

AgeUK Shropshire Telford and Wrekin ext.231	01743 233123
BINS - Waste Management <a href="mailto:customer.service@shropshire.gov.uk">customer.service@shropshire.gov.uk</a>	0345 6789007
CAXTON SURGERY <a href="https://www.caxtonsurgery.co.uk/index.aspx">https://www.caxtonsurgery.co.uk/index.aspx</a>	01691 654646
Citizens Advice Bureau, Castle View	03444 991100
CORBET SCHOOL <a href="http://www.corbetschool.net">www.corbetschool.net</a>	01939 260296
DIAL-A-RIDE, Volunteer Bureau and Qube Arts centre (main switchboard Osw.Community Action)	01691 656882
ELECTRICITY Scottish Power (Manweb as was)	0800 001 5400
KNOCKIN Medical Practice	01691 682203
NHS Out of Hours Service	111
Orthopaedic Hospital	01691 404000
PARISH COUNCIL email: <a href="mailto:westfeltonpc@gmail.com">westfeltonpc@gmail.com</a> <a href="https://www.westfeltonparish.co.uk/">https://www.westfeltonparish.co.uk/</a>	
POLICE, West Mercia Non-Emergency number	101
Oswestry Police Station	0300 333 3000
Safer Neighbourhood team—email: <a href="mailto:oswestryc.snt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk">oswestryc.snt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk</a>	
PRADOE CHURCH: Chairman: Andrew Kenyon	01691 610218
PUNCH BOWL	07543 040618
QUEENS HEAD RESTAURANT	01691 610255
RAIL STATION, GOBOWEN	01691 681010
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH: Fr Philip Holy Mass Saturday 6:30 pm, Sunday 10 am	01691 652248
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SAMARITANS	116 123
SCHOOL – West Felton C E School	01691 610388
SHOP: West Felton Stores	01691 610863
SHROPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL Anti-Social Report Line	0345 6789000 0345 6789020
Your Shrops Councillor: Steve Charmley email: <a href="mailto:steve.charmley@shropshire.gov.uk">steve.charmley@shropshire.gov.uk</a>	01691 587958
ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH: Revd Suzan Williams	01691 674948
Church Warden: Dr Michael Davie	01691 610612
ST. CHAD'S: Chapel Warden: Mrs A Hampson	01691 610845
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION - Secretary	01691 610357
VILLAGE HALL Bookings	01691 610629
WASP Problems Emergency number	01691 831251 / 07772 006994
WATER - Severn Trent Water Authority	0800 783 4444
WOMEN'S INSTITUTE: President: Rhian	07375 997 782

Year 32

JANUARY 2025

# ROUND and ABOUT WEST FELTON

[www.westfeltonmagazine.co.uk](http://www.westfeltonmagazine.co.uk)



# W H A T 'S O N

**Parish Council** Second Tues of the month, 7:30 **School Hall**

**West Felton Walkers** 10am Mondays, Punch Bowl **EXCEPT... see page 51**

**Pilates Class** Tuesday mornings: 2 sessions: 9:30-10:30 & 10:45-11:45am Need to book online GYMATCH. Phone: Abi 07904456368

**Tai Chi** Tuesday 2pm to 3pm, Village Hall

**Badminton** Every Tues evening: 8pm to 9:30pm. Village Hall

**Felton Flexors** Wednesday mornings 9:30am to 10:30am Village Hall

**Table Tennis** Thursday 7:30pm Village Hall

**WI** 2nd Thursday of the month 7pm Village Hall

**Short Mat Bowls** contact Glynnis on 610336

**Royal British Legion** 8pm Meeting, **THE PUNCH BOWL** first Monday of the month except Bank holidays then second Monday.

19 Dec	Thursday 3pm - CHRISTINGLE in West Felton CofE School - all the community are welcome.	
24 Dec	Tues 4pm CHRISTINGLE at WHITTINGTON CHURCH	
24 Dec	Tues 10pm CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE St Michael's Parish Church	
25 Dec	10am PRADOE CHURCH CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE	
2025		
9 Jan	10- 12noon COMMUNITY COFFEE MORNING	
7 Mar25	5:30pm Jack Dent, CHILDREN'S MAGIC SHOW.	

## THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

West Felton Branch Chairman Jim Maxwell  
Branch Sec: Amanda Wood 01691 610 357

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS IN THE PUNCH BOWL 8PM, FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH, EXCEPT BANK HOLIDAYS, THEN SECOND MONDAY.



