

Village News

for Bishopstone & Hinton Parva December 2017

Church Services in the Benefice



Sunday	3rd December	8.30am	Holy Communion	Bishopstone
	Sunday of Advent	10.30am	Family Communion	Lyddington
		6.00pm	Evensong	Hinton Parva
Wednesday	6th December	7.00pm	Midweek Communion	Wanborough Vicarage
Sunday	10th December	8.30am	Holy Communion	Lyddington
	2 nd Sunday of Advent	10.30am	Family Communion	Bishopstone
		4.00pm	Christingle	Wanborough
Wednesday	13th December	7.00pm	Midweek Communion	Wanborough Vicarage
Saturday	16th December	10.00am	Christmas church decoration	Lyddington
		4.00pm	Christmas Carols (not a service)	Lyddington
Sunday	17th December	10.30am	Family Communion	Hinton Parva
	3 rd Sunday of Advent	6.00pm	Benefice Carol Service	Wanborough
Wednesday	20th December	7.00pm	Midweek Communion	Wanborough Vicarage
Sunday	24th December	3.00pm	Crib Service	Lyddington
	4 th Sunday of Advent	5.00pm	Christingle Service	Bishopstone
	Christmas Eve	11.30pm	Midnight Mass	Lyddington
		11.30pm	Midnight Mass	Wanborough
Monday	25th December	9.30am	Christmas Family Communion	Wanborough
	Christmas Day	11.00am	Christmas Family Communion	Hinton Parva
Wednesday	27th December		No Midweek Communion	
Sunday	31st December	11.00pm	Watchnight Service	Bishopstone
	Sunday of Advent	10.30am	Family Communion	Lyddington
		6.00pm	Evensong	Hinton Parva
Wednesday	3rd January	7.00pm	Midweek Communion	Wanborough Vicarage
Sunday	7th January	8.30am	Holy Communion	Bishopstone
	1 st Sunday after the Epiphany	10.30am	Family Communion	Lyddington
		4.00pm	Carols & Mince Pies	Hinton Parva Village Hall

Church Wardens' Activities

I bet most of you can't help yourselves and say a little prayer from time to time. Even for those of you who might not admit it publicly. I know that I do and perhaps particularly when things are going badly, I am worried about something or someone, or feel vulnerable. When the worst

happens and there is a tragedy, or we lose a loved one, many of us tend towards the Church for solace, prayer, support and to be together. Conversely, we do the same at moments of joy; like the birth of a baby, an anniversary, or a wedding. But do we stop to consider whether our prayer was an-

swered in some way? If it has been, do we realise it and do we take time to thank whomever we prayed to for making things better? It's so easy to think that, in good times, we don't need anyone else, and only to seek divine help when the chips are down.

(continued page 3)

www.bishopstoneandhintonparva.org for breaking news





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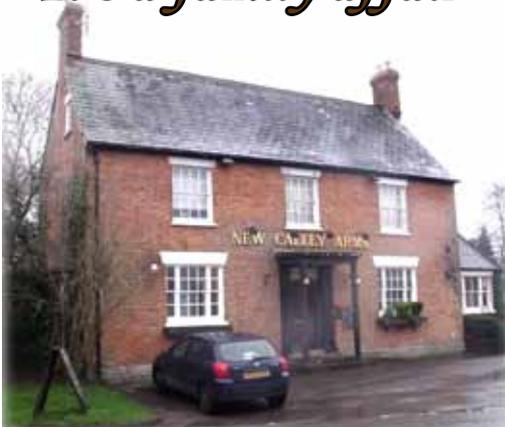
92 Ermin Street
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24 hour service

The New Calley Arms

It's a family affair



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(from front page)

Recently, one of our elderly parishioners had not been seen in Church for a while as she was unable to get there. In one of the services, we said a prayer for her and I noted that she was able to get to the very next service. It worked! What's more, I've noticed that it works so often. Not perhaps in the

way one expected but nevertheless, it works. OMG seems to be the acronym of the moment but it's not a bad one and if we can just go a bit further than OMG we might be amazed.

Tom

PCC Meeting
7.30pm Monday 8th January
Hill Manor House
Hinton Parva

Come and enjoy
the Benefice Carol Service
6.00pm Sunday 17th December

this year is at **St. Andrew's Wanborough**

The Benefice choir extend a very warm invitation to all the people from Bishopstone, Hinton Parva, Lyddington and Wanborough to join us and help us to swell the singing.

As you walk to church listen to Tony's faithful band of bell ringers in the tower, ringing the changes, enticing you in.

Come and listen quietly to the wonderful story of the Nativity. Hear the clear magical sound of the handbells echoing round the church, and joyously sing the lovely Christmas Carols that we all know and love.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if the church was so full, and so great the volume of the voices, that the sound will make the *rafters ring*?

