

# HighworthLINK

HIGHWORTH'S COMMUNITY MAGAZINE BROUGHT TO YOU WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE CHURCHES OF HIGHWORTH



February 2021





Highworth Churches Together are four churches united through friendship, faith and a desire to support and bless our community.

# Looking for a church in Highworth?

## Highworth United Reformed Church

High Street SN6 7AG

*'We are a Christian church of faithful people, searching for God's guidance, trying to follow the way of Jesus. We are here for you.'*

**Meets Sundays, 10:45am**

bryanellk90@gmail.com  
www.highworthurc.org.uk

## Highworth Methodist Church

Vicarage Lane SN6 7DG

*'Our mission is to love, worship and serve God, whilst individually we aim to know Him and make Him known.'*

**Meets Sundays, 10:30am and 6pm**

highworthmethodistchurch@gmail.com  
www.highworthmethodistchurch.org.uk

## St Michael's Parish Church

Vicarage Lane SN6 7DG

*'A vibrant Anglican church with a passion to help people on their faith journey.'*

**Meets Sundays, 8am and 10:15am**

office@stmichaelshighworth.co.uk  
www.stmichaelshighworth.co.uk

## Highworth Community Church

Warneford School, Shrivenham Road  
SN6 7BZ

*'We love to be together, laugh and learn together, and serve together. We are a church with a life full of God and a heart reaching out to people.'*

**Meets Sundays, 10:15am**

admin@highworthchurch.co.uk  
www.highworthcommunitychurch.org

## A message from Highworth Churches Together

**Highworth Churches Together, (who are the publishers of Link) and the Link management team have reluctantly taken the decision that the magazine will not be published again until May.**

In the light of the recently issued Government restrictions, direct delivery of Link to homes has once again been judged to be unsafe. Last year, in the previous periods of lockdown Link was, wherever possible, published online or printed and placed in central locations in the community. However, while this was well received, advertising revenue could not be collected as the magazine was not distributed directly to homes and businesses. So the decision not to publish during the national lockdown has been taken to protect the long-term viability of Link.

The publishing team deserve huge thanks for all their efforts last year to continue with production of the magazine in its various forms. Please be assured that Link will return as soon as it is judged safe and prudent to do so.

*Highworth Churches Together and the Link team*

*January 7th 2021*

## To all of our valued advertisers

We would like to thank you for all your continued support through these uncertain times.

I would also like to assure you that your advertising will be adjusted as per last year for any issues that we are not able to produce.

*Thank you for your understanding*

*Debbie Hodgson*

*Cover: Scouts volunteering at Badbury Clump, spreading wood chippings around the children's wild play area. (see page 9)*

## LINK magazine

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Highworth Link is published monthly except in January and August.

Opinions expressed or implied in any contributions are not necessarily those of the editor or management committee.

No responsibility can be accepted for any error of fact in the magazine or website. Please inform the editor of any errors so they can be rectified.

### **Contributions:**

May be published in the magazine and/or the web. Make clear any limitations you have about what, how and when we may publish your contribution.

Email is preferred; otherwise deliver to The Lighthouse Bookshop.

Make sure you are writing for a general audience, not just your own organisation.

News stories should not exceed 150 words. If it's too long we will ask you to cut it. Articles may be longer but get in touch first to save the annoyance of a rejection. Photographs and advertising artwork should be clear, with good contrast. JPEG electronic format is preferred but we can scan from good quality prints. Make sure any people in photos agree that the photo can be published in the magazine and web. Get parent's consent in the case of minors.

We reserve the right to edit contributions and to not publish any contribution or advertisement that is either unsuitable for our format or is inconsistent with our editorial policy.

### **Deadlines:**

1st of the month before publication – news, articles, advertising, what's on and letters.

## Christmas Lights Switch-On

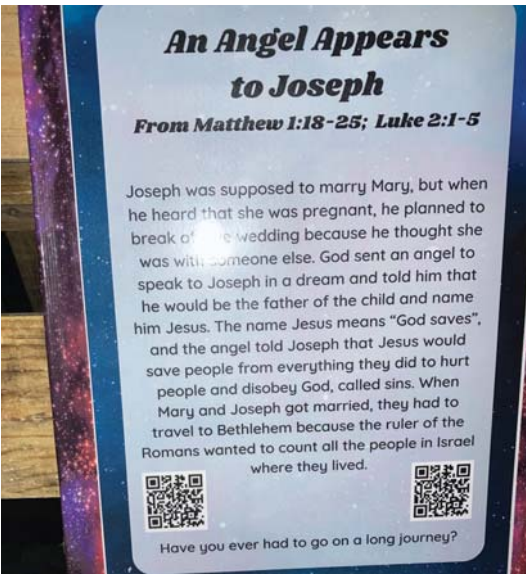
Mayor Richard Williams livestreamed this year's Lights Switch-On in an almost empty market square at the end of November.

It had been hoped that the Lights Switch-On and Christmas fayre could take place this year, but the November lockdown put paid to that idea. You can watch the Mayor's Christmas address and seasonal messages from a selection of Highworth Town Councillors at <http://bit.ly/3rRFjs7>



## Nativity Trail

Various houses in Highworth hosted a nativity trail from the 12th-19th December. Starting at Highworth Methodist Church, each of the 10 stops had a decorated window or garden and a board with a code that linked to a video telling the story of the nativity through the eyes of each of the nativity characters.



## Father Christmas

Santa sent a message on facebook from his North Pole home, apologising for his absence at this year's Light Switch-On and reassuring the children of Highworth that he had received the COVID-19 jab and would be visiting their homes with lots of presents on Christmas Eve.





## Hope for Highworth Carol Service



**On the 20th December, with the usual carol service unable to take place in the market square, Highworth Churches Together live-streamed from St Michael's Church.**

The hour-long service was led by Highworth Community Church Leader Matt Ford and St Michael's Church's Assistant Curate Revd Emily Swinerd. Matt used a quote from the Shawshank Redemption 'Fear can hold you prisoner. Hope can set you free' to introduce Hope as the main theme for the night and spoke about our great need for hope at this dark time. Children from Southfields and Westrop then shared their 'Hopes for Christmas'.

The pre-recorded videos took the action out into Highworth itself, with the Market Square, Warneford and Highworth Cemetery all recognisable in the background. Thanks was given to the Mutual Aid Community Group and the Swindon Food Hub for all they have done and are still doing and Kathryn Ford gave an update on CAP's work this year.

Nine year old Austin Hillcoat from Westrop sang a very moving solo of 'Silent Night' in St Michael's Church, a reminder of Christmas Eve 1914 when the German and British troops put aside the devastation to come together and exchange gifts and play football with the enemy they had been trying to kill mere hours before.

Each of the three hymns were accompanied by a range of musicians: violin, guitar and keyboard and for the last song, 'Joy to the World', a montage of over 50 members from all four Churches were pictured singing along in their homes.

Finally, Matt and Emily reminded us that Advent is the season to talk about all the things that have gone wrong this year and to light candles to help us see and find our way forward.

The carol service has already received over 1200 views and is available to watch on YouTube at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9oikCwn9Es](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9oikCwn9Es)

*Photo: Austin Hillcoat*

## Christmas Advent Window Trail

24 houses around Highworth decorated and illuminated one of their windows on a Christmas theme. Some even added music to help bring their window alive. A new window was revealed each night of December and then residents were asked to vote on their favourite window. The most votes went to Window 10. Windows 18, 2, 7 and 4 were also highly commended.

Organisers Elaine Graham and Lesley Muir said: "I think everyone would agree that every single window delighted trailers with their creativity and effort. A massive thanks to all who displayed a window, followed the trail and voted for their favourite". Let's hope we see the window trail return next year.



## High Street Sheep Trail



Sheep appeared in many of the windows on the High Street this Christmas. When the initials of each sheep were collected and rearranged a message was revealed. The sheep were returned to St Michael's Church in time for their Christmas Eve Crib service, which this year took place in the Churchyard and included sweets for the kids and hot chocolate for all.

## Team Kotcha Christmas Trail

Team Kotcha dance fitness created a Christmas Trail to get us out and about. They hid 16 festive photos around the town for people to find.



## Highworth Light Up and Care for Christmas Project

A new Facebook group was set up in December. Its aim was to provide a gift and/or Christmas lunch to those who were alone this Christmas or who were vulnerable or struggling. It is hoped that this will become an annual tradition so please check out their Facebook page and join the group ready for next year.



# Updates from Highworth Pre-School from COVID to Christmas

2020 was a tough year for so many and at Highworth Pre-School we want to thank the staff team and families for all the support in making it a safe place for our little ones.

A detailed risk assessment and cleaning routine put a lot of pressure back onto the staff team and we will continue to work in our small bubbles to make it a safe environment for as long as needed.

We all celebrated Christmas with a difference but the Elf still visited the children. We had lots of festive fun at parties and parents have been overwhelmed with the crafty gifts that the children took home. "You have all put a lot of effort into making this Christmas special for the children and it's much appreciated".

## Christmas Fayre in a Cup at Highworth Pre-School

Sadly, we had no Christmas fundraising event this year so we had the perfect solution with our Christmas Fayre in a Cup. Each Highworth Pre-School Christmas Cup contained: a Christmas Knitted Character, Christmas Tattoo, Reindeer Food, Candy Cane, Snowman Soup and Snowman Lolly Stick Craft activity. The children loved them and some were even delivered by the Elf off the Shelf!



Christmas Fayre in a Cup

## Making a 'Merry Christmask!' at Highworth Pre-School

We raised just over £150 from masks made by our talented Mrs Anne Clarke, helping to keep us all safe whilst raising funds for the children of Highworth Pre-School.

Thank you Mrs Clarke

## Highworth Pre-School will be planning drop-in sessions in the coming months:

- Is your child 2 or 3 during the next school year?
- Flexible Sessions for children from 2 years old from 8am to 6pm

## A review from a parent:

*"We have spent pretty much 24/7 with each other for the last year due to lockdown. I was so anxious about being apart from her but seeing how she strolls in every morning without a backwards glance shouting "See you later" just goes to show how amazing you ladies all are".*

Please call or email to register your interest on T: 766646, E: [hwpreschool@aol.com](mailto:hwpreschool@aol.com), W: [www.highworthpreschool.co.uk](http://www.highworthpreschool.co.uk).

We are located at Newburgh Place, Highworth, SN6 7DN, on the path next to Westrop Surgery through the Yellow Gate.





## Scouts Defibrillator Challenge

Back in 2018 I challenged the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts of 1st Highworth to raise funds for us to purchase and install a Community Defibrillator to be placed at our Scout HQ in Eastrop.

The challenge was set and the Scout Group's sections responded brilliantly.

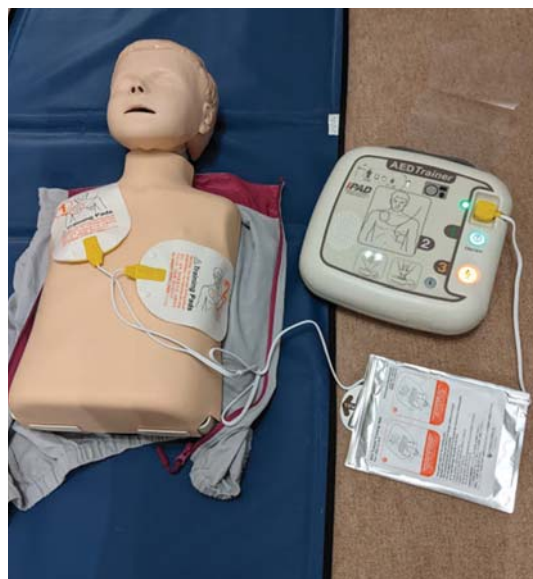
Our Beavers held coffee mornings with raffles. Some of them helped to make cakes or biscuits and some had pen and paper poised to take customer orders. The Beavers waited on each table to fulfil their customer's needs whilst the leaders looked after the hot water and made the drinks.

One of our Cub Packs ran a sponsored walk whilst the other decided to treat(?) residents of Eastrop by Carol Singing just before Christmas 2019. They found the residents very generous and managed to boost our funds by quite a bit. Thank you!

Our Scouts spent time doing odd jobs for family and friends whilst the 2nd Troop baked biscuits and cakes and sold them on the podium.

Along with some smaller donations we secured a larger donation from WrdeUp Music Festival for which we were really grateful.

Our largest donation came from the Round Table who had asked us if we would like to be involved in helping Santa meet people at the Orbital Retail Park. Our task was to hand out sweets to youngsters passing, normally in return for some small monetary donation to the Round Table's collecting box, though sometimes the donation



came after the sweets were handed out. The youngsters (and some leaders) who helped enjoyed a few sweets too.

We were just preparing to purchase our equipment as lockdown happened so this has all been delayed a bit. However, we have managed to purchase an external defib and a locked cabinet which were installed outside the Scout Hut in January. Thanks to the generosity of Highworth people and organisations, we were also able to buy a training defib and a manikin so that we can train our members in using a defib wherever they are, should they need to.