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The Post Office is located in the entrance lobby  
of the village hall.

Opening time :  
Wednesdays only : 9am until 10:30am.

## Round and About West Felton

Articles/advertisement amendments for inclusion  
in next issue  
to Editor by email (preferred) or phone

Last day for submission of copy and  
Deadline for content changes 10th JANUARY 2025

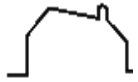
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Tel 01691 610300

[colleenhughes748@btinternet.com](mailto:colleenhughes748@btinternet.com)

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## WEST FELTON PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to West Felton Parish Council: **Mrs Rosemary WOOD**

**Parish Office: 5 Newtown Gardens**

**Baschurch Shrewsbury SY4 2HF Tel 01939 262 881**

Email: [westfeltonpc@gmail.com](mailto:westfeltonpc@gmail.com) Website: [www.westfeltonparish.co.uk](http://www.westfeltonparish.co.uk)

<b>Chairman</b>	Cllr John THORNHILL	07714 759 466
<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	Cllr Ozcan OZAGIR	07955 232 199
Cllr David CURTIS	01691 610 665 (Rep WF Primary School & SALC Area Comm)	
Cllr Alastair FORBES	01691 610 524	
Cllr Kerry GROVE	01691 611 776	
Cllr Marian HESKETH	01691 610 441 (Rep for Village Hall).	
Cllr Chris JONES	01691 610 354	
Cllr Pat MABE	01691 610 400 (Rep SALC Area Comm).	
Cllr Ed NICHOLAS	01691 610 230 (Rep ABP committee)	
Cllr David WALKER	01691 897 117 (Rep Helicopter Noise Group)	
<b>Shropshire Councillor</b>	Cllr Steve CHARMLEY	01691 650 488

### PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS 2024-25

14 January 2025	8 April 2025
11 February 2025	13 May 2025
11 March 2025	

### Road Closure:

**Unnamed road Rednal Mill Rail Bridge, Queens Head**

**Start Date:** 12th February 2025, **End Date:** 13th February 2025

**Purpose:** Road Closure - Detail examination of underbridge. Working times 23:00 - 06:00. Works Promoter: Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd  
Works Promoter Ref: KL431WSJ18478120225MP-01

Enforcement pattern for Unnamed road Rednal Mill Rail Bridge, Queens Head: 23.00 - 06.00hrs.

You can view the closure and diversion route at

<https://one.network/?tm=140996181>

**Should you have any queries regarding this closure, please call Customer Services on 0345 6789006, or contact the Street Works Team on [streetworks@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:streetworks@shropshire.gov.uk).**

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Email: [Karl.Bryant@westmercia.police.uk](mailto:Karl.Bryant@westmercia.police.uk).

PCSO 40373 Stuart Carroll | M: 07970 544372 | Direct Dial: 101 Ext. 7704043

PCSO Kurt Mabe M: 07870 219669

Team email: [oswestryrs.snt@westmercia.police.uk](mailto:oswestryrs.snt@westmercia.police.uk)

OSWESTRY RURAL SOUTH Safer Neighbourhood Team,

West Mercia Police, Oswestry Police Station, Park St, Oswestry, SY11 2HE.

These personal mobile numbers/email addresses can be used to gain quick contact with our local policing team **BUT are not to be used to report new incidents**. All incidents must be reported on either of the two numbers: 101 in the case of non-emergency and 999 for emergencies.

Crimestoppers: 0800 555111

Twitter: @OsCops

Non emergency number : 101 web: [www.westmercia.police.uk](http://www.westmercia.police.uk)



## West Felton Walking Group

We meet at 10.00 am Mondays at the Punch Bowl car park

**EXCEPT** on the first Monday of the month when departure is 9:30 to allow time to travel to our chosen destination for the away day walk. New members always welcome.

**Walk leaders:-**

**Mike Bossen 01691 610623**

**Hilary Iles 01691 610707**

**John & Eileen Hanmer  
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## WEST FELTON PARISH COUNCIL

The December Parish Council meeting was held after the printer's deadline  
for this month's magazine - the report will appear next month.