Please come.

Myra

Christmas Open House at the Vicarage
Saturday 9th December

You are very welcome to call in anytime between 7.00pm & 10.00pm
R.S.V.P. to: villagevicar@hotmail.co.uk or
The Vicarage, 19 Church Road, Wanborough, SN4 0BZ

From the Benefice Register

Funeral

St. Swithun's Hinton Parva

20th November

Lesley Wakefield

Cleaning Rota - St. Mary's Church, Bishopstone

2018	December	Fran Shiston & Gill White
	January	Chris Thomas & Gill May
	February	Maggie Gill & Jane Golding
	March	Liz Warwick & Jane Manktelow
	April	Sarah Best & Jenny Isles
	May	Mary Darling & Lisa Fitchett
	June	Lorna Ford & Linda Matthews
	July	Karen Stevens & Sheila Collins
	August	Fran Shiston & Gill White

Many thanks to all those who have helped to keep our church cared for and clean. We always welcome more volunteers on the rota; if you, or anyone you know, might like to join us

Sarah Best 791 121

Prayers

If you have anything that you would like our village prayer group to pray for please contact:

telephone - 790 088

email - villageprayers@gmail.com

Bill

Christmas Handbells

The Wanborough Handbell Ringers will be out and about this Christmas, performing their selection of seasonal tunes and carols. In addition to the Church Carol Service, entertaining patients, visitors and staff at GWH and Prospect Hospice, they will be *Ring-ing around the local pubs* and also performing at Morrisons Supermarket, Dorcan Way. At these latter venues, collections will be made for charity, and the Handbell Group have decided to collect for Prospect this year.

Full details of our performances can be found at:

www.wanboroughringers.org.uk/index.php/handbells/page-4-handbells

Nicky Pullan 01793 790 904

Parish Contacts

The Vicar: the Rev Bill O'Connell
The Vicarage, Church Road,
Wanborough, SN4 0BZ

01793 791 359

villagevicar@hotmail.co.uk

The Churchwardens: St. Mary's

John Lowry 01793 790 271

john1000000@live.com

Doug Stevens 01793 791 107

doug@mowerfixer.co.uk

Alan Taylor 01793 791 666

R2attayloralan@aol.com

The Churchwardens: St. Swithun's

Tom Cripwell 01793 791 148

tomcripwell@gmail.com

Emma Cripwell 01793 791 148

emma@angelpublicity.com

The Acting Secretary:

Alan Taylor - Charlbury Cottage,
Westend, Bishopstone, SN6 8PT

01793 791 666

R2attayloralan@aol.com

List of Other PCC Members:

Karen Stevens (Treasurer)

01793 791 107

kschurchview@gmail.com

Roz Boot 01793 790 508

Sara Hall 01793 791 202

thecourthouse@gmail.com

The Village Hall, Bishopstone - December

The hall is cleaned	Mondays		8.30 - 10.30am
Martial Arts	Mondays	4 th , 11 th & 18 th	5.00 - 7.00pm
Taekwondo	Tuesdays	5 th & 12 th	7.00 - 8.00pm
BADS	Tuesdays	5 th , 12 th , & 19 th	Evenings
BADS	Wednesdays	6 th , 13 th , 20 th & 27 th	Evenings
Mothers & Toddlers	Thursdays	7 th & 14 th	9.30 - 11.00am
School	Thursdays	7 th & 14 th	3.15 - 4.15pm
WI	Thursday	14 th	4.00 - 9.30pm

Daily School Dinners (not holidays) Subject to bookings 11.45 - 1.00pm

All bookings for the Village Hall Bishopstone will be taken via Bishopstone CE Primary School. In term time, call 01793 790 521 and speak to Sue Tremlin, or leave a message on the answer phone. During school holidays there will be a message giving an alternative number to contact. We look forward to receiving your bookings for Bishopstone's excellent Village Hall. Cost for hiring the hall: £7.50 per hour for Bishopstone and Hinton Parva residents. £11 per hour for all other bookings. Cost for hiring the hall for a full day is £55.

At <http://bishopstoneandhintonparva.org/bishopstonevillagehall/> you can find a link to more helpful information about the Hall and the terms and conditions of hire.

Hinton Parva Village Hall - December

Bridge	Friday	1 st , 8 th , 15 th & 22 nd	7.00 - 10.00pm
Private Booking	Friday	1 st	9.00 - 5.00pm
Private Booking	Saturday	2 nd	10.00 - 5.00pm

The most pretty Hall around, and free parking .

