driving a couple of hours to get to work, but how time takes it toll! Our strategy to gather them up from the North West and the South East means Gorgeous Hubby and I had to divide and conquer the driving duties. Whilst there are plus sides to the occasional solo road trip, for example I can indulge in wall to wall Radio 2 (you'll remember it's not Gorgeous Hubby's first choice of radio station he's a more sophisticated 6 Music man). It also means that when journeys don't go to plan you have no one to moan about it to and to plan with like a contestant in Race Across the World trying to avoid all the traffic jams showing on the Sat Nav.

I'm not going to lie my timing wasn't great. After two days of biblical rain I happily set off just to grind to a halt on the M4 16 miles from home. Now for those people like my dear old Dad who used to love nothing more than reading maps for pleasure, you will note that 16 miles means I had literally just joined the motorway so no alternative route and nowhere to go. Not only did we grind to a halt – we were stopped long enough that engines got switched off and people were out their cars, or in one case someone wound their seat back and popped their feet out of the window, maybe it's a generation thing – but the point was lost on me! Once we were on the move again it became apparent that what we all really needed was a James Bond style amphibious vehicle such was the water flowing down the motorway.

Was it worth it? Heck yes! Not only did I have a fabulous Thelma and Louise road trip back with the girls, but I also got to do my best proud Nanny act at Princess Bella's school assembly when she received a certificate for being basically just a brilliant human being, silent weeping only allowed. Reunited back at base camp only one rule applies – what happens at Nanny's stay at Nanny's!

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Wiltshire

Gutter Cleaning Services

Parish Council - Chair's Report

Peter Smith, Chair of the Parish Council

Planning Appeal: 30 homes on Land South of Pound Lane – the developers with an interest in this site, Greystoke Land, have appealed against the decision of Wiltshire Council to refuse the planning application. The appeal will be heard by the Planning Inspectorate, though we don't yet have a date for this. The Parish Council has again written to the Planning Inspectorate to voice its opposition to the application, making comments about landscape harm, factual inaccuracies within the appeal documents, and the need to preserve a World War 2 anti-tank defence. Our letter of objections will soon be on the Parish Council website and on the notice board.

Wiltshire Council (WC) Local Plan Consultation – the Parish Council has responded to this with comments and concerns about the local plan proposals under six headings. The full document, which runs to 6 pages, focuses on these issues:

- Housing growth numbers – noting that Semington has already met its 2038 housing growth target yet continues to be vulnerable to speculative off plan housing applications (see above) due to WC not having a 5 year housing land supply in place.
- Canals – where we support protection for both the K&A canal and the restoration of the Wiltshire and Berkshire canal, contingent upon the need for a substantial and permanent wildlife buffer between the K&A canal and any development to the north of the K&A canal. It is important to maintain a substantial green buffer between Berryfield and Semington.
- The A350 bypass – noting that the proposed plan is silent on the bypass issue, including no safeguarding line for the route.
- Hilperton Gap – where once WC had floated the idea of approaching 2600 new homes to the north and northeast of Hilperton and Staverton, this latest draft plan proposes to build around just 600 houses to the northeast of Hilperton village, with access to these from the Paxcroft Farm roundabout. The build would extend to Whaddon Lane and the resurfaced cycle route along Gypsy Lane. We believe this to be phase one of the original plan for around 2600 homes extending all the way to Staverton, but this does not form part of the current plan.
- Nature Park – a country park of 33 hectares would be laid out on land south of the A361 adjacent to Paxcroft Farm and extending south to the A350, including Hag Hill.
- Housing Market Areas (HMA) – the Parish Council continues to argue that we and four other parishes were moved from Chippenham HMA to Trowbridge HMA to enable WC to plan the expansion of Trowbridge. Were these parishes still in the Chippenham HMA they would be off limits for the Trowbridge expansion.

The Parish Council's full response can be viewed on the website under "Planning".