As is appropriate for a defib located at the Scout Hut, the machine we have purchased can be used on both adults and children at the flip of a switch.

Let's hope that no-one will ever use it but at least the residents of Eastrop can rest-assured that there is a defib nearby.

I am proud of what the Beavers Cubs and Scouts have achieved and really grateful for the support of the people and organisations of Highworth.

Our thanks for the installation go to Crannis Technology Services Ltd from Wroughton. They were very helpful and their work all looked very clean and tidy!





## Post-Lockdown 2 Scouting

**We were back face-to-face briefly before Lockdown Two struck and then we were into December. We had two or three meetings for each section to fill with face-to-face Scouting outside on cold, damp December evenings.**

Firstly though, for some sections Zoom meetings continued, perhaps interspersed with the face-to-face option. It is difficult trying to keep youngsters involved and enthused in online meetings and then trying to keep them socially distanced when face-to-face. All I can say is we try our best (as per our Scout Promise).

As well as looking after ourselves, we try to look after our Scouting family across the UK too. For many young people, Scouting can be a lifeline but this year Scouting provision has been threatened. 'Race Round the World' was a Scout Association initiative to help support over 500 Scout Groups in the UK who are struggling due to COVID-19. The idea is we raise money for The Scout Association to distribute where it's needed. Highworth Cubs took part in an adventurous night hike or had a Zoom meeting called Round the World in 80 days ending with a family tea party with sandwiches, fairy cakes and tea. Scouts had a long night hike; we started at Idstone at 6.30pm on a cool Friday evening and walked back to Highworth arriving at 11.29pm. This was important as we had told parents to pick up at 11.30pm and some of the leaders had grins from ear-to-ear with the timing 'perfection'. The hike included thick muddy fields, puddles and navigating along footpaths that had been blocked by barbed wire fencing. As a Scout Group we managed to raise in excess

of £1000. Thank you everyone for your support.

Other face-to-face meetings included hikes, walking some of the Highworth advent trail, wild wooding, making fires and S'mores, campfire

and cooking more pancakes outside on gas.

Zoom meetings included Remembrance Day, cooking pizza's in a mug, Cub Home Safety badge, Salt dough Christmas crafts and decorations and a Christmas Quiz. One of our Beaver Colonies sent each Beaver a pack with their December programme which could be completed at home in their own time.



*Navigation practice at night*

Northview's last meeting before Christmas was a day volunteering at Badbury Clump. Nine Scouts helped litter pick the area, dismantle the dens in the Bluebell ring and spread four heaps of wood chippings around the children's wild play area. Did you know you can play Connect 4 and noughts and crosses in the wild play area? Find some natural objects (leaves, bark, wood) and use these as your tokens.

As we write Highworth has moved to Tier 4. It means no face-to-face meetings so it is back to Zoom, etc for the next few weeks.

Finally, congratulations to some of our leaders who have achieved a 'Good Service Award'. They are Greg Worrall (Award for Merit) and Rebecca Mollart, Bobby Bailey and Emily Brooke (Chief Scout's Commendation).

*Cathy Mollart, Group Scout Leader Team,*

*1st Highworth Scout Group*

## Hedgehog-friendly Highworth

We have formed a group to encourage hedgehog-friendly actions to help our little spiky friends. Unfortunately, hedgehog numbers have plummeted by around 500,000 since 2000. It's so easy to help to save these amazing creatures:

- Create a CD sized hole (13 x 13cm) in your fence. Hedgehogs roam up to 2km in a night and one reason they have declined in numbers is that we have fenced off our gardens, stopping them moving around easily.
- Have a hog house which you can buy or build! Advice on [hedgehogstreet.org](http://hedgehogstreet.org).
- Leave out water in a saucer or bowl (please change daily to stop bacteria growing and no milk as they are lactose intolerant).
- Leave out food such as tinned or dry cat or dog food (please avoid fish flavours and no mealworms as these cause hogs metabolic disease).
- Let a patch of your garden grow wild or have a leaf pile giving them a potential place to



shelter or hibernate.

More information can be found at [Hedgehogstreet.org](http://Hedgehogstreet.org) (there's also an app under the same name). If you see a hedgehog or create a highway, please log it with them.

And please join us on Facebook Groups ([Hedgehog Friendly Highworth](https://www.facebook.com/HedgehogFriendlyHighworth)) as together we can really make a difference.

*Lauren Hogarth*

## Operation Christmas Child (The Shoe Box Appeal)



The annual Shoe Box appeal for Operation Christmas Child was delayed because of the second Lockdown. It was able to take place successfully from Monday 7th December to Monday 14th December.

The Methodist Church in Vicarage Lane was used as the collection centre. It was open each morning and lots of people came and dropped off either individual shoe boxes or a church came with many shoe boxes. We received over 1,650 filled shoe boxes as well as gifts to go into a shoe box. The number was a little lower than last year, which is understandable in these COVID-19 circumstances.

On behalf of Operation Christmas Child, I would like to thank: everyone who helped in any way

the volunteers who helped at the Collection Centre, those who made knitted items and gave other fillers and of course everyone who made up a shoe box.

Every shoe box will go to a child in the developing world and will mean so much to that child. For those who put a barcoded envelope in your shoe box, you will receive an email in March or April informing you where your box has gone.

As the Appeal has been delayed because of COVID-19, some shoe boxes will be delayed in being sent abroad to the children. At the time of writing (18th Dec), about 100,000 boxes have been sent.

If you want to find out more about Operation Christmas Child, then please look at their website, <https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/>.

Once again, a big thankyou to everyone.

*Peter McAuley*





## Friends of Angels Orphanage update

As the pandemic has gone on and on, it has become harder to get masks in Kathmandu so I asked a 'good Friend', Highworthian Wendy Smith, who was making masks here, for a pattern and explanation. I sent it on to the children and with some of the money sent by Jayne Mason they bought material and made themselves three reusable washable masks.

We have also started putting three masks in each Freedom Kit Bag. These bags are given out to girls and contain everything they need for their periods, allowing them to continue going to school. So good and quick were the children

making their own masks, that when we needed some masks quickly for our bags, we asked the children to make 100 by the end of the week – AND THEY DID!

Friends of Angel's Orphanage is a Highworth-based charity that raises funds to cover the costs for Angel's Orphanage in Nepal. Find out more at [www.friendsofangelSORphanage.com](http://www.friendsofangelSORphanage.com) or look for us on facebook.



**FRIENDS OF  
ANGEL'S ORPHANAGE**  
*every little helps, every penny counts!*

## Sustainable Highworth

**Highworth Town Council has set up a group to promote sustainable actions for Highworth residents.**

One of our initiatives is to encourage greener travel by residents, with a focus on replacing short car journeys with walking and cycling.

We would like Highworth residents to be able to walk safely or cycle for journeys within Highworth and in the future to cycle to Swindon. This will improve your health, your spirits and reduce carbon emissions. We



need your input into what improvements need to be made to encourage you to walk or cycle more.

Please complete the Cycling and Walking survey using this link <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/C7RFL8/> which can be found on the Highworth Town Council Website. Paper

surveys are available at the market most Saturdays. Closing date to complete the survey is **Sunday 14th February.**

## From the Lions Den

**The Highworth and District Lions Club would like to thank the people of Highworth for their generous support over the past year and especially over the Christmas period.**

Following lockdown and the broken window episode we were able to re-open the Charity Shop with limited opening in December and were also able to help Father Christmas with his sleigh. Unfortunately, he was not able to have any personal contact with the boys and girls but he did cover a wider area than in previous years.

I have compiled a list of donations the Lions Club made during 2020 and the Grand Total is £19,835. This is down from the £26,970 donated in 2019, but not too bad considering what we all had to put up with during the nine and a half months in 2020 when we had to close the Shop, stop fund-raising and take our vehicles off the road.

Unfortunately, with the restrictions imposed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we can't say what the future holds for our operations. We have not altered the advertisement in the Link in

case we are able to return to normal operations in the Charity Shop, but you are advised to check with the Shop or on line to find out the opening hours and whether or not we are accepting donations of saleable items.

I would like to end by extending the thanks of the Lions Club to our wonderful Volunteers who have been so supportive over the past year and who have now continued to work in the Charity Shop under difficult and sometimes unpleasant situations. If it wasn't for them the above figures would be a lot less.

### **Donations for November and December, 2020, were:**

Visit Highworth Ltd.	£250
Gift Cards for the Elderly	£3,645
Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal	£25
Royal British Legion Highworth Branch	£250
Swindon Food Bank	£392.50

*Rodney Davis, Secretary,  
Highworth and District Lions Club*

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## Highworth Twinning Association: 2020 The year of the Coronavirus

### ***Hello everyone,***

**It doesn't need me to tell you that 2020 has literally been a non-event in Twinning terms, our only meeting being the AGM in February. I'm sorry not to have written before now but I have had little to report. A Christmas letter seems an appropriate time to catch up.**

Briefly, in 2020 we cancelled visits to Wassenberg in May, Pontorson in September and also a visit from Wassenberg in October. After twice postponing the proposed Dinner Dance at Warneford School we have now cancelled this event altogether. The concert from the Eclectic String Band is now scheduled for November 2021.

The EU has agreed the funding for the Ascension gathering in Wassenberg in 2020 can be transferred to 2021. At this point in time I

believe nobody really knows whether this will go ahead or not. Optimistically we might be vaccinated by then but will we have the confidence to travel abroad by coach and will our hosts have the confidence to accommodate us? In other words, will May 2021 come around too soon for a visit? In the normal way, we would be starting the coach planning process in January but with the COVID-19 situation worsening at the moment I consider it's far too early to ask people to put their names forward.

I'm very sorry to tell you that two of our committee members, Chris Latimer and Richard Rogers, have suffered from serious health issues in 2020 (not COVID-19 related). Two operations and repeated visits to the hospital by ambulance were required respectively. I'm sure you would want to join me in wishing them well as they continue their recoveries.



Sadly, Wendy Eason Gibson died recently, I'm unaware of the circumstances but remember her well as being a regular attendee at our safari lunches.

Highworth is expanding; the Red Down development appears to be next. With this in mind, over the last couple of years, the HTA committee has discussed proposals for new street names in Highworth. We have put forward several suggestions to the Town Council and agreement was given in principle. However, the council changes annually so it is not yet a 'done deal'. Please look out for Pontorson Place and Wassenberg Way in the future!

## **News from Wassenberg**

*Extract of an email from Karin (Wassenberg President) earlier in December*

The situation (re COVID-19) in Wassenberg is about the same as everywhere in North Rhine-Westfalia and basically in Germany. Numbers are far too high and hospitals are reaching their limits so the government decided yesterday (!) 13th December, that we need more serious restrictions over Christmas and the New Year. As of Wednesday, we will now go into a stricter lockdown and only shops that care for everyday needs will be allowed to open. The rules for family meetings over Christmas (24th to 26th) are: members of one household plus four people can celebrate together. That, of course, gives families a bit to think about and organize. On all other days, a maximum of five people coming from two households at most are allowed to meet but of course we are encouraged to meet as few people as we possibly can.

They have half-heartedly shut down schools as from today: our years 5-7 (10-13-year-olds) are allowed to come in or stay away, as their parents decide. The older ones are to be taught at home. Luckily, our Moodle platform and our Big Blue Button conference tool work well for us so we should be able to cope.

Holidays start early so this is the last week before we break up completely and, as they last longer, we are coming back on January 11th at least that is the plan that we know of today. Nobody really knows what will happen after Christmas.

Kreis Heinsberg, like all areas, is preparing a vaccination centre, I am not sure when

vaccinations will start here and who will be the first ones.

People in town hall have organized a 'stayhome festival' and uploaded short musical events. It might be interesting for twinning people and maybe others:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLPPcX3pQMvYmcy2oaRNq3RNsKZS9dxGf>

Philipp Schneider is the deputy chairman of our twinning committee. Marcel Maurer is the newly elected Town Mayor and is in his early forties (quite young for a mayor) and is also a member of the CDU and a friend of Philipp. In twinning matters, he would like to follow in Manfred's tracks and support twinning as best he can. Sounds good to me... (Karin)

In addition, I will forward an email I have recently received from the Wassenberg Association's Secretary, Heinz-Josef Peters. I wholeheartedly agree with him when he says: "Let us be grateful for the good memories and look forward to life (and twinning) picking up again in the course of next year."

In a further email from Karin received two days ago, she tells me they are again in 'hard-lockdown' and the Christmas proposals, like ours, have been overtaken. My purpose in relaying this is to show you the situation is basically the same there as here. Yes there are some variations, groups of 5 being mentioned rather than 6, but overall the same.