*To Contact the Parish Council*

*Clerk – Rosemary Wood – 01939 262881*

*Email: [westfeltonpc@googlemail.com](mailto:westfeltonpc@googlemail.com)*

*Website Address - <https://www.westfeltonparish.co.uk>*

*Under the main heading 'Contacts' on first page click on a named person  
and you will be taken to an email contact form to write to them.*

As the Parish Council is not held until after the copy date for the magazine there is little to report. However I am delighted to say that our proposal that the Punch Bowl pub be made an Asset of Community Value (ACV) has been agreed by Shropshire Council. Further information on the value of ACVs can be found here <https://mycommunity.org.uk/what-are-assets-of-community-value-acv>.

It was pleasing to see so many attending the switching on of the Christmas tree lights. Congratulations to those who organised the event which I am sure gave pleasure to many including the children who were there and had contributed to the excellent tree decorations. Thanks also to the Porthywaen Silver Band who played carols to remind us of the true purpose of Christmas, and to the Punch Bowl for allowing Father Christmas to visit our village to meet our children; and arranged a 'Chippie.' I enjoyed one of the best fish and chip suppers for a long while.

I also visited the Christmas Fayre in the Village Hall. The array of crafts was of a very high standard and the Mead I won in a raffle and the sandwich cake were well relished in this wintry weather. The coffee morning was a good introduction to the spirit and enjoyment of Christmas giving me an opportunity to buy some beautiful Christmas cards.

These events are a testament to the talents we have among our parishioners. Thank you all for what you do. I encourage more to join in these important events. I wish you all a happy and blessed Christmas.

***John Thornhill, Chairman, West Felton Parish Council***



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Ensure your dog is always  
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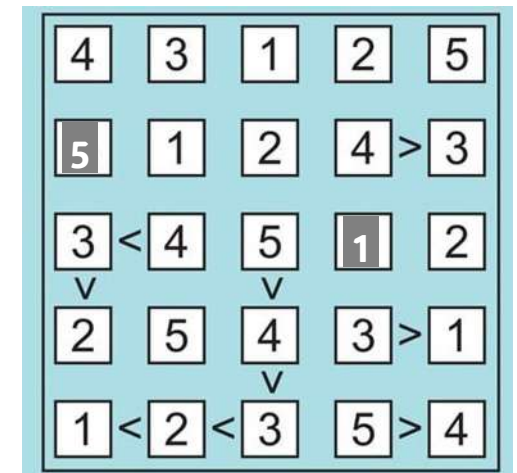
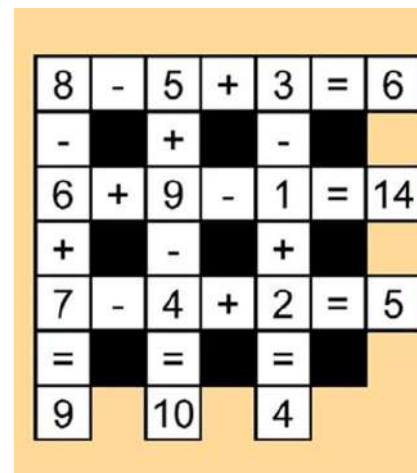
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(Continued from page 45)

17. What is the last day of Advent?
18. In Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol", how many ghosts visit Scrooge?
19. In "A Christmas Carol", what does Scrooge have for his Christmas dinner?
20. Which country is known for its tradition of a "witch" delivering presents to children at Christmas?
21. Which saint's day is celebrated on 26th December?
22. In which ocean can you find Christmas Island?
23. What time is the King's speech usually broadcast on Christmas Day?
24. How many Scrabble points for the word 'Christmas'?
25. Where is the tradition of filling children's clogs with candy?
26. Which most popular toy of 1980 was designed by a professor of architecture in Budapest to teach his students about spatial awareness?

Answers  
next  
month

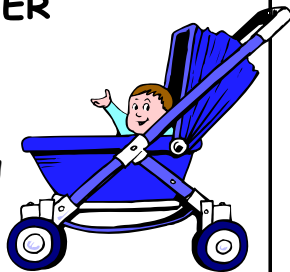




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Happy New Year!

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£1.50 entry includes tea/coffee, biscuits.

Bacon baps £1 extra



## Carols at St Michael's Parish Church

The formal, traditional Carol Service on 1st December featured the children's choir from Packwood School and was declared a wonderful event, much enjoyed by the congregation who filled the church.