Jobs and Volunteers – many thanks to those of you who 'phoned me with suggestions for jobs for our parish steward. Hopefully, by the time you read this, you'll see that the jobs have been done, either by Connor or by the wonderful Semingtonians who turn out for village working parties. We had 9 people at the gutter/path clearing and litter pick on 21st October. Many, many thanks to all who turned up. There are, though, yet more jobs to do and we'd love to welcome more happy helpers. If you'd like to be added to our circulation list so that you know when the next work party will happen, please either call me on 870888, or leave a message on the Parish Council website: semington.org.uk There's no obligation to turn out: being on the list just means you'll be notified of events and can choose whether you are able to help. Big thanks in hope!

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Nature Notes

Trees - I'm writing this a week after the sycamore on Hadrian's Wall was wantonly felled and when trees and their value, whether for biodiversity, aesthetics or timber, are much in the mind. A lot of emotion and both plangent and spiritual feeling have been stirred by this vandalism. The Bishop of Newcastle said that the tree bore a pastoral load in its strength and beauty.

Unsurprisingly, there are lots of poems about trees. For example, John Clare wrote movingly about an old elm, Housman declared the cherry to be the loveliest of trees and Robert Frost and Emily Dickenson wrote endlessly about them. But it's Joyce Kilmer's poem, written in 1913, which is said to be one of the most popular despite, or maybe because of, its sentimentality.

Trees

*I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.*

*A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;*

*A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;*

*A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;*

*Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.*

*Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.*



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Abridged Minutes from Parish Council Meeting

Meeting Held Wednesday 18th October

Present. Councillors P Smith (Chairman), R Bruges, M Carberry, J. Hailey, M. Kasasian, C. McGarvey, W.Scott, C. Wade and the Clerk, Roger Coleman. Wiltshire Council. Cllr J Seed attended (Part-time). There were two members of the public present initially.

Apologies. Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. S. Chown.

Wiltshire Council Report. Cllr. Seed gave a report on the following subjects:

Bus Gate - The bus gate and associated furniture has recently been inspected by Wiltshire Council and, subject to a minor repair to the lock, was found to be satisfactory. Cllr. Seed commented that if there were to be a housing development in the area, the need for the bus gate, or its location, would need to be reconsidered. He recommended that the provision of the ANPR camera needs to be agreed with Wiltshire Police and Wiltshire Council and that its enforcement also needs to be agreed. He recommended that this subject was discussed at the next LHFIG Meeting when both Wiltshire Police and Wiltshire Council will be present. Cllr. Wade added that security clearances would also need to be obtained from Wiltshire Police for any parish volunteers who would comprise the 'No Entry Watch' team and he understood that there was a current moratorium regarding such clearance processes. He stated that the next Area Board Meeting (which will have a highways focus) is to be held at Semington Village Hall on **6th December 2023** and that key Wiltshire Council officers would be in attendance and that would be an ideal opportunity to raise this subject. Cllr. Seed was advised of two 'local' organisations that had been observed ignoring the 'No Entry' sign. He stated that he would contact those organisations and would provide advice.

Planning Appeal – PL/2022/09397 (South of Pound Lane). He cautioned that following discussions with Wiltshire Council officers, the forthcoming Appeal hearing may consider that the 'flooding issue', previously highlighted as a serious impediment to the development, might not be so significant as previously thought.

Greenacres - The relevant Cabinet members and officers have been alerted to the breaches of planning consent by the occupiers of the Greenacres site and responses are awaited from those members and officers regarding intended further action by Wiltshire Council.

Safety Audit – SEMI19A/10 and HILP22/10. In reply to a query from Cllr. Scott, Cllr. Seed stated that he had no further information regarding the progress, if any, of this audit and that he was unaware that any information regarding the recent serious accident on this byway had been passed by the police to the Audit team. Cllr. Scott commented that it was essential that such information was passed to the Audit team.