## **Pontorson**

I have exchanged a couple of emails with Jacqueline during 2020 but I have not received a reply recently. When I last heard, all was well and they were being philosophical about the situation and doing what they have to. Jacqueline remarked how quiet it was in Pontorson when very few people, if any, were visiting Mont St Michel. Of course, this may have changed during the summer. You may not know that in France, since the first lockdown, every French resident has to carry a form with them when going out. You access a government website and print off the form which you complete to explain the reason for being out of doors; as far as I know, this has continued all year.

Thank goodness we don't have to do that!

## ***Looking forward...***

### **What do we plan for 2021?**

Well, I don't think a normal 'face-to-face' AGM is likely, or indeed necessary in view of the lack of activity. My suggestion for the AGM is that we submit brief reports (importantly the Treasurer's statement confirming the bank balance) by email and respond to any points which arise in the same way. Apart from the concert from the Eclectic String Band playing in November 2021 nothing else is planned. For the moment I feel

we just have to wait to see how things pan out. Our association is about meeting people, hosting and visiting until the pandemic is over I regret we simply can't safely resume our normal programme of events.

If anyone has any news from either 'twin' that they would like to share, especially from Pontorson, then please let me know.

Have a peaceful Christmas and let's hope for a better New Year!

*Richard Pearce*

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## ***Dear friends of the town twinning with Pontorson and Highworth***

### **As Secretary of the twinning committee, I am writing to you in Advent to review the past year.**

To do this, I have taken another look at the last communications, starting with the circular letter in Advent 2019, the invitation to the general meeting in the spring of this year with subsequent cancellation and the letter cancelling this year's Europe Days, hoping that you have the chance to keep in touch with your friends in our twin towns by telephone, Whatsapp, e-mail or letter. In September we were able to inform you that the already approved grants could be carried over to 2021. We could postpone our plans for Europe Days to 2021 without any major problems.

A lot has happened in the meantime. In the summer, life had almost returned to normal, but in the autumn, infection rates rose again all over Europe, varying in amount but unfortunately the same in trend. What followed were stricter lockdowns, although we seemed to have got off lightly compared to what our friends in France and England have to endure in terms of restrictions on daily life. Some sectors such as the hotels and restaurants as well as arts and culture were certainly hit very hard. The 2500 Christmas markets that took place in Germany in 2019, with some 150 million visitors, have also been cancelled this year and not to forget the countless associations, which, like our twinning committee, have had to scale down their activities.

But we should not forget that our twinning has

been active for over 50 years and that we have had lots of good times. Let us recall all the moments, let us think back to the numerous celebrations and encounters, to the good conversations, the laughter and celebrations and to many a friendship that was made during this time and that goes beyond the limited times of the twinning events as such. Let us not be too sad that all this could not take place this year. Let us be grateful for the good memories and look forward to life (and twinning) picking up again in the course of next year after this year's interruption.

While the current limitations cannot be talked away and are unfortunately absolutely necessary to get out of this pandemic, life does go on, and with hope and confidence I quote in part from our letter last year: "Candlelight shines against the darkness. (...) Homes are festively decorated. (...), one comes to rest and looks forward to celebrating the festival with the family (...)." All this is also possible under COVID-19 conditions, albeit restricted. Let us not only look at all the difficulties, but look forward to a time of rest and reflection, so that we can look to the future with strength and hope. The important thing is that we all get through this difficult time as unscathed as possible.

At least there seems light at the end of the tunnel. It seems that two vaccines are close to final approval. In England, one vaccine has already received provisional approval, which gives hope that it will soon be approved in the



EU as well. A vaccination centre for the Heinsberg district has already been designated in the industrial area of Erkelenz. Even though this is really very hopeful news, one must remain realistic and still be patient. Research into when larger parts of the population can be vaccinated has not yet yielded any clear results. Sometimes there is talk that these vaccinations can take place from March or April 2021, sometimes one hears from government circles that one has to wait until summer 2021.

What does this mean for us as members of the twinning committee? Unfortunately, we are not in a position to make any serious predictions at this stage as to when joint meetings with our friends from Pontorson and Highworth will be able to take place again. Rest assured, however, that we are eager to revive our twinning arrangements as soon as possible without risk to life and limb.

As part of this end-of-year newsletter, it is our sad duty to remember those who have passed away in the last two years:

- François Lepennetier
- Marc Basquin
- Konrad Janßen

We will honour their memory.

A very special thank you goes to our mayor of many years, Manfred Winkens, who has always been very supportive of twinning and has now gone into well-deserved retirement. Far beyond his ex officio membership, he accompanied our town twinning with great commitment of heart and soul. Among other things, he travelled to Pontorson and Highworth several times for twinning events, which is a special sign of solidarity. We wish him well in his retirement and look forward to seeing him continue in our ranks. We very warmly welcome his successor in office, Marcel Maurer. Certainly, he will continue



the commitment of Manfred Winkens and also accompany our town twinning activities with his youthful verve.

There have also been personnel changes in the City Halls of our two twin towns in the meantime. In Pontorson, André-Jean Belloir was elected mayor in March 2020, whom we hereby warmly welcome and look forward hopefully to meeting him in person next year. He replaced André Denot who, as mayor from 2014, was a reliable and committed partner in our town twinning and was present at all meetings. Thank you to André.

There was also a change of mayor in Highworth in July 2020. Richard Williams, who was previously responsible for organising the Saturday

weekly market and who is well known as 'Town Crier', replaced his predecessor Julia Bishop. We wish him all the best and thank Julia Bishop for her support of our twinning during her term of office. In Highworth, mayors are elected for only one year at a time.

I am confident that a meeting of the Wassenberg committee members will be possible in 2021. When the next meeting with our friends from Pontorson and Highworth can take place depends on many factors. Let us remain confident and look forward to seeing our friends again, whenever that may be.

We wish everyone a happy Christmas season; may we remember what is really important, friendship with each other and among peoples, to which we can all contribute within the framework of the twinning committee, however good or bad times may be. Stay healthy and have a happy and healthy New Year!

*Sincerely for the board of the Wassenberg  
Twinning Committee*

*Heinz-Josef Peters, Karin Hilgers,  
Philipp Schneider, Thomas Kügler*

## Happy New Year from 878 Squadron!

2020 certainly has been a year that no one will forget in a hurry. Although there have been definite challenges to overcome (mostly technological!) the Squadron has managed to continue providing training and support to all our cadets and staff. All our young people have persisted with exams and lockdown activities, even through the toughest of lockdowns.

With the ever-changing situation and lockdown restrictions, it is unclear when we will be able to return to face-to-face activities. Having said that, the Royal Air Force Air Cadets have proved that we do not need to be together to work as a team. This is mostly evident through the numerous virtual activities that have taken place, uniting cadets from all around the UK and

abroad. New connections have been forged and new friendships made. Above all, this proves the strength and commitment of the Royal Air Force Air Cadets and all its members.

We still do not know exactly what will happen in 2021, but we do know that we are now more equipped than ever to provide training and once-in-a-lifetime experiences, no matter what might happen.

On a slightly separate note, I would like to thank you all for reading these articles and for all your support of the Squadron. It means so much to us to be present in the community and we would like to say thank you for allowing us to do so. Best wishes for 2021!

*Cadet Sergeant Anna Talbert, 17*

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## BEM Medal awarded to 878 Squadron's Padre

**Congratulations to our Padre, Rev Bernard Rumbold, who has been awarded the BEM in the New Year's Honour List!**

Padre Rumbold, a retired Wing Commander in the RAF, has been made a 'Medallist of the Order of the British Empire' for his voluntary work with the Royal Air Force Air Cadets.

He regularly provides the young people and adult volunteers with support and guidance in a wide range of welfare duties and has been an inspiration to many people over his decades of service.

He is Chaplain to 1245 (Cirencester) Air Cadet Squadron as well as our own and his service in RAFAC totals 64 years!

Congratulations, and a massive thank you, from all at 878 (Highworth) Squadron.

*878 OC, Flt Lt Nick Goddard*

To find out what other activities cadets get up to, search '[878 Highworth Squadron RAF Air Cadets](#)' on Facebook or visit '@878Highworth' on Twitter and '@878highworthsqn' on Instagram.



*Rev Bernard Rumbold*

## **Sport** *Compiled by Jason Daniels*

If you have a sport story email [jcdsport12@gmail.com](mailto:jcdsport12@gmail.com)



### **Highworth Phoenix Diving Club**

All being well, Highworth Phoenix Diving Club should have re-started this New Year, although what that year will bring is anyone's guess!

Our return to the pool in September gave us several challenges with a later start time and the parents of Over-8s not allowed on poolside, not to mention the showers and changing rooms being out of bounds! It has meant that sadly, our Over-18s have not been permitted to train.

The Committee (led by Chair, Richard Burbidge) worked hard to ensure the club complied with COVID-19 requirements to keep us all safe. The club has adjusted to the new restrictions new timetable and is now able to open up more spaces for new members. Although the club caters for members over the age of five years (provided they can swim 25 metres unaided and are confident in deep water) on Mondays at 7.30pm to 8.15pm, we are especially interested in new members aged 11-16 who can join the 8.15pm to 9pm sessions. Perhaps ex-swimmers, gymnasts or trampolinists who are looking for something



*Diving with a difference*

different to try might enjoy it?

If you are interested then please do get in touch and for up-to-date information please take a look at our website or social media pages.

E: [Irenealdridge@hotmail.com](mailto:Irenealdridge@hotmail.com)

W: [www.highworthphoenixdiving.wordpress.com](http://www.highworthphoenixdiving.wordpress.com)

Facebook: [Highworth Phoenix Diving Club](https://www.facebook.com/HighworthPhoenixDivingClub)

*Irene Aldridge, Chief Coach*

### **Highworth Running Club**

**I love the unexpectedness of some conversations. After last month's eulogistic reminisce over the passing of our beloved fellow runner, I received a phone call from one of the two people who started our club; naming all but one of those we'd pictured.**

To add a bit of context, in the early eighties running as a hobby (and not just when late for the bus) was a pastime considered eccentric. Of course, by the late eighties everyone was doing it but back in the autumn of 1984 Brian Legge decided to take up 'jogging' to lose some

weight. Before long, pounds were converted into miles and his path crossed with another local lone runner.

Brian and Bob Wood got chatting and decided there might be others out there with a similar affliction. Advertisements were placed in the local paper and within notices placed around the town. By December, a committee was formed and the inaugural first meeting took place in the changing rooms of The REC. Training sessions were organised for Sunday mornings and Tuesday or Wednesday evenings (depending on runner availability) from The REC. The club later migrated to the Football Club for training



sessions before adopting the Vorda Building as its more patronised home.

Apparently, one of the fastest runners in the early days was a local policeman by the name of Martin Millward who could run marathons in under 2.30 hours; he probably remains the fastest runner we've had (so far). It's wonderful to think that the club has gone from strength to strength over those 37 years and will look to hold its annual spring time race (for the 35th time) this year on **Sunday 18th April**. Of course, pandemic restrictions may continue to be as disruptive as they were last year but we'll keep our fingers crossed and hope we can host our event unaffected. If so, entries will be possible online and available to anyone aged 15 or older.

If you are interested, please do keep up-to-date with the information posted on our website or Facebook page. We very much hope to be able to see you in April.

W: [www.highworthrunningclub.co.uk](http://www.highworthrunningclub.co.uk)

*Jason Daniels*

## Highworth Town Football Club

**At time of writing the Town's first and reserve team's fixtures remain postponed, courtesy of last year's second unwanted lockdown.**



The last game however, played by the first team before the curtain came down (again), was a controversial cup match against Swindon Supermarine that ended 3-2 but not in the red's favour! A goal line clearance denied Highworth a draw and saw them exit the Buildbase FA Trophy at the third round qualifying stage. Reading the club's Twitter feed the opinions on whether the ball had fully crossed the line were divisive but ultimately the official's verdict is final.

With the date of this season's restart not yet known it is unlikely that a full 38 game league season can be achieved but please keep pace with updates via the Worthian's social media forums or via website updates.

W: [www.highworthtownfc.com](http://www.highworthtownfc.com)

*Jason Daniels on behalf of Derek Lloyd  
Photograph courtesy of Twitter  
(@HighworthTownFC)*

## Wrag Barn Golf

**Wrag Barn signs up to the England Golf Women In Golf Charter.**

We are proud to announce that Wrag Barn has become a signatory for the Women In Golf Charter. The purpose is threefold: to encourage more women and girls to play the game and join clubs, to inspire more families to enjoy golf as a

*Did the ball cross the line?*



*Three Cheers for the Charter*

group leisure activity and to open up more opportunities for women to work within the golf industry.

Jeremy Tomlinson, CEO of England Golf wrote "Wrag Barn will be inspiring other clubs from

across the country to develop a more inclusive culture within golf for more women and girls to develop across all levels of the sport. It's fantastic to see you are working on all aspects of the club from recruitment of women and girls to supporting mixed events". Some of the measures we already have in place are regular group coaching sessions at the weekends, introductory memberships for Ladies in a teaching programme, a full fixture list of mixed competitions, both fun and competitive as well as our inclusion in the 'Girls Golf Rocks' programme. The events of this year have highlighted the importance of spending time with family and golf is an ideal sport for intergenerational participation. The mental health benefits of golf have been well documented and the improved muscle strength and balance in elderly participants has been proven in a recent study by the R&A at the University of Southampton. To find out more we'd love you to get in contact.