In spite of storm Darragh, the church was again full of music and meaningful readings on the afternoon of Sunday 8th for the **Community Carol Service**. Carols that raised the roof; stories that amused, I don't think any of us will sing Away in a Manger again without a smile, thanks to 'Wayne'. At 'great expense', we were told, there was a BOY BAND! Called The Three Gentlemen, they sang beautifully.

Afterwards delicious refreshments for the happy social gathering of friends and neighbours.

From all at your parish church:



**"Write it on your heart  
that every day  
is the best day  
in the year."**

**Ralph Waldo Emerson**





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## CHRISTMAS TRIVIA

1. The Twelve Days of Christmas finishes on which date traditionally?
2. Which of Santa's reindeer comes first alphabetically?
3. The Trafalgar Square Christmas Tree is a gift from which city to London, a longstanding tradition since 1947?
4. If you're born on Christmas day, what's your star sign?
5. The original name for mistletoe was mistaltan. With 'Tan' coming from the Anglo Saxon word for stick, mistletoe literally translates to what on a stick?
6. How do you say 'Merry Christmas' in Spanish?
7. Which country is Europe's largest exporter of natural Christmas trees?
8. What do elves typically have on their shoes?
9. What colour suit did Santa Claus originally wear before the iconic red suit?
10. What type of bird usually appears on Christmas cards?
11. What gifts did the three wise men give Jesus?
12. What are small, inexpensive gifts usually called?
13. Which reindeer's name means 'thunder'?
14. In which modern-day country was Saint Nicholas born?
15. What's the main colour of the berries of the mistletoe plant?
16. Which country is credited with the creation of the Christmas beverage, eggnog?

(Continued on page 47)

## Annual property review 2024

Are you curious about the value  
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- Have you simply outgrown your home?
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## WEST FELTON CARNIVAL COMMITTEE

Festive Fun a Huge Success:  
Father Christmas, Christmas Tree Lights  
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Despite the weather lots of people came out to see the West Felton Christmas Tree lights switched on. The mulled wine and cakes helped to keep the cold at bay, while the Porthywaen Band brought everyone into the festive spirit.

A cheque for £500 was presented to West Felton Primary School. Thank you to everyone who bought a bauble to support our local school. We hope you were able to spot your name on the tree!

Father Christmas was very busy, chatting and providing presents to over 50 children. He's certainly going to be busy making all the presents from everyone's list in time for Christmas Day!

The Fish & Chip Van was a particularly welcome sight after braving the rain and went down a treat! Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year  
from the West Felton Carnival Committee!



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## Up the Garden Path with Topiarius

### Gardener's progress

One part of our winter changes was to remove a small hedge surrounding a paved sitting area which had encroached too far. After due contemplation, we decided to keep it open with just wood rails and stair spindles, and we are pleased with the result. We also bit the bullet and cleaned the pond. This proved to be a lot easier than feared, mainly due to there being very little mud at the bottom. Excess oxygenating plants came out without much effort but removing a water lily was quite a struggle. Having got it out we decided that it was not going back after pruning as we had to admit the pond really wasn't big enough for such a vigorous plant. We now need to find smaller things to take its place. We are still staring at the shady area that we had to accept would not grow grass in search of inspiration, so that remains a work in progress. However, we have made excellent progress on renovating hard landscaping, with particular thanks to a good dry Autumn spell without frost.

I have observed before that a garden is not complete without seats, if for nothing else than to pause to properly take in the scene. There is also the need for rest from gardening activity, and a few years ago I added a number of simple brick and slab resting places to counter the advancing years. Seats can also have special significance as in those

dedicated to the memory of people associated with a garden. Our garden is not in the class of having people sponsor seats so we had to provide our own commemorative resting places. Most recently, we commissioned a pair of wrought iron chairs to mark our 60th wedding anniversary which now occupy a prime position on a terrace near the back door. Perhaps they will encourage us to sit and enjoy our garden a bit more because, I suspect like most gardeners, we find it difficult to just sit as there is always that feeling that we should be doing something. Actually, looking at your garden is not wasting time because, apart from appreciating the results of your labours, it the only way of seeing the less obvious things that need changing.