Bookings Secretary Janet 791 391- Please leave a message if required

£6.00 per hour for residents of Bishopstone & Hinton Parva

£8.00 per hour for those living outside the parish

Private Parties
Meetings etc welcome

Catering may be available
Free Parking

Hinton Parva Village Hall annual VILLAGE SUPPER

Saturday 27th January
2018

Raise the Roof

Tickets £12 in advance
Book by 'phone on 791 171

Community Connect

Wanborough Farmers' Market

Community Connect is pleased to report that, at the Farmers Market in September, £190.47 was raised for the Wiltshire Air Ambulance. This gift has been allocated to the *Air Base Appeal*, the new site which is currently being developed for the air ambulance and its support staff at Semington, near Melksham. We would like to thank all who came and who gave so generously for this much needed facility.

The charity of the month at the December Farmers' market will be the *Brighter Future Radiotherapy Appeal*. This local charity is seeking to raise £2.9 million from public subscription for a radiotherapy unit to

be built at the Great Western Hospital, Swindon. At present, cancer patients have to travel to Oxford, Bath or Cheltenham to receive their treatment. A radiotherapy unit in Swindon will bring the availability of cancer treatment closer to patients' homes; however, this can only happen if local people support this appeal.

Please join us, enjoy FREE coffee/tea and delicious home-made refreshments, stay for a chat, and support our charities

For further information:

Telephone: 790 355 or 791 140.

Wanborough's Farmers' Market

9.00am - Noon

Saturday 16th December

Wanborough Village Hall

High Street

Lower Wanborough

A wide range of produce is available and you can also have refreshments courtesy of the

Wanborough Community Cafe

For more information contact:

Sue or David Birley:

01793 790 438 sbirley@gn.apc.org

The Village Hall, Bishopstone Annual General Meeting

Monday, 4th December, at 6.30 pm

Bishopstone School

Please come and join us and share your ideas - and ours - for events and activities that we can all enjoy in our newly equipped and refurbished hall. We have this great facility - let's get people together to make the most of it! All welcome.

A New Broom

What a wonderful surprise! Karen, Phil and I were cleaning St Mary's church hall last Saturday when we came across a box that no-one had opened. Indeed no-one knew anything about it. It was a mystery!

I remembered contacting Dyson before the local fete, way back in the spring. The outcome of which was, whilst Alfresco Childcare was successful, my own efforts to secure a Dyson vacuum cleaner for a raffle prize were

not. I can only assume from the faded address label on the box that Susan left it in St Mary's church for us and went without mentioning it. This is so very kind of her. Thank you so much.

Phil put it together and it works a treat; it will make the vacuuming much easier for the team of cleaners. Anyone with a spare broom to donate to St Mary's church? We desperately needed one last Saturday to sweep up the leaves which had blown inside.

Sheila

Dickie's Diary

This time of the year I am out and about covering a lot of country. In the past week I have been privileged to be asked to shoot standing in picturesque valleys in both the Cotswolds and Chilterns. I am usually accompanied by my black lady companion but my four legged shadow is off games just now with eleven stitches in her chest and a lampshade round her head to deter licking the wound. This autumn the crops have emerged well, better than last year when

slugs and flea beetle damage were more of a problem. Our cattle are now housed, tucking into silage, but keeping them clean will not be so easy this year with the bedding straw so brittle after the August storms that it breaks up too easily.

This year many French vineyards are harvesting one of the smallest yields of grapes on record, but here we did not have those damaging frosts and in this season of mellow fruitfulness, fruit has been abundant. I am also struck this year by the brilliant vibrancy of our red berried shrubs. As someone who often starts the day with a well known brand of cereal with red berries for breakfast, these fruits in our hedges and gardens really add colour to a dull December day. Many shrubs profit, like apples, from having both genders in proximity and we must teach our children that most colourful red berries are poisonous.

In our hedgerows, fieldfares and redwings are clearing the hawthorn haws. Beneath these bushes you can spot the vivid necklaces of bryony and

woody nightshade. You will also find spindleberries. I have planted a good number in new hedges; they are one of my favourites with the orange pip now breaking out. Unfortunately they play host to overwintering aphids. Also to be found is the guelder rose which is a variety of vibernum with red berries. I get a buzz near Christmas from harvesting plenty of berried holly on the downs, from bushes I planted over twenty years ago. Growing up, we had none in the Vale but farming relations in West Dorset used to send us a box through the post, and we used to reciprocate with a brace of pheasants, posted unwrapped just with an address label round their neck! Those were the days; but, seriously, let me know if you would like to be given game in the feather and I will see to it. Whitebeam and Rowan trees also sport red fruits. And our gardens are now showing brightly with the vivid crimson varieties of cotoneaster and pyracantha, often as a hedge or against a wall.