W: [www.wragbarn.com](http://www.wragbarn.com)

T: 01793 861 327 (Office)

T: 01793 766 027 (Pro Shop)

*Verity Manners*

## The Churches of Highworth want to pray for you.

These are challenging times for us all, not only in regard to health, but also in relation to employment, finance, education, and many other areas.

*Jesus cares, and we care too.*

Whatever you are facing due to crisis, we believe in a God of kindness and miracles. We want to be praying specifically for you.

If you would like us to do this for you, simply email your first name and your prayer needs to:

**[churchispraying@gmail.com](mailto:churchispraying@gmail.com)**

We will not email you back or save your information unless you specifically ask for further connection.

# There is HOPE!



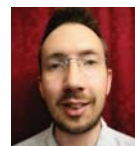
# HOPE

for Highworth



## Arts Section *Compiled by Iain Barnwell*

Contact: [HighworthLinkArts@gmail.com](mailto:HighworthLinkArts@gmail.com)



## Fandangoes Update

2020 has been a particularly tough year for performers so we asked Highworth's Tom Falding to give us an update on what this year has been like for the Fandangoes (who are well known for providing the entertainment at the May Day celebrations).

### Performers on Lockdown

Performers (similar to the whole event industry) have been hit doubly hard by the COVID-19 crisis, not that I'm saying they're any worse or better off than any others. There was an initial wave of cancellations and the Industry seems to be hit with 'first to go, last to return'. This being said, the more performers can adapt and think of innovative ways to produce performances and get work out there the better. We're thinking about producing outside perambulating-audience shows so watch this space!

I've been incredibly lucky over lockdown as I was living on a farm with lots of my performer friends and it didn't really feel like lockdown! There were 11 of us all together; it was good fun! Since lockdown lifted then work did start to come in for live performances but it's been very slow. Support has been available if you're lucky. There has been a huge pot of money made available to help creative individuals and organisations survive through this crisis or even produce new material.

### The Swindon Summer Bowl

We set up the Swindon Summer Bowl in response to COVID-19 and a cancellation of community and cultural events. In a nutshell, we worked closely with the event safety advisor group (ESAG) from SBC as well as the parish who manage the Town Gardens, South Swindon



Parish Council (SSPC), who I must also say a special thanks to for supporting us from the get go and without their support the project would not have happened. At first, when the idea was floated we were naturally met with a range of questions and some doubt; after all, we were striving to put on events when the rest of the country were cancelling.

The plans we produced and work provided quickly changed the route of thinking and we continued full steam ahead to produce the program of events on the basis of "If this is allowed at the time, this is how we will run and manage it". It was a bit of a gamble but it was so exciting at the same time and I didn't want to stop; we were the first producing these 'Covid-safe' events. To cut a very (very) long story short, we had a fully signed-off and approved event management plan and 7-week schedule of events ready to go. We then got approval for live entertainment ahead of the pack, so launched our venue on 17th July.

We successfully ran a full, varied and flavoursome schedule of events which saw comedy nights, workshops, family shows, fitness classes, circus lessons, bands, DJ's, an art auction and a school prom fill our colourful space at

the Bowl in the Town Gardens in Old Town. The programme ended on the August Bank Holiday. I feel it was the perfect time to end it.



We were blessed with a busy last weekend, surrounded by friends and family and I couldn't have been prouder of our incredible Fandangos team which pulled off something which everyone said was unachievable at the time. We provided a safe, comfortable, fun and exciting experience for people.

The whole project was completely overwhelming. I ran it with my ever-supporting girlfriend, Jess, to whom I owe endless thanks. We have rewritten the rule book!

## 2021

It's difficult to know what next year will look



like. We expect to see a rise in the amount of specifically designed events, such as the Swindon Summer Bowl. Looking forward for Fandangos, we're looking at working with more local and parish councils to produce engaging community and cultural events and would encourage any interested councils / organisers to reach out to us if they have a vision for community and cultural events for the area they oversee.

*Tom Falding*

## Outside the Box:

*Everyday stories of death, bereavement and life by Liz Rothschild*

'Outside the Box' is an eclectic collection of experiences, featuring personal stories of death, dying, bereavement, funerals, grief and life. The narratives are a mixture of heart-wrenchingly sad, angry, inspiring, contradictory and humorous but they all add to and challenge our preconceptions about death. We asked author Liz Rothschild, owner of the Westmill Woodland Burial Ground, to tell us more about her work.

The book grew out of my one woman show 'Outside the Box – a live show about death' which premiered at the Swindon Festival of Literature in 2016 and has toured throughout the UK and even as far as the USA ever since.

The show is a storytelling piece involving my own experiences and those of people I know and have worked with. The performance includes a post-show conversation with the audience and an invitation to share stories. People get a card in their programmes and over the past four years, many have filled them in or sent them to me afterwards by email. This means that I have ended up with an amazing range of stories and the sense that this was a subject that people wanted and needed to talk about but didn't quite feel able to in everyday society. With COVID-19 forcing shows to be cancelled or to move online, I recognised that a book had the ability to travel much further, reach a larger number of people and could draw on a wider range of expertise than a one-woman show, so this year felt like the right time to organise the stories I had into a book.

The book organised itself into 'themed chapters', although I did also actively collect stories from groups that I felt were under-represented in the book, such as men and those with learning disabilities. Each chapter also contains a commentary from an expert, such as a doctor, dementia nurse, etc. I felt that this was important to add context to the personal stories.

Getting published was easy. I approached a small independent mental health publisher called PCCS

Books based in Monmouth. They found the proposal interesting and agreed to take it on. The cover, which I love, came as a result of their team developing a variety of ideas and I had the chance to comment at the design stage.

The book launch happened on the evening of 26th November and was attended by over 400 people.

Due to COVID-19, the publishers suggested a virtual launch. I proposed the final shape it took with its combination of storytelling and interviews with experts. It was a lot of fun. I particularly enjoyed finding the actors to read the individual stories. But, thank goodness, the technical side was all handled by Online Events very professionally. I could not have done without them.

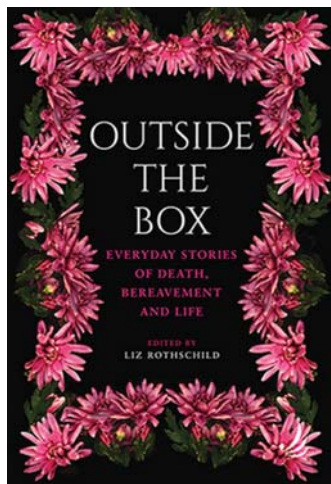
I sold 255 copies after the launch evening, which I see as a very positive start. I have just recorded a series of short programmes about the book for BBC Radio Wiltshire and I shall be doing a conference with the publishers and other

promotional events in the near future. I am also busy making a podcast. Hopefully, word will also spread and a few people who have already bought the book have been back in touch to ask for more copies for presents. Writing so far has been a very positive experience and, once I have recovered from this first book, I would really like to write something else. I have always wanted to have my poetry published. I would also like to write an account of my father one day, so watch this space.

In the meantime, I hope that people will find this book a useful resource to inspire and inform, to help make us feel less lonely with our mortality and to prepare us better to help ourselves and those close to us through this difficult territory.

*Liz's book is available to buy from PCCS at a reduced rate and free postage.*

Visit: <https://www.pccs-books.co.uk/products/outside-the-box-everyday-stories-of-death-bereavement-and-life> It is also available through all independent bookshops and online at Waterstones and Amazon.



## ***Why should it be?***

***Why should it be, when we are blessed with eyes, to see the wonders of nature, the clear blue skies,***

***We journey through life some fast, some slow with one eye open and one eye closed?***

***Why should it be, when we are blessed with ears, to hear the sounds of nature heard in our childhood years?***

***We journey through life some fast, some slow with one ear open and one ear closed?***

***Why should it be, that we must change from basic needs to material gain,***

***To try and outclass our fellow man and be the cause of misery and pain?***

***Why should it be, that we must turn from all others so to look after number one,***

***When so many other people have never seen the sun?***

***Why should it be, when in the world there is so much trouble and strife,***

***We do our utmost, no matter what, to make worse this life?***

***Let us pause for a moment, not just one but us all***

***And listen for the sound of any birds call.***

***Let us lift up our heads with wide open eyes***

***To see the wonders of nature and the clear blue skies.***

***Let us be happy and content with the things that are ours,***

***For our health and our homes, for many joyful hours.***

***Let us think of other people whose needs must satisfy***

***The kind of help that we can give so they, too, can see the sky.***

***Let us try and find a cure for this misery and pain***

***But, more so, to prevent them from occurring yet again.***

***Why should it be, that when we have done our task and made the world a better place,***

***We can all sit back in peace with a smile upon our face?***

*Tony Brewster (circa 1967)*





## Camera Club's Picture of the Year



**The picture of the year entitled 'Early Winter Morning' was taken by Dave Sore at Lake Pochard, just off Spine Road East (B4696) between Cricklade and Cirencester.**

It was photographed using a Nikon 8.10 DSLR with an 18-300mm Nikon zoom lens mounted on a tripod and shot in RAW format.

Dave has lived in Highworth for 40 years. He joined Highworth Camera Club about 15 years ago as a complete newcomer to photography. He finds "its members to be very friendly, and willing to pass on their knowledge". His work is mostly land and seascapes, as well as some composite images.

Dave believes that his "best images often have a degree of luck associated with them". For this photo he says it was the "right day, right weather, right light and right time".

For post-production, Dave used Coral PaintShop Pro 2020 Ultimate taking 3 exposures at 1 stop intervals combining them to give an HDR image (High Dynamic Range).

In addition, he used some selective individual colour saturation and some local tone mapping, as well as a slight increase in sharpness.

*Iain Barnwell*

## A Year of Pictures

**There follows a gallery of some of the best pictures from both the Highworth Camera Club and Highworth Artists' Society from last year.**

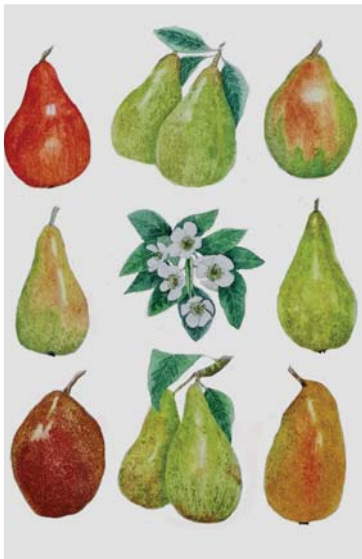
*1st row: Dave Sore - Early Winter Morning (1st place, Print of the Year), Neil George – Barn Owl (3rd place, Print of the Year), Pauline Godwin – Chicken Feathers (2nd place, Print of the Year)*

*2nd row: Vanessa Mulloy – Living Statue*

*(4th place, Print of the Year), Pam Hague, Gill Thomas*

*3rd row: Christine Gill, Lindsey Stevens – Jumping for Joy (Winner of the Holt Trophy), Chris Dunster – Playful Fox (Winner of the Ashworth Trophy)*

*4th row: Richard Harpin, Annie Lynch, Wendy Fouracre*





## Community Tree Planting Challenge

*The Challenge: can the community plant a tree for every Highworth resident?*

The Friends of Pentylands Country Park, working with The Great Western Community Forest, intend to plant in the Park, a tree for every resident in Highworth by the end of March 2021.

**That means we need to plant at least 8,000 trees.**

1. We have a guarantee of 4,500 trees donated by the Trust for Conservation Volunteers.
2. For the remainder, The Great Western Community Forest will obtain from a variety of suppliers.
3. Funding is in place to cover costs including ongoing management of all the trees we plant.
4. We are yet to be notified of the delivery date for trees but it is likely to be mid-March.

### **Planting Areas:**

Tree planting will take place in two areas of the Park in early 2021. These areas are:

1. Little Forty. Better known by many as The Barra Close Field.
2. Grove Furlong (Field 5): Planting will take place in the Southern quadrant of this Field.

Traditionally, Community Tree Planting involves a lot of fanfare and the Community turning up at a specific date and time and planting as many trees as possible in a day.

COVID-19 means that approach will not be possible and has forced us to re-appraise how we can carry

out a community tree planting in these difficult circumstances.

COVID-19 restrictions mean we will need to spread the tree planting over a period of time to accommodate safely groups and volunteers.

### **Doing things this way means:**

- We can allocate specific areas to schools, groups, organisations and businesses, etc.
- It will allow ownership of that space.
- It will help us better to manage timings to ensure social distancing.
- Ensure the safety of all involved.