Community and Communication. The Chairman reported that there had been a recent audit undertaken on the footfall at the Post Office and that the results would indicate very poor use of the Post Office thereby placing its future existence in serious jeopardy. The Chairman confirmed that he had collected the bags of salt and snow warden jackets from Wiltshire Council that were available under the PEAS Scheme. Cllr. Bruges confirmed that arrangements for the proposed Community Event, a Bonfire Celebration, to be held at Outmarsh Farm on **4th November 2023** were progressing well and thanked Cllr. Carberry for his assistance in the project.

Recreation and Wellbeing. The Chairman confirmed that all related documentation concerning the transfer of the allotment site from Newland Homes had been sent to all councillors prior to the meeting for examination and save for one minor typographical error no other comment had been received by him or the Clerk. He added that the Parish Council was now in a position to decide whether or not to proceed with the transfer of the allotment site to the Parish Council. The Parish Council resolved to accept the latest versions of the Allotment Transfer Documents, acknowledging that there are no outstanding matters and that the transfer should proceed forthwith. The Clerk stated that at the point of transfer it would be necessary to ensure that the appropriate insurance cover was in place. Cllr. Wade commented that as the Parish Council is a member of the Allotment Society some insurance cover is already in place. Cllr. Wade stated that he would send these details to the Clerk. The Parish Council resolved to appoint Cllrs Smith (Parish Council Chairman) and Cllr. Wade (Parish Council Member) as the signatories of the legal documentation relating to the allotment transfer on behalf of the Parish Council and that the Clerk R Coleman is to act as witness. Cllr. Scott ventured that some form of ceremony should accompany the first 'dig' in the allotment.

Cllr. Hailey gave a report on the progress of the Wessex Close Play Area Asset Transfer from Wiltshire Council. She stated that there were a number of relatively minor issues that required clarification from Wiltshire Council and that she would inform the Clerk of these matters for him to write formally to Wiltshire Council in order to obtain clarification and to effect the transfer. Cllr. Hailey stated that the Play Area Community Management Group had been formed and that training of the members was now a priority, either individual or group training. She agreed to make the necessary enquiries. The Parish Council resolved to formally name the walkway through Jubilee Wood – 'Rimmer's Ramble' in memory of Steve Rimmer who was a previous Parish Councillor and instrumental in promoting tree planting in the village. The Council resolved that a budget of £150 be allocated for appropriate signage. Cllr. McGarvey confirmed that a defibrillator training event had taken place on 16th October at the Village Hall, although the attendance – nine persons – was disappointing.

Environment and Streetscene.

Rights of Way. Cllr. Hailey reported the trimming back of vegetation on Paths SEMI9 and SEMI28 and stiles cleared. She added that Cllr. Bruges had cleared the overgrown vegetation on SEMI1 (Brook House end), although the other end of this path is very overgrown. She stated that the footbridge (SEMI28) still needed repairing.

Other Matters. The Chairman stated that clearance of the vegetation in the immediate vicinity of the Pill Box was necessary and, following discussion, it was agreed that a working party would undertake this work on 18th November – subject to agreement with the owner of the land. Cllr. Smith confirmed that a rubbish skip could be obtained around the budgeted figure of £250 that was agreed at the previous Parish Council meeting. He added that a comprehensive plan for the refurbishment of the Pill Box will be developed and sent to all councillors. Cllrs Hailey and Smith stated that it had been agreed at a previous meeting not to proceed with the tree planting project, primarily because of the obligations imposed by Wiltshire Council on the Parish Council regarding the use of the intended land. The Chairman confirmed that there was to be a 'Gutter and Path' clearance activity and a litter pick on Saturday 21st October commencing 10.00am at the Village Hall. Cllr. Carberry reported that he had examined the current legislation regarding Litter Bins and dog waste and confirmed that it was permissible to place wrapped dog waste in Litter Bins. He commented that there was a need for additional bins in the village – especially noting the additional properties planned for the village – and he would survey the village and propose where additional bins may be necessary or existing ones re-sited.