07788 727 811 rwgreen42@gmail.com



Rainbow
Baby and Toddler Group

Bishopstone Village Hall
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9.30 - 11.00am
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A stay and play session for families with children under 5. Join us for free play, art activities, snacks and singing. A great way to meet new friends.

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Letters to the Editor

Les Wakefield

We were amazed to hear from a lady in Wanborough at the Farmers Market that dear old Les had died and hadn't heard a *dickie bird* about it. I saw a few cars outside the Church that Friday when I was cleaning our car. Having a great affection for him we would have gone to his funeral.

He was of *the old school* and an old-fashioned country gentleman who had lived in our village for many, many years. We loved his eggs, enjoyed his weekly calls and are left with some good memories of him and his sense of humour.

Our condolences go to Pat.

Hazel and Peter Cooke

We always appreciate your taking time to contact us, if you have any articles to include, compliments or criticisms you can reach us on:

Editor, contact details page 14 or Sheila Collins

admin2.collins@icloud.com

Fiona McAnespie

1 Little Hinton Farm Cottages, Hinton. mcanespief@gmail.com

Please note that names and contact details must accompany these letters, but, of course, we will not publish your details unless requested to do so.

Womens Institute

- Inspiring Women

Our Christmas celebration evening will be held on:

Thursday 9th December,

7.00pm, Bishopstone Village hall

Hot supper and puddings for all!

Looking ahead to January, we have speaker Andy Binks giving us a **Swindon History in Photos** at **Hinton Parva village hall, 7.00pm**. Andy chairs the Swindon Society devoted to the preservation of the town's history through photographs, films, memorabilia and advertising material, chronicling what has changed and what has evolved.

Your local WI has members from the villages of Ashbury, Bishopstone, Hinton Parva, Wanborough and Liddington, and we always welcome new members.

Our monthly meeting takes place on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7.30 - 9.30pm in either Bishopstone or Hinton Parva village halls, and we have groups which also meet outside of our monthly meeting, e.g. reading, art study and organised trips for members and their friends.

Come along to one of our meetings to see if you like it - no obligation to join unless you want to!

Please contact me if you would like any further information.

Patricia Wells 01793 790 054

School report -

As the season moves from  Autumn to Winter, the school year follows suit. Harvest was celebrated in church with a fairly lengthy service, but the children were keen to share, from poems to songs, an interview with the local farming community (thank you Prebendal for hosting yr2), alongside KS2 who factored in a lot of maths to work out how a *ripple* of kindness would spread if everyone did a random act of a kindness a day.

Prefects are now in place showcasing the school's Christian Values (compassion this term) alongside the School Council (Pudsey bear planning in place and complete) and, finally, our Worship Council who work alongside Rev'd Bill (keeping their eyes on how he leads a service then marking this *Strictly style!*). On a more serious note, we continue to strengthen the bonds of the school with both the Church and local community. We are delighted to have Mrs R back in with us working on a *patchwork piece* with our oldest children, and last week saw *bring your parents to school*. A lovely trip to study *rivers around the world* at Wichelstowe, followed by a trip to see *The Two Steves* - two famous authors at Ridgeway Secondary, taking part in the Literacy Festival. The whole school then visited the much hidden Swindon Hindu Temple; the warmest of welcomes, information and delicious snacks were provided.

Miss Pearson is already dusting off the decorations in preparation for the KS1 traditional advent play with our youngest children . . . so to end

. . . wishing you a Happy Christmas and New Year (am I really writing that in November!!!)

Emma Linsay

Swindon Choral Society

A group of children from Bishopstone Primary School will be joining us for their:

Family Christmas Concert

5.00 pm, Saturday 9th December

Christ Church, Swindon

Swindon Choral Society are coming up to their 90th Anniversary and are really looking forward to the children joining them for this event.

Tickets are available from: Swindon Library, Bishopstone School or members of the choir. Online tickets can be purchased at www.swindonchoral.org.uk. Tickets will also be available on the door.

Carol Sarchet

The Marlborough Concert Orchestra

Winter Performance

7.30pm Saturday 2nd December

St Mary's Church, Marlborough

(London end of the High Street)

The programme includes:

Mozart's Overture to the Marriage of Figaro; Schubert's 3rd symphony, also excerpts from Verdi operas and Bizet's Carmen.

Tickets £10 (£2 students), available from Sound Knowledge or on the door. There will be a licensed bar and raffle.

See mco.org.uk

Highworth Choral Society

Christmas Concert

Saturday 9th December

St Michael's Church

Lechlade Road, Highworth

Doors Open 7.00pm

Performance 7.30pm

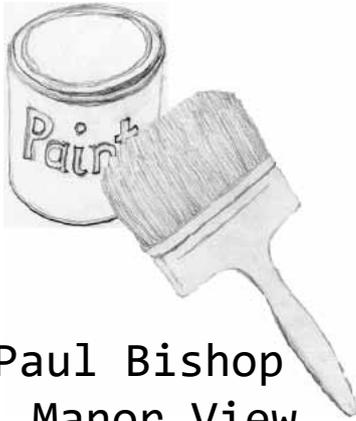
Our programme includes Bob Chilcott's *A Little Jazz Mass* - all the features of a traditional mass with a jazz and blues feel - it's superb!