### **Are you up to the CHALLENGE?**

**If you are up to the challenge, we will need to know:**

- How many trees you would like to plant.
- What times / days would best suit.
- Who you are.
- If you are representing a Group or Business?
- How many are in your Party, Group, Business or Bubble.

To make a commitment or for more information.

Email: [pentylandscountrypark@gmail.com](mailto:pentylandscountrypark@gmail.com)

Tel: 01793 763 071 Text: 07467 029 009

*Ken Saunders*

*Chair: The Friends of Pentylands Country Park*

## Governors needed for Westrop Primary

**We would like to recruit a school governor from the local community.**

Governors are lay people who have an interest in the role of schools in Swindon and wish to make a positive contribution to their communities. We are looking for those of you who have enquiring minds and have the ability to contribute to debate and planning and the confidence to ask the questions that need to be asked. We would love to have people who have skills in:

- HR
- Business
- Health and Safety

- Premises Management
- Finance
- Education

However, don't be put off by thinking that you have to have this specialist expertise or knowledge. Enthusiasm and interest is much more important to start with and there is tried and tested training and support available to help you throughout the four-year term of office. If you would like to know more please contact the Clerk, Heather Large, at: [h.m.large@btopenworld.com](mailto:h.m.large@btopenworld.com)

*Heather Large*



# A TREE FOR EVERYONE IN HIGHWORTH

HELP US PLANT 8000 TREES  
IN PENTYLANDS COUNTRY PARK

WE WANT TO PLANT A TREE FOR EACH AND  
EVERY ONE OF YOU BEFORE  
THE END OF MARCH 2021



WE ARE LOOKING FOR A COMMITMENT FROM  
INDIVIDUALS, CLUBS, GROUPS, SCHOOLS AND BUSINESSES

**IS PLANTING 8000 TREES FEASIBLE?**

Yes it is, if 8000 People plant 1 tree, or 1000 people plant 8,  
or 80 people plant 100 trees each.

TO MAKE YOUR COMMITMENT OR FOR MORE INFORMATION  
email: [pentylandscountrypark@gmail.com](mailto:pentylandscountrypark@gmail.com) Tel: 01793 763071  
or text: 07467 029 009

## History of an Eastrop home

**I like history. I have always liked history, from Ladybird books, school plays to GCSE's and an honours degree. History has a beginning a middle and an end, it is then reviewed, rewritten and 'refreshed'.**

When we moved to Highworth in 2015 we were given the opportunity to be part of history, part of The Puzzle. In the purchase of our house, along with bricks and mortar, a garden well and a beautiful home, we were given the deeds to our house, the deeds from 1833 along with much of the original paperwork henceforth.

I know that that in 1833 John Hedges passed and left to his first son William 'seven freehold cottages... in Eastrop, his son Ephraim received the freehold tenement and premises along with the stable at the back' (The Elms) and there was still two cottages in Westrop to leave his wife! His family continued to prosper but moved to London. 15 years later the stables, three cottages, garden, six poles of ground, a barn and outbuildings were sold at auction at the King and Queen, Marketplace, Highworth. I know this because I have a copy of the auction pamphlet and receipt of sale.

In 1852 Richard Lay took a mortgage for a 1000 year lease at £90 for three cottages or tenements including parcels of ground, wall mounds, fences, ditches, etc. In 1883 a house was built on the

land behind 'ours'; there were three thatched cottages and all the properties were rented not owned. Diamond Villa is first mentioned by name in 1897. Lot 1 changed hands almost every decade during the 1900s and a value was put on

the villa in 1973 of £11,991; it didn't make the guide price! Houses, gardens and outbuildings were lost or converted and it is all recorded on waxed parchment and written in ink, so much movement and development may explain why the house numbers don't flow, why access is restricted and why there is such goodwill among neighbours.

We are grateful to all those historians who lived in our house before us; record keepers and memory makers who kept a record of time spent living in Puzzle Court (now The Elms).

The Highworth Historical Society has welcomed me in and on to the committee. The talks on local history are informative, the archives and open days enlighten me and

enable us to share local knowledge with those that want to know and from those 'that know'.

If you want to find out more please join the society or take a look at our website [www.highworthhistoricalsociety.org.uk](http://www.highworthhistoricalsociety.org.uk) Please get in touch with memories or artifacts and help us make history.

*Caroline Pooley*

*Highworth Historical Society member*



## Swindon & District Samaritans turning the blues into brews

**Swindon & District Samaritans are encouraging people to beat the winter blues and COVID-19 by staying connected with a virtual warming cuppa and a chat over the long cold months for Brew Monday.**

Brew Monday kicked off on Monday 18th January, as the third Monday in January is typically known as 'Blue Monday' for being the most difficult day of the year. Samaritans are turning the blues to brews by encouraging friends, family and workmates to reach out every Monday to someone for a virtual cuppa and a chat as well as raising vital funds for Swindon & District Samaritans. Now, more than ever, sharing a cuppa is more than a drink; it's about reaching out, checking in and staying connected.

If you need to know more please reach out to: [fundraiserswindonsamaritans@btconnect.com](mailto:fundraiserswindonsamaritans@btconnect.com) – and if you brew up to chase those blues away and can

support Swindon & District Samaritans, please text to donate. To donate £5, text BREWMONDAY 5 to 70490. Texts cost £5 plus one standard rate message and you'll be opting in to hear more about our work and fundraising via telephone and SMS. If you'd like to give £5 but do not wish to receive marketing communications, text BREWMONDAYNOINFO 5 to 70490.

Samaritans are always here every hour of every day of the year. Talk to us any time you like, in your own way and off the record about whatever's getting to you T: 116 123 – calls are free, E: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org).



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## Brighter Futures launch Dementia Appeal

**Brighter Futures, have launched a new appeal to raise vital funds needed to improve care for patients living with dementia, who have to stay in hospital.**

It is common knowledge that we have a rapidly ageing population, but the risk of dementia increases with age with one in six over the age of 80 having a diagnosis of dementia. At Great Western Hospital, approximately 3-5 per cent of all patients discharged each month have a diagnosis of dementia; this equates to about 150-200 patients per month. Some of them will also be discharged to a care home setting, despite living in their own home before they were admitted.

The Brighter Futures' Dementia Appeal will be split into three phases, with the first phase setting a target of raising £33,000 by 31st March 2021. With this money, the charity will replace clocks around the hospital with dementia-friendly clocks that display not only the time, but the day, date and weather and they will also purchase a Reminiscence Interactive Therapy Activities (RITA) machine which is a valuable resource for patients living with dementia. The pre-loaded system can be used by patients themselves or with a nurse, therapist or carer to engage them in a range of activities. These

include listening to music, showing them photos, interactive games and even replaying famous speeches the patient may connect with.

Dr Sarah White, Consultant Geriatrician, said: "It is really important that we make a stay in hospital for individuals with dementia as comfortable and support as possible and phase 2 will involve making our older persons' wards 'dementia-friendly', with soft furnishings, bright colours and adapted flooring. We also want to create areas around the hospital for our dementia patients to sit, such as a 1950s style tea room and a dementia-friendly garden. This is particularly important, as we know people with dementia are at a higher risk of falling in unfamiliar environments or developing worsening of their confusion, known as delirium.

"It can be even more distressing for people with dementia who are in hospital at this current time, due to visiting restrictions in place because of COVID-19, which prevent their familiar carers or family from being with them. Creating spaces that are comforting, welcoming and similar to a home environment will support individuals with cognitive impairment by putting them at ease and enabling them to understand and engage with their surroundings more easily."



There are lots of ways you can get involved by either simply donating to the appeal or by holding a fundraising or sponsored event. This could be through a marathon, bike ride or virtual event. If you are organising an event, please do ensure you follow the government guidance to keep yourselves and others safe.

For more information about how to support the Dementia Appeal, please visit [www.brighterfuturesgwh.nhs.uk/fundraising/elderly-care-projects/dementia-appeal/](http://www.brighterfuturesgwh.nhs.uk/fundraising/elderly-care-projects/dementia-appeal/) or call Brighter Futures on 01793 605631.



## Thanks from ex Mayor Julia Bishop

**Councillor Mrs Julia Bishop presented The Prospect with a cheque for £5360.00 raised during her time as Highworth Mayor 2019/2020.**

The Prospect is a charity close to Councillor Bishop's heart and she was extremely happy to be able to support them with various fundraising activities within the year. A special mention to Highworth Masonic Lodge for their generous donation of £1,000.

Although this is a tremendous amount of money, Councillor Mrs Bishop was devastated at having to cancel four fundraising events due to COVID-19.



Councillor Mrs Bishop would like to thank the wonderful people of Highworth for their support.



## Charity Christmas Trees update

**A BIG THANK YOU from Swindon North Rotarian Terry Williams and his wife Chris for supporting their sale of Christmas trees this year.**

In total £1295 was raised for local charities. Tree sales were boosted by donations made for mistletoe and branches. Thank you again for all your support

*Photo: Chris and Terry ready and waiting for customers on the Podium*

## Dear Editor

My Aunt, Mrs Alfreda (Freda) Mackenzie passed away peacefully on Wednesday 25th November. She was 95 years old. She was one of the founder members of the Highworth Arts Society, and she organised the exhibitions for many years – usually in the Saracens Head pub. She was also involved with the twinning of Highworth with Ponteson. I thank everyone for their kind messages.

Regards, Ruth Higginson, niece

## Appeal to TT Linnet

Whilst very much in favour of the principle of outside tables and chairs, as an ex-user of a mobility scooter (now a nursing home resident), I did occasionally experience hindrance when passing.

Brian, Park View Nursing Home, Blunsdon

## Dear Editor

I really appreciate receiving the Link, it being a good source of what's going on in the local community as well as identifying the availability of local trades. However, I was dismayed to see the 'poem' on HS2 on Page 45 of this month's edition.

Regardless of whether I agree or not with Mr Stredder, your publication is surely not the correct vehicle for this sort of dialogue.

Sincerely Graham, Shrivenham

## Dear Editor

This photo shows nature's ability to heal itself. The tree on the eastern side of the Community Centre (Northview School) has grown through the fence and healed itself around it!!

Mirian Sirrelle



## Dear Editor

On New Year's Eve, I mislaid my bank card at the Co-op in Highworth. A kind person found it and handed it in to a member of staff. I was relieved to collect it on New Year's Day and would like to thank the person for their honesty. It is much appreciated.

Madeline Webb, Blunsdon

## Update on blocked footpath, opposite Wrag Barn Golf Club, January 2021

Hello Highworth Residents. All the relevant forms that have been collected have now been passed to the Ramblers [www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk) Swindon representative who is dealing with this matter. He will progress the additional work to complete the application and intends to submit it to Swindon Council by the end of January. From that point, it is out of his control but it is not a quick process. The Council has to examine the user evidence and investigate the history of the path.

If they determine that a public right of way "subsists or is reasonably alleged to subsist" they will make an order to add the path to the definitive map. If they decide not to make an order and it is thought that they do not have valid grounds for this then the decision can be appealed to the Secretary of State.

Alternatively, if the Council makes the order, the landowner or any other interested party can object to it, in which case it also goes to the Secretary of State who will appoint an Inspector to hold a public inquiry. Because of COVID-19 the Inspectorate has a large backlog of cases, so we could be looking at an extended timescale. The timescale is usually measured in months.

Many thanks to those who were able to respond. We will keep you informed of progress.

Hugh Reader and Lou Thompson

## Highworth 'Forget Me Not Café' Zooms into Spring!

After a fantastic start last spring for the launch of the Highworth Memory Café and the brilliant take up for our February and March 2020 Café sessions in the Highworth Council Community Room, COVID-19 sadly brought things to a quick standstill again.

In December we trialed a Zoom Christmas Café session to connect people back in again online. We had time to chat and catch up over a cuppa, followed by a fun picture quiz and then a lovely Christmassy singing session with Karen Owen from Musica! This was well received and very much enjoyed by those who joined us and it definitely gave our wellbeing a lovely boost.

So here goes – Let's Zoom into Spring! We would like to invite you to our Spring Zoom Café Sessions.

We will get together online with live Café sessions and will be meeting on the last Thursday of each month from 2.30-4pm via Zoom.

Zoom links will be sent out prior to each session and if you need any help setting up Zoom on your device please do let us know and we will try and help get you get connected ahead of the sessions.

So save the dates:

**Thursday 28th Jan 2021 from 2.30-4pm**

**Thursday 25th Feb 2021 from 2.30-4pm**

**Thursday 25th March 2021 from 2.30-4pm**



### Highworth Forget-Me-Not Café Zooms into Spring

**We would like to invite you to our Spring Zoom Café Sessions.**

**We will get together online with live Café sessions and will be meeting on the last Thursday of each month from 2.30-4.00pm via Zoom.**  
*(please email us by the Tuesday before, to book your place)*

Zoom links will be sent out prior to each session and if you need any help setting up Zoom on your device do let us know and we'll try and help get you connected.