The gardening to do list is not overflowing in January but, as weather allows, it is time to spread lime if pH of vegetable areas needs adjusting and/or applying sulphur chips to lime haters like rhododendrons. There is also need to complete winter pruning. Some people make a big effort to have at least a few things in flower every month but we do not put this high on our list, and our garden is certainly not in a good state for viewing at this time of year. However, we will be looking forward to the new growing season and it is not too early to make a start on clearing paths of accumulated leaves etc. ♦

*Happy new gardening Year!*



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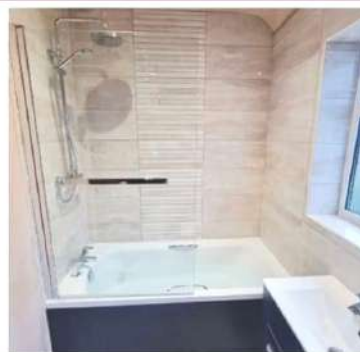
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**Shropshire Council** is supporting residents to learn to use technology safely through The Digital Skills Programme. The service has 25 digital hubs across the area for people who need help to use their laptops, mobile phones or tablets. Learning slowly, taking small steps and having the time to practice are keys to success.

The programme is delivered by experienced, friendly digital volunteers based within Shropshire Libraries and local community organisations. Free data and devices are available for those in greatest need.

*"I felt left behind and knew I needed to do something to bring myself up to date," said Peter, who has benefitted from the programme. "My digital volunteer was so knowledgeable and patient. His kindness helped me to realise that I knew a lot more than I thought I did. Getting out of the house each week to learn something new gave me a boost and I thoroughly enjoyed my sessions."*

**For more information visit :**

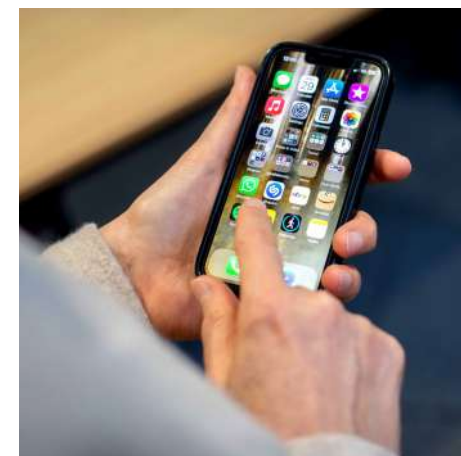
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## Anti-Social Behaviour Awareness Week



It was anti-social awareness week at the end of November and PCSOs Stuart Carroll and Kurt Mabe visited West Felton CofE Primary School to talk to the KS2 children about anti-social behaviour and its impact on the community.



The children were challenged to design posters to prevent anti-social behaviour. The Police were really impressed with the standard of entrants and displayed them on their Neighbourhood Matters forum.

Lily was our overall winner, Lily shared her poster in assembly and received a book as a prize.

The police particularly liked Lily's clear but impactful message to those thinking of committing anti-social behaviour...

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(Continued from page 37)

balloons floated under the hot-water-bottle-gulping gas; everything was good again and shone over the town. "Perhaps it was a ghost," Jim said. "Perhaps it was trolls," Dan said, who was always reading. "Let's go in and see if there's any jelly left," Jack said. And we did that. Always on Christmas night there was music. An uncle played the fiddle, a cousin sang "Cherry Ripe," and another uncle sang "Drake's Drum." It was very warm in the little house. Auntie Hannah, who had got on to the pars-

nip wine, sang a song about Bleeding Hearts and Death, and then another in which she said her heart was like a Bird's Nest; and then everybody laughed again; and then I went to bed. Looking through my bedroom window, out into the moonlight and the unending smoke-coloured snow, I could see the lights in the windows of all the other houses on our hill and hear the music rising from them up the long, steadily falling night. I turned the gas down, I got into bed. I said some words to the close and holy darkness, and then I slept." ♦



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**102 years on ...**

**The Poppy Appeal in  
West Felton and  
Ruyton XI Towns**

In 1922, the ex-Servicemen of West Felton formed a sub-branch of the British Legion under the jurisdiction of Oswestry Branch. After WWII many ex-Service men and women joined the Legion; by 1948 West Felton membership was between 60 and 70 when it was decided that West Felton would form its own branch, this was finalised in March 1948. All the founding members served the Legion enthusiastically for the rest of their lives, often followed by their sons and daughters.

Traditionally our Branch was renowned for raising the highest donation *per capita* in Shropshire. Although times have changed and the ways to donate have multiplied, no longer depending on collectors going door to door, now we can donate online, by phone, by supporting the Poppy Concert in the hall, through the Poppy Shop and many other ways. Nevertheless, West Felton and Ruyton donated locally this year more than £3076, bringing the total collected over the past 10 years to nearly £40,000.