Transport and Traffic. Cllr. McGarvey reported that residents in Pound Land had complained to her regarding the damaging of the grass verge by tractors. Councillors observed that when cars are parked along the road there is insufficient road space to allow tractors to pass – hence the damaged verges. She was advised to inform residents to contact Wiltshire Council via the ‘My Wilts’ app to report the problem.

Planning and Development. The Council examined the following planning applications and resolved to send comments to Wiltshire Council as shown (in italics): PL/2023/08160 12 Turnpike Close; Construction of single storey side extension to provide an additional bedroom and ensuite. Internal remodelling of first floor layout to provide an additional bedroom. Installation of new first floor window to side elevation and swapping of ground floor door and window on rear elevation. *The Council has no objections to this proposed development.* The Chairman declared an interest in PL/2023/08552 and left the meeting. PL/2023/08552, 5 The Hunt Close Erection of a single storey front and two storey side extension, form pitched roofs to existing dormer windows, and widen width of rear facing dormer window. Demolish existing 1.8m high front and side facing boundary wall, and replace with new 1.8m high wall. *The Council has no objections to this proposed development.* The Chairman rejoined the meeting.

The Council considered the proposed comments (prepared by Cllr. Scott) in respect of the Greystoke Planning Appeal (Land South of Pound Lane, Planning Appeal APP/Y3940/W/23/3329064) that had been sent to all councillors before the meeting and, following discussion, resolved to send these comments to the Appeal Inspectorate. The Chairman stated that Cllr. Scott had written a possible Parish Council response to the request for comments by Wiltshire Council in respect of the Wiltshire Council Local Plan – Wiltshire Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft 2020 – 2038, September 2023 – and that these comments had been sent to all councillors prior to this meeting. These comments were discussed by the Parish Council and subject to an agreed additional sentence the Parish Council resolved to send that response to Wiltshire Council. The Council reviewed the proposed comments (prepared by Cllr. Scott) in respect of the Green Square Accord Planning Application (Land North of St George’s Road - Planning application 20/01306/OUT) that had been sent to all councillors before the meeting. Following a discussion by councillors, the Parish Council resolved to send that response to Wiltshire Council.

Finance. Total Balance in hand as at 18th October 2023 - £86,622.48

The Parish Council resolved to make a donation of £650 to St Georges PCC - £50 of which is for the purchase of a Remembrance Day Memorial Wreath. In reply to Cllr. Scott, the Clerk confirmed that a draft FY2024/25 Budget would be presented to the Council for approval at the November Parish Council meeting. In view of this, the Chairman requested all Theme Leaders to provide anticipated spend in FY2024/25 to the Clerk well before the next meeting.

Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr. Scott reported that there was nothing to report and he expressed his disappointment that it was now necessary to undertake a Strategic Environment Assessment when this matter could have easily been resolved earlier by Wiltshire Council and allowed the Regulation 14 Consultation to be undertaken now instead of six months’ time. Cllr. Scott stated that the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan had now been issued under Regulation 14 for public consultation. Cllr. Scott agreed to draft comments for Semington Parish Council to send in respect of this publication.

Date of the next meeting. Wednesday 15th November at 7.30pm

Wiltshire Councillor News From Jonathon Seed

The Wiltshire Council year marches on and councillors have just attended the October meeting of the Council. It was a full agenda with many issues from climate change to local parish boundary reviews being discussed. This was in addition to regular council business including representations from members of the public, budget monitoring and committee reports to the council. Also agreed at council meetings are appointments and changes to committee posts and I am pleased to have been appointed as a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee of Wiltshire Council. This may seem a bit local government “tech” but this is the committee which scrutinises the Executive as well as assisting with policy development. I have lengthy experience of this work and recently chaired a policy development task group to recommend much needed change to the policy of council housing allocations.