*Please join us*

**2.30pm - 4.00pm**  
**Thursday 28th January**  
**Thursday 25th February**  
**Thursday 25th March**

**We'd love to see you this Spring and help bring the café to you!**

We want to bring you ongoing support and encouragement, fun, laughter, music, quizzes and most of all a smile to brighten your day!

**For more details please email Kevin at [forgetmenot.highworth@gmail.com](mailto:forgetmenot.highworth@gmail.com) or call Ruth on 07970 543423**

We'd love to see you this Spring and help bring the café to you!

We want to bring you ongoing support and encouragement, fun, laughter, music, quizzes and most of all a smile to brighten your day!

For more details please email Kevin at [forgetmenot.highworth@gmail.com](mailto:forgetmenot.highworth@gmail.com)

or call Ruth on 07970 543423



If you have a business story email: Sarah Gardiner, [editor@highworthlink.co.uk](mailto:editor@highworthlink.co.uk)

## Progressive Wiltshire Law Firm gears up to launch new Swindon office

Awdry Bailey & Douglas, one of Wiltshire's leading law firms are gearing up to open their new Swindon office in early 2021 as part of the firm's continued expansion plans.

The newly built office, 2 Gateway North, is conveniently located on North Latham Road adjoining the B4534 Lady Lane and the A419 dual carriageway to the north of Swindon.

The new office provides dedicated car parking spaces, is easily accessible via Junction 15 of the M4 and is opposite the David Lloyd sports and leisure club.

Although Awdry Bailey and Douglas can trace its history back to approximately 1750, by way of an unbroken series of partners, the firm prides itself on taking a modern and progressive approach to legal services.

The launch of 2 Gateway North illustrates the firms' progressive nature and expands their range of offices in the key Wiltshire towns of Chippenham, Devizes, Marlborough, Royal Wootton Bassett and, soon to be, Swindon. The new office will provide a full range of legal services including Conveyancing, Commercial, Employment, Family Law and Private Client services to the local community throughout

Swindon and the surrounding areas.

Tim Hotchkiss, Partner and member of ABD's Management Board, who have overseen the completion of the lease, commented, "Geographic expansion is one of the firm's key strategic objectives. Whilst we already offer our services remotely, through video calls, over the telephone and via email, we understand that being able to access your lawyer in person, in an easily accessible, COVID-19 secure environment, is still highly valued by our clients.

"Being part of the local community is important to us at ABD. Our new Swindon office will enable us to offer easy access to our highly qualified lawyers who are here to provide not only the trusted, personalised and high quality legal services we are renowned for, but also to help and support local people, local businesses and the wider community as a whole."

The firm's new Swindon office is due to open in early 2021 and their full address is:

2 Gateway North, North Latham Road,  
Swindon SN25 4DL.

W: [awdry.co.uk](http://awdry.co.uk)

E: [info@awdry.co.uk](mailto:info@awdry.co.uk)



## Highworth Library opening arrangements:

As we are following Government guidance, services and opening times do keep changing.

We are hoping to remain open for Click, Call and Collect, reservations and returns only. Books can be ordered online at <https://bit.ly/30IMJct> or by calling the library. You will need your library card and PIN. Staff can also pick out books for you if you don't know what to read. You will be called once your books are ready to collect and others can collect the books if you are shielding. Previous books can be returned during collection.

The Library has a one in one out system and masks should be worn. Books will be issued for six weeks. There is no access to toilets. Access to

the computers and 'quick access' browsing sessions as suspended whilst Highworth is in Tier 4.

To keep up to date with our current opening hours and services you can either:

- Follow Swindon Libraries on social media
- Check on Swindon Borough Council's website: [www.swindon.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.swindon.gov.uk/libraries)
- Read our blog: [www.swindonlibrarieswordpress.com](http://www.swindonlibrarieswordpress.com)

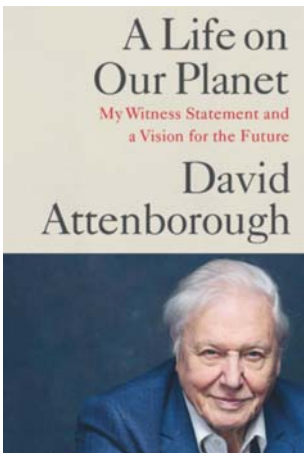
If you have an enquiry, call us: 01793 463500 or email: [highworth.library@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:highworth.library@swindon.gov.uk)

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## Highworth Library Book Reviews

Are you looking for some inspiration as to what to read in the next few months, whilst we wait for the spring to emerge from its long sleep and the restrictions of COVID-19 to be lifted? We have an abundance of new and exciting titles for every age and taste, in a variety of formats (e-book, hardback, paperback and audiobook). Here are some of the books we have been reviewing recently. We do hope you enjoy them and do let us have your feedback (good and bad).

### A life on our Planet – My Witness Statement and a Vision for the Future by David Attenborough



(Published by Witness Books, 2020)

"We humans, alone on Earth, are powerful enough to create worlds, and then to destroy them."

This book makes for a compelling read. This is part memoir, part warning about the decline of our

planet, if we continue to live and consume in the way we currently do. But it is also a book that offers 'hope' as Attenborough explores constructive ways in which the planet can survive, if society collectively changes its behaviours. The more society continues to fracture the wild with deforestation, the expansion of farmland and the activities of the illegal wildlife trade the more likely it is that another pandemic will occur; a stark warning indeed! He convincingly explores the processes and technologies that societies need to harness to save the wilderness and human civilization, namely renewable energy, intensive farming methods, diet transformation, rewilding and reduced population growth. Attenborough claims that we should, once more, become part of nature: "We need to rediscover how to be sustainable, to move from being apart from nature to becoming a part of nature." This book is a must for everybody who cares and is interested in the environment we live in.

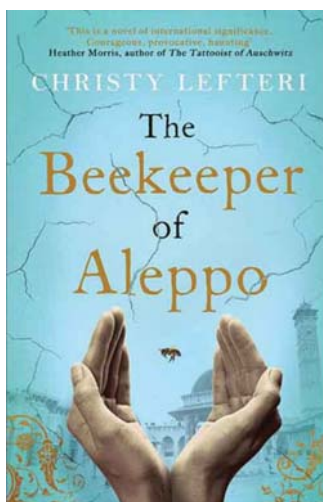
### The Beekeeper of Aleppo by Christy Lefteri

(Published by Manilla Press 2020)

This is a novel of international significance.

Courageous, provocative and haunting. Nuri is a beekeeper; his wife, Afra, an artist. They live a

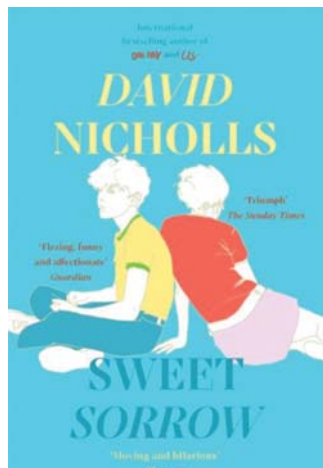
simple life, rich in family and friends, in the beautiful Syrian city of Aleppo; until the unthinkable happens. When all they care for is destroyed by war, they are forced to escape. But what Afra has seen is so terrible she has gone blind, and so they must embark on a perilous journey through Turkey and Greece



towards an uncertain future in Britain. On the way, Nuri is sustained by the knowledge that waiting for them is Mustafa, his cousin and business partner, who has started an apiary and is teaching fellow refugees in Yorkshire to keep bees. As Nuri and Afra travel through a broken world, they must confront not only the pain of their own unspeakable loss, but dangers that would overwhelm the bravest of souls. Moving, powerful, compassionate and beautifully written, *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* is a testament to the triumph of the human spirit. Told with deceptive simplicity, it is the kind of book that reminds us of the power of storytelling.

## Sweet Sorrow

by David Nicholls



(Published by Hodder & Stoughton, 2019)

David Nicholls has again been in the public eye thanks to the recent BBC production of his novel *US*, which is what initially prompted me to pick up *Sweet Sorrow*, published in 2019. I absolutely loved this book and am

hard pushed to think of anything I didn't like about it except maybe that it had to end. A charming and poignant coming-of-age story, centred around Charlie and Fran, who navigate first love and the highs and lows of the teenage years in ways that readers of any age will recognise and identify with. The observations are at times hilarious, at times sad, but always spot on. Whilst I would classify this as an 'easy' read, that is in no way to detract from the quality of the writing. Their story is cleverly interwoven with references to *Romeo and Juliet* and the bittersweet ending is well judged.

## Becoming

by Michelle Obama

(Published by Viking, 2018)

I so wanted to enjoy this and ended up loving it. Honest, witty and deeply personal you can hear her voice in every sentence. You get everything from her firm foundation in church and family and the importance of her years in education, to her



meeting her future husband, juggling motherhood and a career to the giddy heights of life in the White House. The unforgiving media gaze hurt and confused her, but she worked with it the best way she could to become and remain a powerful advocate for girls and women. There is also an amazing audio book version which she narrates herself. I can't recommend it enough.

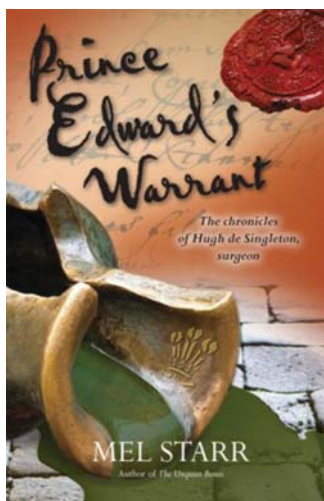
## Prince Edward's warrant

by Mel Starr

(Published by Lion Fiction, 2018)

If you enjoy historical crime (a slightly niche but growing genre), then the chances are you will enjoy this short novel by the American academic





Mel Starr. Do not be put off by the fact he is American; his studies include Medieval surgery and Medieval English and he puts them both to good use in his series of books following the adventures of Hugh de Singleton, Bailiff and Surgeon in the Oxfordshire village of

Bampton. This novel, the latest in the series, is not set in Bampton but at Kennington Palace where Hugh is charged with investigating the murder of one of Prince Edward's (the Black Prince) favoured knights. The body count rises and danger lurks for Hugh as he solves the crime. The story moves at a good pace and one aspect I particularly like is the language used which manages to give the feel of the period without sounding put on. A handy glossary of terms is at the front of the book to help you with some of the medieval terms used. All in all an enjoyable and well-researched murder mystery.

## The Children's Corner

### The Ickabog

by J.K. Rowling

(Published by Little, Brown Books for Young Reader, 2020)

The kingdom of Cornucopia was once the happiest in the world. It had plenty of gold, a king with the finest moustaches you could possibly imagine and butchers, bakers and cheesemongers whose exquisite foods made a person dance with delight when they ate them. Everything was perfect except for the misty Marshlands to the north which, according to legend, were home to the monstrous Ickabog. Anyone sensible knew that the Ickabog was just a myth, to scare children into behaving. But the funny thing about myths is that sometimes they take on a life of their own. Could a myth unseat

a beloved king? Could a myth bring a once happy country to its knees? Could a myth thrust two children into an adventure they didn't ask for and never expected. If you're feeling brave, step into the pages of this book to find out... A beautiful

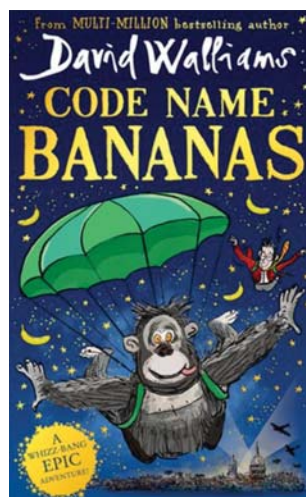


hardback edition, brought to life with full-colour illustrations by the young winners of The Ickabog competition.

### Code Name BANANAS

by David Walliams

(Published by Harper Collins Children's Books, 2020)



Go back in time with No. 1 bestselling author David Walliams for a whizz-bang epic adventure of action, laughter and secret plots and the extraordinary friendship between a little boy and a huge event that just might save the day...1940. Britain is at war with Nazi Germany. Eleven-year-old Eric spends

his days at the place that makes him most happy: London Zoo. And there's one animal in particular he loves: Gertrude the gorilla. With bombs falling all over London, Eric must rescue Gertrude. Together with his Uncle Sid, a keeper at the zoo, the three go on the run. But while hiding out at the seaside they uncover a top-secret Nazi plot.

## Rendcomb College Open Day, Saturday 6th March



At Rendcomb College, pupils are free to be themselves and free to take on big challenges because they know that to 'FAIL' is only the 'First Attempt In Learning.'

I am not alone in thinking that Rendcomb College is a very happy and special place and would like to invite you to come and see for yourself at our open day on **Saturday 6th March**.

Our website is [www.rendcombcollege.org.uk](http://www.rendcombcollege.org.uk) and specifically [www.rendcombcollege.org.uk/visit](http://www.rendcombcollege.org.uk/visit) for details on the open days.