We also have Alan Bullard's quirky *A Feast for Christmas* and a rendition of Rudolf the Red Nosed Reindeer like you've never heard before.

Traditional carols to kick start the Christmas season.

Tickets £10 from the Light-house Bookshop in Highworth or contact Cheryl on 791 849.

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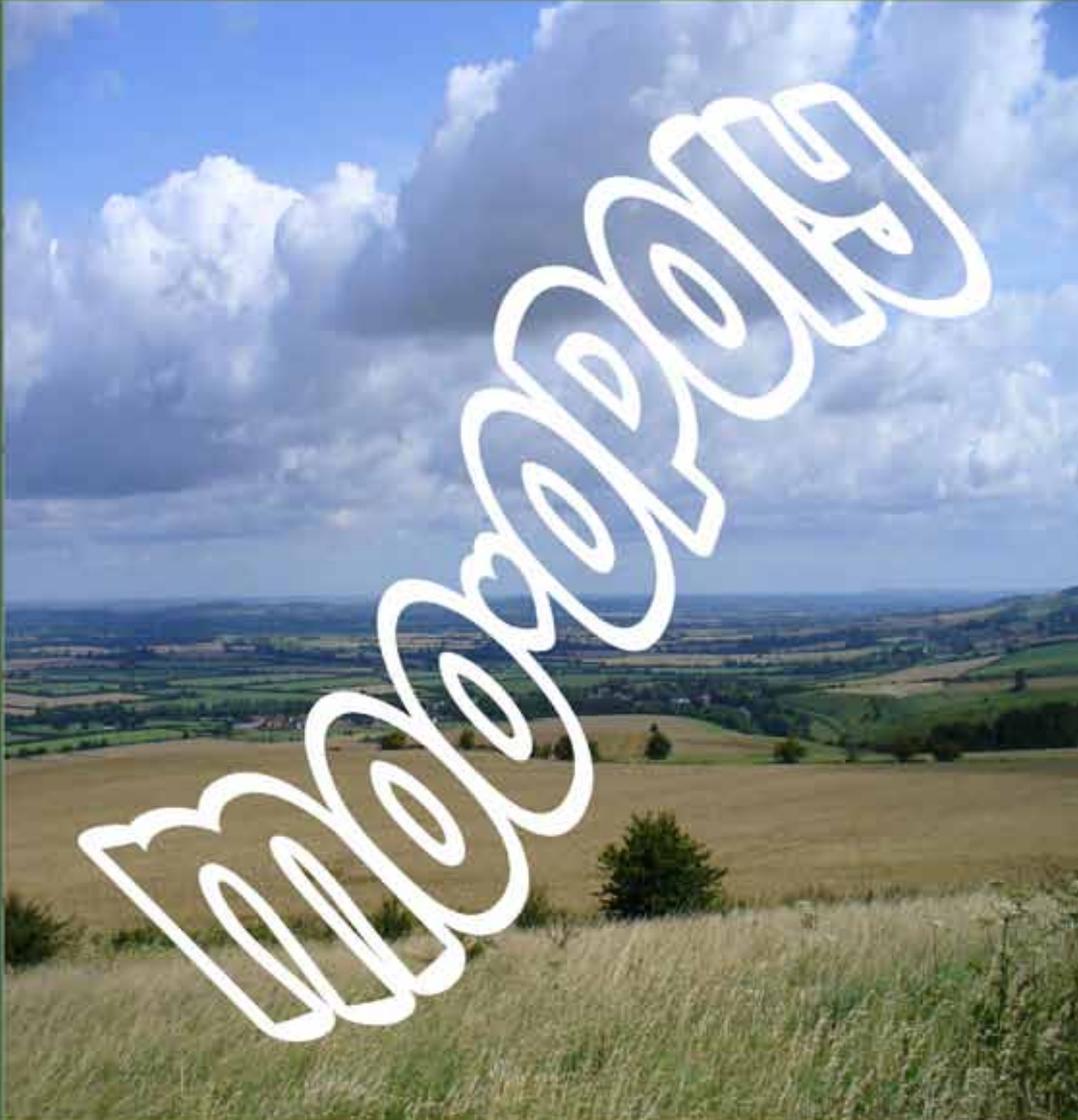
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 <p>East- brook Farm £200</p>		 <p>Royal Oak £200</p>	 <p>Cues Lane £150</p>	 <p>Chance</p>	 <p>High Street £150</p>	
<p>In Swinden</p>		<p>Prebendal Farm £200</p> 	<p>Bishops- tone Village Hall £250</p> 	<p>Chance</p> 	<p>St. Mary's Church £250</p> 	<p>The Wyncie £150</p> 

MOO-OPOLY

If you are bored over Christmas, here is our little pressie to you, something to entertain the family.