From the present to the past last month we held a highly successful Melksham Area Board. I took over the chair of this board in June and have moved to themed meetings to try and reignite public interest in the work of our local Area Board. Last month we chose heritage as our theme and met in Melksham. The meeting started with a heritage walk of Melksham town conducted by Melksham Historical Society. This was hugely interesting but best of all 50 residents turned out in the drizzle to learn more about the town of Melksham. The meeting itself was attended by a separate and similar number of residents who received information on all sorts of heritage aspects and generated a desire to see Melksham included in the new county heritage App. The next Area Board is on **Wednesday 6th December at 7.00pm** in Semington Village Hall when the theme will be local highways including local highways issues, of roads, footpaths and cycleways. This meeting is open to the public so please come along.

The past month has also seen quite a heavy caseload of local concerns. These include alleged illegal expansion of a local travellers site, potential housing development in a village, worries about traffic increase in Great Hinton, concern at maintenance of the local WW2 pillbox defences in Semington, a move to upgrade a village playing field into the village community activity area in Steeple Ashton and many others. Each of the issues noted, and many others, bring their own need for local government liaison and trying to make a difference and address people’s concerns is the best part of my role as your Wiltshire Councillor.

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Semington Village Quiz Night

Derek Edwards

Thank you to everyone for attending the October quiz evening. It was an amazing turn out with 52 entrants split into teams. The winning team with 49 points was 'Mind The Sycamore Gap'. In fact only six points separated the top four teams. 'Mind the Sycamore Gap' only won by one point and they managed to pick out the crisps prize, so £49.00 rolls over to the prize kitty next month. In addition the evening raised £49.00 for the Wiltshire Air Ambulance.

I'd like to thank Heidi for all her support in organising the quiz and also to the village hall team. It was great to meet new and old villagers, we've already set the date for the next quiz **Thursday 16th November 7.30pm** at the village hall. Come along and even if you don't have a team we'll find one for you to join – entry is £2.00 per person. We are blessed with our village and I thank you all for your support although I do feel I must apologise for the cryptic round!

Semington Book Club

Angela Grodzicka – 870756

We met on Thursday 19th October to discuss *God Help the Child* by the Pulitzer Prize winning author Toni Morrison. Although a short book it is packed full of content with the themes of racism and child abuse running through it. It is well written and members found it interesting and different, if a trifle disturbing and violent in places. It is a social commentary on black America and we wondered if it was the author's personal experience or the result of social work. 'What you do to children matters ... and it echoes through the generations'.

The next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday 5th December** to discuss 'The First Time Lauren Pailing Died' by Alyson Rudd.

Semington Heritage and History

Steve Turpin

Thomas Helliker and the Incident at Littleton Mill Semington

Dawn broke on 22nd March 1803, the day of Thomas Helliker's 19th birthday. The occasion may not have been uppermost in his mind for it was also the date on which he would hang for arson and riot at Littleton Mill, Semington. So what events led to his execution?

Helliker was born on 23rd March 1784 in Horningsham, the youngest of six children. His whole family was employed in the woollen industry. In 1797 he was taken on as a shearman's colt in Trowbridge at a mill owned by Francis Naish, the start of a five-year apprenticeship. However, it was the time industrialisation was being introduced into the woollen industry including at Littleton Mill, Semington. The new machinery would make shearmen redundant and consequently, they formed a secret union, illegal at the time, to protect their trade. Militancy against the introduction of machinery was increasing and so the mill owners introduced 24-hour watch keepers. Littleton Mill was no exception and rotated the task through some of its trusted workers.

On 22nd July 1802 a group of Trowbridge shearmen decided on active protest and they set out to destroy the newly installed shearing equipment at Littleton Mill. The mill was owned by Francis Naish but rented by Ralph Heath. With blackened faces the group arrived at the mill. It so happened that the watch that night was Heath and his assistant John Pierce. They were allegedly taken captive at gunpoint while the mill was sacked and torched. Heath claimed that the group comprised seven vigilantes. The outcome was eight thousand pounds worth of damage to the mill, a considerable amount at the time.