To register your interest please contact our Admissions Team directly on:  
[admissions@rendcombcollege.org.uk](mailto:admissions@rendcombcollege.org.uk),  
or call: 01285 832306.



### VISITOR INFORMATION & CRAFT CENTRE

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SN6 7BE

**01793 764440**



CALL FREE ON **0800 328 0006**

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Free debt counselling in your community  
from an award winning charity

[capdebthelp.org](http://capdebthelp.org)



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## Highworth Methodist Church says “Goodbye” to Jon Lewis

Jon Lewis has been the Mission Enabler at Highworth Methodist Church for the past three years. Before he left, we caught up with Jon to find out more about his time in Highworth:

### ***What is a Mission Enabler?***

My job was to focus on everything that doesn't happen on a Sunday. So it was my rôle to introduce people to the Church, to organise the children's and family work and also

to run activities such as the bridge club, the baby group, the summer holiday sports mornings, the Messy Family Fun, etc.

### ***Where did you work before you came to Highworth?***

I was a Youth Worker in Cornwall for six years. The focus there was much more on young people and youth work, so it was interesting to run groups for the younger children and toddlers.

### ***What has been the best part of your job?***

It has to be all the people I have met in Highworth. My job rôle was new for the Methodist Church so I have had to evolve and grow the rôle during my time here. But the community here is really special and everyone has been so welcoming and helpful that it has made my job a lot easier. Even when there are disagreements, we find a positive way to move forward.

### ***How did Coronavirus affected your job last year?***

I was furloughed from March-June. I really missed my rôle, but it did give me time to reflect



and time to learn some new skills. Since July it has been great to be back. I and some others have been making videos for our youth groups to watch and we have been organised messy church bags for families to do at home so it's been nice and busy, but I really miss the face-to-face contact. I never realised how important conversations with others was until lockdown forced this detachment upon us. I have really missed that this year.

### ***What are your plans for the future?***

I am going to go home to spend some time with my parents in Wales because I haven't been able to see them much this year. Then I am going to look for a new rôle. It has been a real privilege to work with the young people and children of Highworth and I hope to find a similar rôle elsewhere. I shall be quite teary when the moment finally comes to say goodbye and I am already looking forward to visiting the Church in the future. But I am also excited to see what God has planned for me next.

You can watch Jon's leaving talk together with Mike and Trudy's thankyou on the HMC Youtube channel <https://bit.ly/3n8eg8D>.



## Highworth Churches Information

**Hope for Highworth:** email your personal needs or concerns to [churchispraying@gmail.com](mailto:churchispraying@gmail.com) and the church will pray for you.

**Saturday Prayers:** At 12noon every Saturday until the end of the crisis we will all pray together for the town and the nation. Everyone who is a part of the Highworth Churches will do this wherever they are, many outside, and anyone is free to join in where they are as we consistently pray for hope, wisdom, healing and an end to the troubles.

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### FROM THE REGISTERS

Remembering the recently bereaved:

*Colin John Dawson, Kenneth Archer,*

*Kay Elizabeth Lee, Pamela Hitchcock*

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### LIVE SERVICES

Live services in St Michael's Church and the Methodist Church have been cancelled during the lockdown. It is hoped that they will restart at the end of February. Please check the Church websites for updates.

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### VIRTUAL CHURCH SERVICES:

#### St Michael's Church:

**All activities in Church have been suspended due to the current lockdown. This will continue to be reviewed.**

St Michael's remains open for private individual prayer. Face coverings must be worn in Church. Current social distancing guidelines must be adhered to and good hygiene maintained by all.

Hand sanitizer is provided in the South porch for use when entering and exiting Church.

The 10.15am Sunday Service can be watched live at [www.twitch.tv/stmichaelshighworth](https://www.twitch.tv/stmichaelshighworth) or by clicking on the service link on the Church

website at [www.stmichaelshighworth.co.uk](http://www.stmichaelshighworth.co.uk). Service sheets, summaries, prayers and blessings can all be found on the Church website.

#### Roman Catholic Church:

You can watch a daily Mass live from Clifton Cathedral at 9.30am using this link <https://www.churchservices.tv/cliftoncathedral/embed#tab-player>

#### Highworth Methodist Church:

We are streaming a live zoom service every Tuesday evening at 7.30pm. If you wish to take part, please email [highworthmethodistchurch@gmail.com](mailto:highworthmethodistchurch@gmail.com) for the log in details. Rev David presents an online service which is available to watch on youtube at <http://bit.ly/2LpI2B7>. A new video is posted at 10.30am for each Sunday while we are unable to meet together. All previous services are also available to watch.

#### United Reform Church:

There is a full list of URC churches offering live and recorded services at <https://urc.org.uk/latest-news/3385-coronavirus-worshipping-digitally>.

#### Highworth Community Church:

We are publishing daily encouragement on our HCC YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCG1MXSAzh uV0aWk3tYEzyUw>.

Our children's, youth and families work is still active through various media. Contact Jon to see what's happening: 07701 303760 or email [jon@highworthchurch.co.uk](mailto:jon@highworthchurch.co.uk).

You can also access the **Hope for Highworth** YouTube channel at [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpu76C97aCmAue\\_8hfqCXOg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpu76C97aCmAue_8hfqCXOg)

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### Church contacts:

**St Michael's and All Angels Vicar:** Rev Geoff Sowden T: 01793 765554

**St Mary's Roman Catholic Church Priest:** Fr Michael McAndrew T: 01793 535089

**Highworth Methodist Church Minister:** Rev Rachael Wilson T: 01793 764330

**United Reformed Church Minister:** Rev Robert Jordan T: 01793 513039

**Community Church Leader:** Matt Ford T: 07712 521046

## From our MP

As I write this article the New Year has only just begun. I hope everybody had a happy and peaceful Christmas and I am sure you are all glad to see the back of 2020. But, as we are all aware, we continue to face the unprecedented challenges presented by COVID-19.

It seems like a lifetime ago that we first heard about a dangerous virus which had made its way over to the UK from Northern Italy via a 'super spreader.' At the time we were heading into the unknown - it seemed like the news had digested one of the many sci-fi books that tell stories of viruses taking over the world.

Everyone has had to overcome challenges thrown at them by COVID-19. The shopkeeper who has had to keep their doors closed. The care worker who has had to isolate from friends & family in order to continue caring. The office worker who lives alone and has missed out on everyday social interaction. The parents who have had to transform the kitchen table both into an office and into a classroom. And of course, those who have tragically lost loved ones; both those who have succumbed to this awful virus, as well as those who died of other causes but couldn't have their family & friends gather to say goodbye.

It has been a cruel year in many respects and humanity has been pushed to its limits. However, I really do think 2020 will be remembered mostly for the lightness that was thrown onto the darkness by communities across the world.

Firstly, by those brave healthcare workers who time and time again continue to put themselves on the front line in our hospitals. By other key workers who continue to go to work because society needs them more than ever – teachers,

childcare providers, supermarket workers, the police – the list goes on. By every single person who came together to clap on their doorstep for the NHS, by those who donated meals to front line workers, and by those who did the shopping for a vulnerable neighbour or relative. And crucially, by the truly remarkable scientists who have worked day and night to deliver us the life-changing vaccines.

So however hard the last year has been – take comfort from the fact that we all come together, in some way or another.

I know it continues to be a difficult time for all but with the additional Oxford vaccine now being rolled out, and the UK leading the way when it comes to vaccinations, there really is light at the end of the tunnel and with just one last effort from everybody to protect those we hold dear; As HM The Queen said so movingly in her address to the nation last year, 'We will meet again'.

MPs Office, First Floor, Customer Service Hub,  
Orbital Shopping Park, Swindon SN25 4AN  
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[Facebook.com/justintomlinsonofficial](https://www.facebook.com/justintomlinsonofficial)

Twitter @JustinTomlinson



## Help us survive Covid-19

[www.prospect-hospice.net/donate](http://www.prospect-hospice.net/donate) **CLICK HERE TO DONATE**

**Prospect**  
Hospice  
40 YEARS TOGETHER

Thank you to  
**IMAGINE CRUISING**  
who have kindly covered  
all costs for this appeal



Prospect Hospice Ltd. Registered Charity No. 280093

## Extracts of the Minutes of Full Town Council, 24th November 2020

50. UPDATE ON THE DOVECOTE A replacement Dovecote is being designed by two residents in Sevenfields. The investigation into land ownership is ongoing.

TO ACCEPT THE EXTERNAL AUDIT AND TO CONFIRM THE NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF AUDIT 51. Councillors accepted the External Auditors Report on the Annual Governance and Accountability Report. The Notice of Conclusion of Audit is to be published on the 25th November 2020. The Councillors congratulated the Office Team on a clean Audit.

54. RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS FROM AGENDA ITEM 9 a. Resolved by Cllr K Smith and Seconded by Cllr Saunders to exclude the Public and Press from Agenda item 9 on the grounds of avoiding disclosure of personal information. Councillors unanimously agreed. b. In response to the questions asked by Cllr Penny, letters were read out to the Councillors, and advice is being sought regarding the Clerks Retirement Gratuity. c. The position of Town Clerk is to be advertised once the Council has agreed the Person Specification which is to be compiled by the Staffing Committee. HR support by Monahans is to be enlisted to undertake the recruitment process. d. Councillors unanimously agreed that a Locum Clerk could be engaged if required, using Society of Local Council Clerks, to support the office to ensure that staffing levels are adequate to cover Annual Leave. e. All future Committee Meetings are to be Public Meetings with Agendas and Minutes circulated to all Councillors and published on the HTC Website. All Councillors and Members of the public will be permitted to attend Committee Meetings. Any Councillor who is not a Member of a Committee may attend any Meeting of the Committee but their right to participate in the Meeting is to be equal to the Public's right to do so. Councillors are permitted to attend Working Party Meetings of the Council under the same restrictions as the Committee Meetings, these Meetings will not be Public but the Minutes are to be published on the HTC Website.

## HIGHWORTH TOWN COUNCILLORS

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Tel. 01793 762377 / 763511

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If you have a story please email [editorathighworthlink13@gmail.com](mailto:editorathighworthlink13@gmail.com)

## CIRENCESTER

### Snowdrops at Cotswold Farm, Duntisbourne Abbots

Every February we support the National Garden Scheme (NGS) & A Rocha by opening our garden in February to visitors. Unfortunately, due to the current COVID-19 situation, we will not be open. If this changes, we will update our website accordingly. [www.cotswoldfarmgardens.org.uk](http://www.cotswoldfarmgardens.org.uk)

We plan to be open on 12-13 June 2021 via the NGS (National Garden Scheme) and by appointment as soon as we are able.

## FARINGDON

### Faringdon and District U3A by Zoom, Thursday 11th February, 2.30pm

Mike St Maur Sheil will give a talk about World War One by Zoom. Mike is a professional photographer who collaborated with the late Professor Richard Holmes to produce a major photographic exhibition 'Fields of Battle, Lands of Peace'. This considers every theatre of war except Iraq. The exhibition was viewed by 13 million people in nine different countries, and resulted in the creation of an award winning

book for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

This talk can be viewed by Zoom; details will be sent to every U3A member a few days before 11th February. If you are unsure whether you have received the link, search through your computer, including spam and junk mail. It will be there somewhere! No luck? contact Ricky Cunningham on 01367 242626 for help.

## LECHLADE

### *'I need a stable for Saturday, angels in wellies, a real donkey, lots of sheep and CGI!'*

... so shouted Rev. Andrew Cinnamond, who was dressed as a film director and gave out the message of God becoming a human being; the greatest story ever told!

St. Lawrence Church, Lechlade heard the Government say yes to nativity plays in early December so Kathy Newton, who helps with the Crib Service on Christmas Eve, decided to film the Nativity Play outdoors, for online viewing from the 24th December.

The Harris family of Pennyswick Farm, Coleshill, kindly offered their land and barn as a film set.

Then Kathy asked local builder Phil Stevens of Burnett Stevens Build 'BSB', to volunteer for the Church. She was delighted when he agreed! "I hadn't a clue what I was going to be asked to do," said Phil, "But if I can help someone out, I will." But Kathy had





*The Shepherds*



*The baby*



*The Director*



*Angels everywhere!*

heard that video making was his hobby passion!

So, filming went ahead with social distancing, on a chilly Saturday morning. There were no rehearsals and the 15 children who belong to Sunday school, the Church Choir or are friends of Lechlade Church, really pulled out the stops! Tia McBain of Farmor's School was a confident, clear narrator. Little Jen, a donkey from the Porter Family had not been ridden in a while but luckily, she liked Mary and Joseph! Jesus was a beautiful brand, new baby, Evie, who was filmed by Phil in the comfort of her grandparent's home in

Lechlade, with clever use of a green screen cinema technique.

Carol singing from the Church Music Group accompanied by Geoff Holmes was recorded by Phil and he skilfully added in the 'heavenly host' choral music sung by the St Lawrence Church Youth Choir, led by Rachel Bath, the music director. You can see the video here:

<https://vimeo.com/493290903>

Phil used 3 HC-X920full HD cameras, audio mics, tripods, a hand- held stabilizer and a mask!