Any similarity between this and other board games are completely coincidental, so use the game rules your family prefer, like Mornington Crescent (country rules). You can also borrow counters, dice and any other props from said games. To distract pesky children, get them to draw property deeds; if you haven't got counterfeit money, using the real thing would pep up proceedings. We do not appreciate people building lots of houses, but when you've amassed your complete property portfolio (the properties with the same symbol) you can buy beehives, when you have four beehives you can then erect a chicken coop. See below for rents and price of hives and coops.

If you land on Chance, pick a number from a hat - again, those pesky children may be useful in writing the numbers on several small pieces of paper and supplying hats. Alternative methods include Googling *random number generator* on a mobile phone, or using raffle tickets. Once you have a number, follow the appropriate instructions below:

Chance

- 1 You have successfully applied for an education bursary, collect £100
- 2 It's raining. Shelter in the telephone box, miss a go
- 3 Annual subscription to watching moo-vies at the village hall, pay £25
- 4 You have repairs to your beehives, pay £20 per beehive
- 5 You have won the first prize in the 100s club, collect £25
- 6 You have won the first prize in the fête raffle, collect £100
- 8 Go to Swindon, do not pass go, do not collect £200
- 9 Get out of Swindon free
- 10 It's your birthday, pay £50 for a round of drinks
- 11 Go back to Cues Lane
- 12 Go to Wanborough to buy milk - miss a go
- 13 Win at pig racing £150
- 14 Go to City Corner
- 15 Have a stall at the Christmas Craft Fair, collect £80
- 16 Take out a colour ad in the newsletter, pay £100
- 17 Gardening Society subs due, pay £5
- 18 Church roof needs repair, donate £50
- 19 You find a gold coin on your land for which you receive £500
- 20 You win a voucher for a meal at the Royal Oak, collect £50
- 21 Your chickens need to go to the vets, pay £100 per coop
- 22 Buy tickets for BADS production - pay £10
- 23 Road blocked by cows - miss a go
- 24 Caught speeding through the village - pay £100 fine
- 25 It's the annual Hinton village supper, pay £10

Rents:

£150 properties £15 (basic rent) £60 (with 1 beehive) £180 (with 2 beehives) £500 (With 3 beehives) £700 (with 4 beehives) £900 (with a coop)
 £200 properties £16 (basic rent etc etc etc) £80 £220 £600 £800 £1,000
 £250 properties £25 (if only one property is owned) £50 (with two properties etc etc etc) £100 £200

Don't forget to double the rent if you own all properties in a set. You can't build hives or coops on the £250 properties (after all, bees and chickens are generally not welcomed in churches or village halls. . .)

Price of hives £100 each. Price of coops £200 each

Or you could make the whole game up yourselves.

Bishopstone Gardening Society

On the 8th November, we held our AGM and combined it with an American Supper, plus a garden-themed Quiz, (just to keep everyone on their toes). My favourite question was the anagram: O! Mad sewage – I'll leave it to you to work out. Many thanks to all for contributing such delicious homemade food. It was a tough culinary decision but we've decided to pick Susan's savoury scone recipe to send to Richard Walker for inclusion in the Bishopstone Recipe Book.

We have a full schedule planned for 2018, and there will be at least three visits throughout the year organised by Sarah Bally. We will keep you posted of all events and any venue changes nearer the date.

Dates for your 2018 diaries:

Friday 9th February

Our popular **Quiz Night & Chili con Carne Supper**. Ticket only. (Not a quiz about plants.) Supper included. Please bring your own favourite drinks.

Wednesday 14th March

Slide show & talk by John Farrow:

The Wilts & Berks Canal restoration
Wednesday 11th April

Jamie, Bampton Garden Plants:

What to prune in April. (Pruning demo and plants to sell)

Wednesday 9th May

Andrew Tolman presents a slide show and talk on: **Stumperies, Ferns & Shady Friends**. (Plants and tools to sell)

Saturday 12th May, 8:00am - midday.