The Government considered the situation very serious. They feared similar action at other mills and so the Secretary of State sent James Read, a Bow Street magistrate, to Wiltshire. He arrested Thomas Bailey who, while in prison, cracked under interrogation and told of the Shearman's Union. James May, George Marks, John Helliker (Thomas Helliker's elder brother), Samuel Ferris and Phillip Edwards were arrested and held for seven months. They successfully claimed they were not at the Mill but elsewhere and released on lack of evidence. However, in Thomas Helliker's case, Heath claimed he recognised him as one of two people holding him hostage and who had in his possession a gun.

Helliker said he was not at the mill that night and had an alibi, a fellow apprentice, Joseph Warren. Warren had voluntarily gone to the magistrates and stated that at 10:30pm he met Helliker outside John Walter's house whom Warren was visiting. Helliker became very drunk so Warren put him in Walter's kitchen and having locked the front door placed the key under the door of Walter's bedroom. Warren said that he and Helliker slept there till morning, locked in.

When Naish heard what Warren had said he demanded to see him the following morning. Warren disappeared eventually turning up in Leeds in September. It is believed that Union members sent him away with a reference and money, in fear of his safety. Helliker was arrested on 3rd August, and placed in a police line-up where he was picked out by Heath as the man who had held him. The magistrate, John Jones (who owned several mills) in summing up stated that Helliker's alibi had been fabricated and, on the basis of the watch keeper's evidence, he committed Helliker for trial at the Wiltshire Assizes held in Salisbury. To deter any rescue attempt, Helliker was sent under military escort to Wilton Goal to await trial.

He was tried at the Wiltshire Assizes on 14th March 1803 under Judge Thompson. The shearmen clubbed together sufficient funds to employ a qualified barrister, Mr Garrow, to defend Helliker. However, with the lack of evidence to support his alibi as Warren was not at court but in Leeds, the case rested on Helliker's word against Heath's. The poor quality of the evidence to convict Helliker did not deter the judge from asking the jury to decide. They withdrew for only ten minutes before returning a guilty verdict. He was sentenced to hang and publicly executed at the gallows in front of Salisbury's Fisherton Anger prison (the site of the prison is where the Salisbury clock tower now stands).

Contrary to the direction of the judge who said Helliker's body should be interred in a condemned grave within the prison, the shearman collected his body and carried it back to Trowbridge in a very solemn procession. His tomb fell into disrepair and was refurbished in 1876. Each year on the anniversary of the execution (except during the pandemic) the White Horse Trade Unions Council lays a wreath at the site.

At no time did Helliker say who had carried the raid on Littleton Mill, but why not? Several theories have been put forward:

- It was generally thought Helliker would be reprieved and his sentence commuted to a couple of months in prison and he felt he could tolerate that time without incriminating others.
- Members of his family or close friends might have been involved. His elder brother looked similar to him.
- He was a courageous man prepared to forfeit his own life by not implicating others.

On the eve of his execution, Helliker wrote to his family. A copy of the letter is in Trowbridge Museum. In 2010 it was selected as one of 100 objects in the BBC's A History of the World project, organised in partnership with the British Museum. Helliker signed his letter Hilliker and his sister confirmed that it was the correct spelling. I have used Helliker, the name he is commonly known by today and used in the court documentation.

But was Helliker's verdict safe (some of the questions I raise may have answers, but I have not yet found them):

- There is no available evidence as to whether Helliker had a genuine alibi that night or he was among the group at Littleton Mill.
- Did Warren disappear, to reappear in Leeds, because he was afraid for his own safety if he met with Naish or did fellow shearmen believe Warren might break down and incriminate others for what happened at the mill?
- Did Walter, in whose cottage Helliker and Warren spent the night, give evidence? If he did, what did he say and how was it received? If not, why not?

The overwhelming message from the Secretary of State downwards including mill owners, both in Wiltshire and Yorkshire, was that someone must be found guilty and awarded a punishment so severe it would act as a deterrent to others. Did this lead to the outcome?