West Felton Branch would like to thank the Orthopaedic Choir and the school-children and teachers; the shop; the pubs, everyone who gave a home to a static donation box, the collectors and most importantly, the members of the general public of West Felton and Ruyton XI Towns for their generosity.



**Your donations help the Royal British Legion to provide invaluable support to the Armed Forces community.**

Whilst the two-week period of the Poppy Appeal is over, the work of the Legion continues. In West Felton, down recent years nature has taken its course, the membership has dwindled. Members mourned the loss just recently of two stalwarts of the branch, Dave Jones and Keith Diggins. Others have resigned through age, proximity or ill health.

Now we need new blood in the branch. Membership is open to all, not just those in the military and ex-military family. Members meet monthly, thanks to the kindness of Sally, Paul and Mark in the Punch Bowl Inn - but this is not a drinking club, this is a community charitable enterprise open to women, men, young and old.

We can see from the huge enthusiasm for the Poppy Concert each year that many West Felton people recognise the Legion's work in support of the Armed Forces family.

**Perhaps a few hours each month to meet with like-minded people and keep the Branch going is something you might think about?** And perhaps you might enjoy meeting new friends and neighbours in a happy social atmosphere? ♦



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*(Continued from page 35)*

"What would you do if you saw two hippos?"

Iron-flanked and bellowing he-hippos clanked and battered through the scudding snow towards us as we passed Mr. Daniel's house.

"Let's post Mr. Daniel a snowball through his letter box."

"Let's write things in the snow."

"Let's write, 'Mr. Daniel looks like a spaniel' all over his lawn."

Or we walked on the white shore.

"Can the fishes see it's snowing?"

The silent one-clouded heavens drifted on to the sea. Now we were snow-blind travellers lost on the north hills, and vast dewlapped dogs, with flasks round their necks, ambled and sham-bled up to us, baying "Excelsior." We returned home through the poor streets where only a few children fumbled with bare red fingers in the wheel-rutted snow and cat-called after us, their voices fading away, as we trudged uphill, into the cries of the dock birds and the hooting of ships out in the whirling bay. And then, at tea the recovered Uncles would be jolly; and the ice cake loomed in the centre of the table like a marble grave. Auntie Hannah laced her tea with rum, because it was only once a year.

Bring out the tall tales now that we told by the fire as the gaslight bubbled like a diver. Ghosts whoood like owls in the long nights when I dared

not look over my shoulder; animals lurked in the cubbyhole under the stairs where the gas meter ticked. And I remember that we went singing carols once, when there wasn't the shaving of a moon to light the flying streets. At the end of a long road was a drive that led to a large house, and we stumbled up the darkness of the drive that night, each one of us afraid, each one holding a stone in his hand in case, and all of us too brave to say a word. The wind through the trees made noises as of old and unpleasant and maybe webfooted men wheezing in caves. We reached the black bulk of the house.

"What shall we give them? Hark the Herald?"

"No," Jack said, "Good King Wenceslas. I'll count three."

One, two, three, and we began to sing, our voices high and seemingly distant in the snow-felted darkness round the house that was occupied by nobody we knew. We stood close together, near the dark door.

Good King Wenceslas looked out  
On the Feast of Stephen...

And then a small, dry voice, like the voice of someone who has not spoken for a long time, joined our singing: a small, dry, eggshell voice from the other side of the door: a small, dry voice through the keyhole. And when we stopped running we were outside our house; the front room was lovely;

*(Continued on page 39)*



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## SINGING IN LANGUAGE BELOVED....

*Michael Davie*

"Singing in language beloved of the congregation, the service commences. The church is growing and provides the congregation with a sense of community. People like the music and the language gives them comfort. The church does not seek particularly to attract members from outside the background of the congregation. All its ministers are from the same background. They like the exclusivity," states a newspaper article..

Another church recognises its exclusivity but actively seeks to disown it. Such is its anguish that it has published a report outlining how exclusivity is preventing advancement of certain people. The report bewails that fact that congregations are homogenous. It admonishes itself that congregations are prejudiced. This church is in decline.

The two churches have much in common. They have a sense of exclusivity which is encouraged by one church and lamented by the other. Each like their own language and music. One church however wishes to retain its own community; the other wishes to become catholic – all things to all men (and women)

some say.