There were 154 clips to edit and slice together. The Bethlehem night scenes were a challenge on a crisp, sunny December day but if you watch the video, you will see what an amazing job he did. He usually films weddings, baptisms and parties but can now add nativity plays to his list! Fairford readers may remember his film of their town that he produced in 2015 and may like to see this too: <https://vimeo.com/136254527>

Phil Stevens on camera, Jen the donkey Joseph (Lucas Armor) and Mary (Poppy Christie)

The baby pictures were taken in the baby's grandparents' home but using technology it looks like the barn!

*Story: Margaret Hing and Kathy Newton*

## **Calling all gardeners!**

### **Help the Lechlade Lions Grow**

The Lions raise money to serve the Lechlade community, with pharmacy deliveries for those

who are shielding, hardship funds, provision of community transport for groups and the elderly shopping, by providing manpower at local events such as the Traction Rally, Duck Race, Royal International Air Tatoo and more.

In these difficult times for fundraising, we ask that you set aside some of your plant cuttings this autumn and sow seeds next Spring to be sold as seedlings/plants to raise much-needed funds.

You supply the seedlings/cuttings in Spring 2021 and sell to friends, neighbours even hold a plant stall. Get your children to have a competition to raise money by growing the tallest Sunflower for instance. We might even have a map of Lechlade showing where plants can be bought if enough people are prepared to come forward and man a table at their premises.

Last year, as an example, a Lion sold his excess tomato and pepper plants to friends. Just 10 plants raised £33. Think what could be achieved by 100 or more participants.

The money raised is of course yours but we hope you will donate a proportion to the Lechlade Lions page of Virgin Money Giving. The Lions will promote the event and every penny will go to good causes.

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/finalCharityHomepage.action?charityId=1018920>

Help out with new growth and a bumper harvest for 2021!

*The Lechlade and District Lions.*



**LECHLADE and DISTRICT  
LIONS SOW AND REAP 2021  
PROJECT**

**Help raise funds for the Lions to be  
used for local good causes.**

**How?**

**Take Cuttings or Sow seeds.**

**2021 Sell to Family, Friends, Table  
Top sales etc.**

**Have fun and challenge others.**

**Donate the monies raised via the  
Virgin Money Giving Page to  
The Lechlade Lions Charity Reg No  
1179767**

**<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com>  
[www.facebook.com/lechladelions](https://www.facebook.com/lechladelions)**

## **LECHLADE MACMILLAN MAMMOTH QUIZ 2021**

The Lechlade Mammoth Quiz will be run for its 5th year in 2021 as a Virtual Quiz following four successful years at The New Inn in Lechlade, raising £2150.

### **About the quiz**

The Mammoth Quiz is officially a beast. It's the world's biggest simultaneous quiz according to the Guinness Book of Records and thousands of people across the country complete the quiz at the same time.

The Quiz has raised over £413,000 since 2009. All the money you raise from your Mammoth Quiz will help Macmillan to provide millions of people affected by cancer with practical, medical,



emotional and financial support, which is especially important this year with the NHS working so hard dealing with COVID-19.

The Quiz winners will receive a Macmillan Champions Certificate.

### **So How will the Quiz Work?**

You will be given a Zoom Meeting code and password to join the Quiz on Zoom where questions will be put verbally by the Quizmaster. There will be two groups of four rounds (10 questions each) with a break in between. Each Group has a joker which can be applied to a selected round in advance and gives double points. This makes the total points 100 for the quiz. Zoom can be downloaded on a PC or as an App on a tablet or phone and is free, apart from wi-fi or mobile data usage charges if they apply. The quiz starts at 7.45pm on Friday 26th February 2021, but all players must have joined the call by 7.30pm latest.

You will be provided with sheets for answers for each round by email in PDF format for local printing. On completion of every two rounds, please take a photo or scan and return to my email for verification and marking. I will go through the answers after each Group of Rounds, for local marking. You need to ensure you mark the sheet when you apply your joker.

The results will be given out at the end if there is time and sent out by email to all teams, the winners receiving a certificate. The Quizmasters Decision on marks given is final.

### **Donations to Macmillan**

We will not be selling tickets or doing the usual raffle, so we ask you to donate directly to Macmillan. You will be provided with a QR code to scan for a link to the Quiz fundraising page. We suggest a minimum of £7 per person in each team but if you can give more then this helps. I will let everyone know how much has been raised for the Quiz. Donations are preferred before the Quiz takes place. Please ensure the Lead name in each household donates for all so this can be tracked.

### **COVID-19**

Please ensure that any COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time of the Quiz are adhered to, especially social mixing of teams inside.

### **One Virtual Team from different Households**

If you wish to join with another household to form a larger virtual team (max six) then the following applies.

- All players must still join the Zoom meeting and register
- The team leader and team name together with other registered players must be included on the registration form
- The facility to send private messages to others on Zoom on the call allows players in the team to provide input to answers
- The team can set up its own internal comms if they choose
- Only one answer sheet will be provided from the team by the team leader
- Donations can be made by any registered player irrespective of being in another team or not
- All players will be muted for the quiz although they can change this themselves to ask questions for clarity or in order to repeat.

### **What you need?**

If you do not have Zoom or a Zoom account, then you need to set this up using your email.

You need a printer to print sheets  
A mobile camera or scanner to submit answers.  
Pens, Paper and Drinks!

### **Registration**

All participants must register by email no later than 5pm Friday 19th February 2021. You need to provide:-

Lead Name and number of team members. If this includes members in other households then their lead name and member numbers are required

If you use an Alias Zoom Name then this must be given so you are recognised to join the Quiz on Zoom. All registered players are expected to join by video but if this is not possible, please indicate.

- You will receive a confirmation of registration or notification of further details required if necessary.
- You will receive a pdf format set of sheets for

answers and only these will be accepted for verification and marking

- You will receive a QR code for a weblink for donation
- You will receive a Zoom meeting code and password to join the call on 26th February 2021.

I apologise for the detail given but I realise that Zoom and Virtual Quizzes may be new to many.

If you have any questions arising from this guide, please email me directly in plenty of time before the Quiz starts.

Keith Fuller, [kdfmac@gmail.com](mailto:kdfmac@gmail.com)

## STRATTON ST MARGARET

### Lottery for the Scouts

1st Stratton St Margaret Scout Group provides a much loved and valued service for the young people in the community.

Young people in Scouts take part in an exciting programme of activities from Orienteering to Camping. They develop character skills like

resilience, initiative and tenacity, employability skills such as leadership, teamwork and problem solving, and practical skills like cooking and first aid.

The Group are currently fundraising for refurbishment of our toilet/washrooms (approx. £5,000 in total) and replacement of flooring throughout costing £12,000 to £15,000.

We need your help so we can continue to offer and even expand our valued service and so we have started a community lottery to help us fundraise. You can find out more and buy tickets at <http://bit.ly/3n9wExA>

Thank you for your support and good luck!

*Ms Rosalind Gould, Group Trustee*

## SWINDON

### Wessex Male Choir

It's been an odd year. The bins have been out more often than I have and I'm beginning to understand why my dog runs out of the house when the door opens. But all of us at Wessex Male Choir hope that everyone can enjoy Christmas in good health, good spirit and good company.

Unfortunately, the Lockdown rules meant that we haven't been able to rehearse together since early March and so, sadly, performing concerts just hasn't been an option. But we haven't let the grass grow under our feet. Unusually amongst leading Choirs we don't take ourselves too seriously, and a pervasive sense of humour bonds us together, even in times like this. We also miss our friends and supporters and want to keep engaged after such a long absence, so our challenge was to do something which kept us singing together whilst also reaching out to our friends.

Maintaining a connection was a challenge which we met by employing a mix of lesser known audio and video technologies, allied with more well-

known social media apps, YouTube and of course, Zoom.

Earlier this year we produced a great recording and video tweaked from a tune from the musical Oliver: 'Consider Ourselves at Home.' More recently we produced another, this time a piece we had been rehearsing before Lockdown interrupted: David Bowie's 'Life on Mars.'

During November we remembered the fallen in both of the world wars and more recent conflicts, and sent out on various social media channels, a recording from our Steam concert in 2018 of Giorgio Susana's 'Io Resto Qui' with an accompanying video presentation. Sung in our best Italian this is one of our firm favourites, and one that never fails to move us each time we





sing it. Also in November, for the past 2 years, Wessex has enjoyed the privilege of singing on platform 1 of Paddington station, at Great Western Railway's annual remembrance service for employees of the Railway, who lost their lives in the Great War. This year of course, we have not been able to attend but have contributed, once again, with a recording of the fitting 'Blades of Grass and Pure White Stones' by Orrin Hatch. This was played during their service which was streamed via the GWR Facebook page.

The Winter season was busy too with three new Christmas themed pieces being released throughout December. So if you're interested in 'The Wessex's Christmas Message', 'Wessex Pass the Parcel' and 'When we were young,' then have a look at our YouTube Channel <https://bit.ly/3pKtgv8>.

If this sounds appealing and you fancy joining the Choir, why not get in touch? You don't need to be a super singer. If you can sing in tune, learn your words, and turn up regularly at rehearsal, you will be just like the rest of us. It's within your grasp. Sometimes in life, you just need to jump in and give it a go, so why not drop Nick an email: [membership@wessexmalechoir.co.uk](mailto:membership@wessexmalechoir.co.uk) and come along, when possible, to see and hear what we do. What have you got to lose?

John Islip for Wessex Choir

## Watching

*Whilst watching and pondering  
The dogs that trot on by,  
One wonders where the foulers are  
That leave the mess behind?*

*Early morning risers  
Just as the sun is up?  
Bleary eyed, thoughts away ....  
"Fido, hurry up"*

*Late night, round the block  
Before you drop the lock?  
"I'm sure it wasn't my dog,  
We didn't even stop."*

*Who are they?  
What time do they come  
To leave deposits there?  
Those inconsiderate dog owners  
who just don't care?*

Hilary Beach



## LOCAL CONTACTS

<b>Police, Fire, Ambulance</b>	<b>Emergency</b>	<b>999</b>
<b>Police</b>	<b>Non-Emergency</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>NHS</b>	<b>Non-Emergency</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>COVID-19 Test Line</b>	<b>Non-Emergency</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>Gas</b>	<b>Emergency</b>	<b>0800 111999</b>
<b>Electricity</b>	<b>Emergency</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Water</b>	<b>Emergency</b>	<b>0800 3169 800</b>
<b>Pest Control</b>	<b>Non-Emergency</b>	<b>07789 781151</b>

### BUSES

Stagecoach Swindon	01793 521415
Thamesdown Transport	01793 428400
Dial-a-Ride	01793 616050
Community Transport	01793 617828
Traveline	0871 200 2233

### COLLEGES

Cirencester College	01285 640994
New College	0808 172 4445
Swindon College	01793 491591

### LAW & ORDER

Crimestoppers	0800 555111
Victim Supportline	0808 16 89 111
Action Fraud	0300 123 2030

### COUNCILS

Highworth Town Council	01793 762377
Swindon Boro. Council	01793 463000
Streetsmart	01793 445501

### FIRE SAFETY

Home fire safety check	0800 389 7849
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### DOCTORS AND HOSPITALS

Highworth Surgery	01793 762218
Elm Tree Surgery, (Shrivenham)	01793 782207
Great Western Hospital	01793 604020

### LIBRARY

Highworth Library	01793 463500
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### RECREATION

Highworth Rec	01793 762602
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### PHARMACIES

Highworth Pharmacy	01793 762220
Home Farm Pharmacy	01793 861392
Jones Graham Pharmacy (Shrivenham)	01793 783336

### PRESCHOOLS

Highworth Pre-school	01793 766646
Vorda Pre-School	01793 763668
Westgate Nursery	
School & Crèche	01793 861268

### SCHOOLS

Eastrop Infants	01793 763772
Southfield Junior	01793 762210
Westrop Primary	01793 762897
Highworth Warneford	01793 762426

### TAXIS

V Cars	01793 701701
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### TRAINS

National Rail Enquiries	03457 484950
Great Western Railways	03457 000125
Disabled and assisted travel	08001 971329

### OTHER SERVICES

Citizens Advice Bureau	08444 994114
Trading Standards (business)	0207 830 6000
Trading Standards (consumers)	03454 04 05 06
Alcohol and Drug Service	01793 695405
Pest Control	08000 988652
Samaritans	01793 537373
Women's Refuge	01793 610610

## PRAYER PLACE

The churches of Highworth believe that prayer works both on a national and individual level. If you would like us to pray for something or for you please complete this form and drop it into The Bridge, 8 Sheep Street, Highworth or the church or church office of your choice. Photocopies are acceptable.

I would like to be known as: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like you to pray for: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Optional) Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I would like someone to call on me ☐ (Tick if applicable)