Annual Plant Sale

Wed 13th June

Lynda Warren will talk to us about: **A Spoonful of Herbs**. (Free recipe sheet and products to try on the night)

Wednesday 11th July

Peter Biggs: Hint & tips from a flower show judge. (Perennials to sell)

No booking for August

Saturday 8th September

8:00am – 5:00pm

Annual Village Produce Show

Wednesday 10th October

Oxford ecologist, author, photographer and public speaker **Hugh Warwick**,

is going to tell us: **Eleven Things you can do to help hedgehogs**

Unless otherwise stated, we meet every second Wednesday of the month at Bishopstone Village Hall, 7.00pm for 7.30pm start. Raffle/Tea/coffee/biscuits. Visitors always welcome: £2 per person on the door. Annual subscription of £5 per person will be due when we next get together in February 2018. You can contact Sheila or Sarah at:

banddgardeningsoc@gmail.com

Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year from B&D Gardening Society.

A Day in the Life of a Small Builder - 12 *Sheila*

I tried to write my usual piece, but found it impossible and here's why.

A year after leaving London and coming to live in beautiful Wiltshire, I managed to persuade Emma to let me/us get a dog, which was very good of her since our twin girls were just one year old and I was working in London every week-day.

My parents happened to have a litter of eight from their fourth Springer Spaniel, Kipper. Having grown up with spaniels from the age of just six weeks, this was my first choice of breed.

And so it was that, back in Jan/Feb. 2003, we had the pick of the litter, Apollo (who we renamed Pickle). The hills and woods nearby were great for walking, and I took him out briefly every morning before work. He was taken swimming by my sister at some stage and loved the water from that point on.

He guarded Emma and the girls fiercely but was gentle, brave, kind and fun. The sense of smell that a Spaniel has is second to none, hence their use as sniffer dogs, and his was exceptional. They are bred as beating dogs and invaluable on a shoot where the birds need flushing out of thick undergrowth. But, on a peg, he was a nightmare and seldom lasted beyond the first drive before being returned to the car in disgrace. He whined and barked,

slipped his collar, yanked the lead, broke the ground screw holding him and tore around in sheer excitement all to our acute embarrassment. If you want a retriever, get a Labrador, not a spaniel. Every February, I join friends on a boy's walk somewhere in the UK to climb a mountain or two. Pickle must have been with us for the last ten years, at least, walking probably twenty times the distance we covered. He loved it and fitted in with ease.

On one occasion, while I was decorating a house, he managed to put his back leg into a full pot of emulsion paint, prompting a sharp Stay! from me before he had the chance to trot around the house.

Pickle loved people and a party, insisting on lying on his back in the middle of the guests, wagging his tail and waiting to have his tummy tickled and showing off his bits. Chasing rabbits was also one of his top sports and in his prime his tally was around thirty in a year. Another trick was to jump into our bed and lie completely still under the duvet pretending he wasn't there at all.

On 1st December 2017, he would have been 15 years old, or 105 in dog years. But he was having fits more and would often collapse. I was anxious not to wait too long as I have seen so many owners do, and we realised that the time had come. Because he hated going to the Vet, I asked them to come to him and he was peacefully put to sleep on the lawn at home on a lovely sunny day. Emma and I buried him under a tree and cried many times before, during and since. Not for him, as he had such a long and happy life, but because we miss him.

I still look and wait for him when we go for a walk, or think of him when I pass his grave, or when I feed the other two. It will never be quite the same with him gone. What is it about dogs and how we get so attached to them? My brother and I agreed that it was easier to bury my grandmother than losing a dog. Pickle was amazing, a king among dogs, as someone else described him

Tom Cripwell

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The Royal Oak Diary

I write in a slightly valedictory tone, since my lawyers Sue Gabbit and Runne have been put on standby in case The Bottleman Support Trust, based in rustic but litigious Hinton Parva, decide to take the case of alleged libel to a higher court. Well, I have to say, let's hope we're out of the EU by then, because the idea of facing up to their Court of Human Rights—I mean, everyone has a right to dump their bottles anywhere they want—is akin to being harassed by a dead sheep. I am surprised by this threatened turn of events, since so many people in this parish complain to me when I DON'T write about the bottleman. They love this saga of everyday country folk. Mr Manktelow for one. He always asks if there's any news, between issues. Now you mention it, we haven't had a bag of bottles dumped here for a few weeks. I wonder if the doctor has sorted him out?

Anyway, with all the shenanigans above, and the various other threats hanging over the village Newsletter, from the editor downwards, it might well be the last column detailing the comings and goings from HB's Royal Oak. My legal funds will be exhausted very easily. And since we pay the princely sum of £100 per year to allow

this column its space, the village will be poorer without it. But it might struggle on. There's litigation being threatened in several unlikely nooks and corners, by the way. I think there might be some personal animosity lurking behind some of this, which of course I fully understand. But lawyers, don't make me laugh. I'm thinking of mounting an anti Trump, anti Brexit march in Hinton Parva, on Christmas Day, starting near the church.