Comparing the two churches is possibly dishonest. The first church is the Redeemed Christian Church of God, a Nigerian Pentecostal church based in Croydon. They pray in their own language and make their music with drums and an instrument called a shekere made from the shell of a fruit. Whole families come along to services. What they believe can be a little elastic, but the community spirit is supreme. They don't particularly want anyone not of African heritage to join – it is a church for Africans.

The second church will be familiar to everyone. The Church of England is seeking to be a universal church. It is ashamed that most of its congregation is (rather inevitably) white and that there is prejudice against clergy of colour either being appointed to incumbencies or rising up the hierarchy. In trying to be universal, this church encounters feelings that are distinct from universality. The Church of England is itself a splinter group from the Church of Rome, which itself saw the Eastern Orthodox church split off in the 11th century. In the history of the church in England since the reign of Henry VIII, there has been a succession of breaks. The Wesleyans formed a separate church in the 18th Century

*(Continued on page 23)*

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*(Continued from page 33)*

white bowling green and back, as he would take it wet or fine on Christmas Day or Doomsday; sometimes two hale young men, with big pipes blazing, no overcoats and wind blown scarfs, would trudge, unspeaking, down to the forlorn sea, to work up an appetite, to blow away the fumes, who knows, to walk into the waves until nothing of them was left but the two curling smoke clouds of their inextinguishable briars. Then I would be slap-dashing home, the gravy smell of the dinners of others, the bird smell, the brandy, the pudding and mince, coiling up to my nostrils, when out of a snow-clogged side lane would come a boy the spit of myself, with a pink-tipped cigarette and the violet past of a black eye, cocky as a bullfinch, leering all to himself.

I hated him on sight and sound, and would be about to put my dog whistle to my lips and blow him off the face of Christmas when suddenly he, with a violet wink, put his whistle to his lips and blew so stridently, so high, so exquisitely loud, that gobbling faces, their cheek bulged with goose, would press against their tinselled windows, the whole length of the white echoing street. For dinner we had turkey and blazing pudding, and after dinner the Uncles sat in front of the fire, loosened all buttons, put their large moist hands over their watch chains, groaned a little and slept. Mothers, aunts and sisters scuttled to and fro,

bearing tureens. Aunt Bessie, who had already been frightened, twice, by a clock-work mouse, whimpered at the sideboard and had some elderberry wine. The dog was sick. Auntie Dosie had to have three aspirins, but Auntie Hannah, who liked port, stood in the middle of the snowbound back yard, singing like a big-bosomed thrush. I would blow up balloons to see how big they would blow up to; and, then when they burst, which they all did, the Uncles jumped and rumbled. In the rich and heavy afternoon, the Uncles breathing like dolphins and the snow descending, I would sit among festoons and Chinese lanterns and nibble dates and try to make a model man-o'-war, following the Instructions for Little Engineers, and produce what might be mistaken for a sea-going tramcar.

Or I would go out, my bright new boots squeaking, into the white world, on to the seaward hill, to call on Jim and Dan and Jack and to pad through the still streets, leaving huge deep footprints on the hidden pavements.

"I bet people will think there've been hippos."

"What would you do if you saw a hippo coming down our street?"

"I'd go like this, bang! I'd throw him over the railings and roll him down the hill and then I'd tickle him under the ear and he'd wag his tail."

*(Continued on page 37)*

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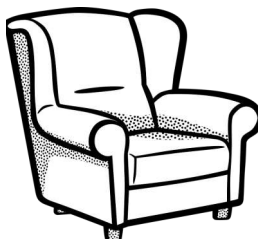


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(Continued from page 21) Singing in a language ... whilst a succession of free churches sought to meet the different needs of the population. High Anglicanism threatened the mainstream church in the 19th Century: the Welsh broke away from the Church of England about 100 years ago whilst some parishes in England still feel the effects of High Church vs moderate church 100 years ago.

Not all these new churches have stood the test of time. Indeed it might be argued that the Church of England is struggling in its aim to accommodate all of branches under its roof. It is always difficult to draw conclusions from data like these, but some features do stand out.