- Heath was offered a reward of £500 (sufficient to buy three houses) if Helliker was found guilty and it was Heath's evidence that convicted Helliker.
- At the identity parade at which Helliker was picked out, he was the only shearman in the line-up and the only person known to Heath.

- The only evidence with which to convict Helliker was the person Heath supposedly recognised from their buck teeth. Helliker did have buck teeth and Heath knew that before the incident at the mill. Would that have been sufficient evidence to warrant a death sentence or was the pressure to convict somebody overwhelming?
- Heath said Helliker was the second person to enter the watch keeper's cottage but Pearce, who was part of the watch, was also in the cottage, did not say there were two and went onto say that Heath complied with an order to keep looking at the ground immediately to his front and could not therefore recognise anyone in the cottage. Pearce was not called to give evidence.
- The jury coming to a decision in ten minutes. To consider a guilty verdict leading to a death sentence in such a short time was inappropriate unless the judge had given direction to the members. There was conflicting evidence for them to consider and decide upon which should have taken time.

Helliker is now generally considered not guilty of the offence. I am not so sure he wasn't at the mill however the evidence to convict was not beyond reasonable doubt. His execution did mute ongoing protest and machinery was installed. However, the peace did not last for long leading to further militant protest especially in Wiltshire and Yorkshire.

Semington Magpies Match Report

Neil Taylor

The Magpies are currently on a fantastic run. Unbeaten in their last five games and only one defeat in their last ten. Our latest game was against Holt. We picked up a good point in an entertaining 1-1 draw. Joe Whiteman got our goal with a 25 yard free-kick.

We travel to South Newton next week in the League and after that we are on the cup trail with an away match at Bromham in the Wilts Cup. Then we have a home game against Dilton in the League Cup on **11th November 2.00pm** kick-off. We have already knocked out last season runners up FC Devizes.

Thanks again for all the support at our home games.

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Semington WI

Deb Hurn



Strictly Come Dancing arrived at Semington WI on Thursday 12th October. Shirley (one of our members) and Jim her husband demonstrated a waltz, quickstep and the rumba. They then showed a huge amount of patience whilst trying to teach us to do the same. The concentration could be felt all around the hall particularly when it came to the turns, easy when you know how! However, many of us are probably still counting 123,123,123.... A big thank you to Shirley and Jim for a fun enjoyable evening.

Next month on **Thursday 9th November 7.30pm** we will be decorating empty wine bottles ready for the festive season. Please bring an empty wine bottle with you.

We're looking forward to joining in with the Semington Winter Fete and Bonfire Night on **Saturday 4th November** which starts at 4.00pm. We will be selling tea, coffee, hot chocolate and cakes from 4.00pm to 6.00pm. We're looking forward to seeing everyone there.

Melksham Foodbank

Julia Wade - 870137



Thank you everyone for your donations to the Melksham Foodbank. Everything you give is really appreciated as demand is huge. They continue to welcome any in date food items, as well as loo rolls, toiletries, etc. These can be left in the porch of St George's Church by 6pm on Wednesdays. Most local supermarkets also have places you can leave donations too.

You are probably aware that when (not if, sadly) they do not receive enough food donations to meet demand they use money given, to buy what is needed. So, some people have asked how to make a monetary donation. Do check out their website <http://melkshamfoodbank.org.uk> but basically you need to email the Foodbank and ask for their bank details so you can do a BACS transfer. Their email address is melkshamfoodbank@gmail.com If you want to send a cheque please send to the Melksham Foodbank, c/o Melksham Baptist Church, Old Broughton Road, Melksham SN12 8BX. If you want to give cash you could pass it to me at 8 Pound Lane and I will take it in.