The pub—ah yes, just served 100 for lunch, miraculously. Some idea of our Christmas plans, for those of you interested. Normal, normal, normal, right up to midnight on Christmas Eve; then breakfast for hotel guests Xmas Day; drinks with the landlord—always very popular—from 11.30-2.00pm, where he displays all his pent up largesse. Closed for the rest of the day unless you're staying with us. Boxing Day, always a big lunch party; then normal through to New Year, on a Sunday evening. Low key as ever, but warm and welcoming. Open all day, food--busy lunch, I suspect; simple Sunday night menu; make your

own entertainment, or use us to re-fuel; might have some games, and some music from the vinyl, and anyone caught looking at their watches before midnight will be asked to leave! New Year's Day is more of a party, and we'll probably take a farm tour in the morning to clear the heads. Lunch will be busy but we like looking after you. Sexual harassment of course remains a topic close to our hearts here within the pub business, where people, staff and customers, are regularly touching each other in inappropriate and always accidental ways. Several up-standing men in the village have written to me seeking advice, but I am unable to dispense it since I am currently being gagged by several of my staff. Pip pip.

TF

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Exhausted of Hinton Parva



Christmas is undoubtedly on its way. I know this because my daughter has started giving me good ideas for presents; all credit to her, they are ideas for presents for other people, not for herself. Perhaps she thinks I've reached the stage where I'll wake on Christmas morning realising I've forgotten someone; perhaps she wants to spare herself complaints from her Dearly Beloved. I suspect he's still muttering darkly about the unique birthday present of a trip to Brickworld that I thought he, as a Lego model enthusiast, would enjoy. In my defence, the website didn't make it clear that it was aimed at the under 10s. . .

Anyway, the suggestion of *The Nightmare Before Christmas* Monopoly for my second daughter piqued my interest, once I'd established that it was based on the film of the same name, rather than being a description of my disorganised panic in the run-up to the festivities. I'd noticed the trend for place-specific games, but hadn't realised that the trend had spread to films.

(In case you're worrying that I'm in danger of spoiling my daughter's Christmas surprise, you can relax; in common with previously mentioned manufacturers of breakfast cereal and my not-so-speedy treadmill friend, Second Daughter doesn't read the Village News. In fact, of all my far-flung friends only one has ever asked to read the random thoughts of a Mantelpiece. I suspect that this is the mark of a true friend . . . Or insanity.)

While musing on the difficulty caused by too much choice, I recalled the joy that a simple game can offer. Many

years ago, I worked for a boss (let's call him Cliff) who had two distinguishing features. The first was that his handwriting was more legible upside down than the right way up. The second was that nothing was ever quite right for him, and this was never more painfully demonstrated than in his quest for the The Ultimate Spreadsheet. I would meet with Cliff, and he would explain his latest ideas. I would pass these

to the long-suffering Becky, whose job it was to turn his genius into reality. After about twenty attempts at creating spreadsheet nirvana, I had to use chocolate to tempt her out from under her desk when Cliff had a new idea. Eventually, I resorted to the *Neighbours* card game; she was a great fan of the programme, and when rows and columns got just too much for her I'd declare a five minute *Neighbours* break. They were all that stood between Becky and spreadsheet meltdown, and they were fun.

So what, I thought, could be more enjoyable at Christmas than playing not just a game, but a game with a local theme. Hence the birth of Moo-opoly. We hope it raises a smile or two when you've reached mince pie and chocolate saturation level, the presents have all been ooh-ed over (and those which didn't inspire oohs have been set aside for future local raffle prizes), and there's nothing on the telly. And if you reach this point, do take a picture and send it in to us. To get the ball rolling, here's a picture of the inaugural game of local Moo-opoly (*top left*). Two bits of advice: build lots of hives, and refuse to play with Sheila. For someone who claimed to be *rubbish at board games* she took the rest of the editorial team to the cleaners.

Mrs Mantelpiece

And Almost Finally.....

This month's issue ends my ninth year as editor. If I survive to January 2018 it will be ten years since Robin Cardwell inveigled me into the job, he promised to give me full



editorial control and he would back all my decisions. *Not on your life*, I replied, *I haven't got time and I don't know the first thing about journalism*. However, my first born prompted, *Go on, and make it your own*. I couldn't resist the challenge, and here we are.

Thought for the month: As I watch my cats wake up, they yawn, stretch, jump off the bed and get on with their day, I ponder, wouldn't it be great to have one's own fur coat? Not to have to bother getting dressed? Not to bother even having to buy clothes? Think of the money it would save, and it wouldn't matter at all if you put on or lost weight. I'd opt to be a beautifully marked tabby. Not sure that I'd like a tail though.

The editorial team and I wish you all the happiest of Christmases.

mogs XXX

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