Catholic News

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

St John the Baptist – Trowbridge Sunday & Weekday Masses:

Saturdays 6.00pm (Vigil Mass), Sundays 10.30am and 12.00pm

Monday/Wednesday/Friday 9.00am and Tuesday 6.00pm

St Bernadette's – Westbury Mass times are: Sunday 9.00am

A Message from Canon Tom: Dear all, you may have noticed that I have been away a great deal recently from the Parishes. For this I apologise but I have a very good reason for this. Three months ago, my mother Tina was diagnosed with inoperable cancer and is now under end-of-life care. This has been a very difficult time for us, my dad Jim, my sister Rachel and my brother Patrick and our extended family. I know you will keep us all in your prayers over the next few days/weeks. I did want to announce this to you all in person, but this weekend Canon Alan Finlay a retired priest from Weston-Super-Mare is saying all our Masses in whilst I am at our family home in the Forest of Dean.

November Holy Souls: November is a month of Remembrance. We remember those who have died in this last year or further back. We think of those who have died in war and conflict. We also remember loved ones and friends who have died. Holy Souls Envelopes are available for you to place the names of those who you wish to be remembered at Mass during November. Please return to Church and place them in the box provided. You may also place an offering in the envelope if you wish.

Mass for Loved ones and Friends who have died: Each year we have a Mass in November dedicated to loved ones and friends who have died recently and those who died in the past. This will take place on **Tuesday 7th November 6.00pm** St. John's.

Paws for Thought



The Lord is a refuge for the
oppressed, a stronghold in
times of trouble.

It's in the Bible; Psalm 9 Verse 9

Thought from Joy, Associate Priest in Canalside Benefice

Once again we find ourselves entering a season of remembering and remembrance. All Souls Day on 2nd November, is when we remember all those we knew and loved who have died, then we remember the actions of Guy Fawkes and others in the Houses of Parliament, and finally the Acts of Remembrance that surround Armistice Day. The poignancy of these three dates being so close together always strikes me afresh each year.

This year, we cannot ignore the loss of life in wars and conflicts around our planet. Although the war in Ukraine has dropped out of the news, it has not ceased, and more recently we have witnessed the devastating loss of life in Gaza and Israel. At the same time conflicts continue in Sudan, Yemen, Syria, Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan. In all these regions people live with fear of what might happen next, where peace seems a distant memory (that is if they have ever known peace).

Most of us who are alive in our village today have never had to fight in a conflict, nor have we known the terror of a conflict happening around us, and it makes it harder for us to imagine what it must be like for those living in constant fear of the next gunshot or explosion that might change the lives of those we love forever. We may feel helpless in the face of all that is happening in our world, but we can seek reconciliation and peace for ourselves, for our government and ultimately for all those who are suffering at present. The Coventry Litany of Reconciliation was written in response to the effects of the second world war, and it is prayed every weekday in the Cathedral. You may wish to make it your prayer.

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

The hatred, which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class,

Father, forgive.

The covetous desires of people and nations to possess what is not their own,

Father, forgive.

The greed, which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth,

Father, forgive.

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others,

Father, forgive.

Our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee,

Father, forgive.

The lust, which dishonours the bodies of men, women and children,

Father, forgive.

The pride, which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God,

Father, forgive.

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

And I pray that wherever you are and whatever you are doing this November, you may know peace.

Rev. Joy Albone

Until our new Rector is in post the normal service pattern may change. However, a service is held in the Benefice every Sunday, and one is usually recorded and available online. Full details are on our website, address below.



**SERVICES
COMING SOON**



**Sunday
12th
November**

**SEMINGTON'S
SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE**
10.15am at St George's Church in Church
Street followed by the laying of wreaths
at the War Memorial in
the churchyard at 11am.

**Sunday
19th
November**

HOLY COMMUNION
9.15am at St George's Church
in Church Street

Contact Details for The Canalside Parishes:

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

Email: canalsideoffice@gmail.com Benefice website www.canalsidebenefice.org.uk

PCC Secretary/Treasurer - Jack Woodward 01380 870784

Church Warden - David Wildsmith

Associate Priest - Rev Joy Albone 07931 638524 email canalsidecurate@gmail.com

Please contact Joy if you would like a visit from someone from Church.