It is evident that ways of practising faith evolve and customs change. This appears to be a function of culture and of age. The average person attending a conventional Church of England service is what might be termed "middle of the road". They are of a certain age – mostly over 65yrs and during childhood were exposed to Sunday school and in many instances in main school some form of Scripture was taught. There was even an 'O' level (the term itself dates it) in Scripture consisting entirely of Biblical studies. This

group has evolved slowly. Some have resisted any change. Hence there are conservative Evangelicals who have their own Bishop (Maidstone), and another group which cannot accept the priestly or episcopal ministry of women (Ebbsfleet). Younger people have not had the traditional upbringing and reject conventional services based on a liturgy almost 500 years old. Hence the rise of Free churches such as Hope church. Different cultures demand different approaches as exemplified in the Nigerian church.

The experience also shows that ways of worship tend to have a finite time before they succumb to a new way of worship. That time may be long – a century or more – before new ways of worship are demanded. The Church of England tries to be all inclusive – it is after the established state church. In so doing it does risk upsetting some groups. As we espouse the values of a multicultural society, the trend is away from conformity towards a worship based on variables including culture, language, sex and tradition. In encompassing all these components and others under its umbrella, the Church of England is setting itself a demanding mission. ♦

*All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree.*  
**Albert Einstein**





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rang a bell; never a catapult; once, by a mistake that no one could explain, a little hatchet; and a celluloid duck that made, when you pressed it, a most unducklike sound, a mewling moo that an ambitious cat might make who wished to be a cow; and a painting book in which I could make the grass, the trees, the sea and the animals any colour I please, and still the dazzling sky-blue sheep are grazing in the red field under the rainbow-billed and pea-green birds. Hard-boiled, toffee, fudge and allsorts, crunches, cracknel, humbugs, glaciers, marzipan, and butterwelsh for the Welsh. And troops of bright tin soldiers who, if they could not fight, could always run. And Snakes-and-Families and Happy Ladders. And Easy Hobbi-Games for Little Engineers, complete with instructions. Oh, easy for Leonardo! And a whistle to make the dogs bark to wake up the old man next door to make him beat on the wall with his stick to shake our picture off the wall. And a packet of cigarettes: you put one in your mouth and you stood at the corner of the street and you waited for hours, in vain, for an old lady to scold you for smoking a cigarette, and then with a smirk you ate it. And then it was breakfast under the balloons."

"Were there Uncles like in our house?"

"There are always Uncles at Christmas. The same Uncles. And on Christ-

mas mornings, with dog-disturbing whistle and sugar fags, I would scour the swathed town for the news of the little world, and find always a dead bird by the Post Office or the white deserted swings; perhaps a robin, all but one of his fires out. Men and women wading, scooping back from chapel, with taproom noses and wind-bussed cheeks, all albinos, huddled their stiff black jarring feathers against the irreligious snow. Mistletoe hung from the gas brackets in all the front parlors; there was sherry and walnuts and bottled beer and crackers by the dessertspoons; and cats in their fur-about watched the fires; and the high-heaped fire spat, all ready for the chestnuts and the mulling pokers. Some few large men sat in the front parlours, without their collars, Uncles almost certainly, trying their new cigars, holding them out judiciously at arms' length, returning them to their mouths, coughing, then holding them out again as though waiting for the explosion; and some few small aunts, not wanted in the kitchen, nor anywhere else for that matter, sat on the very edges of their chairs, poised and brittle, afraid to break, like faded cups and saucers."

Not many those mornings trod the piling streets: an old man always, fawn-bowled, yellow-gloved and, at this time of year, with spats of snow, would take his constitutional to the

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## West Felton CofE Primary School And Willow Class

Willow Class is made up of children in  
 Years 4 and 5 and



our classroom is in the oldest part of the school.

In the Autumn term we learnt about the Anglo Saxons and Vikings who invaded and settled in Britain.

Did you know the Angles gave England its name? (Angle land became England)

We made lots of local links, visiting the mound behind the church and looking at place names in Shropshire, many of which have Anglo Saxon origins. We decided we would prefer living in our houses today rather than those in Anglo Saxon West Felton!

We also had a visit from Shrewsbury Museum in which we studied all things Viking— writing messages in runes, sewing leather goods, dressing up and investigating artefacts and a Viking burial. Presently there is also a fleet of amazing Viking longships, that the children created for homework, sailing in our class-room.

Next term you may see Willow class out and about in the village as we look at how West Felton has changed over the years.



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and mittened on them manfully. But all that the children could hear was a ringing of bells."

"You mean that the postman went rat-a-tat-tat and the doors rang?"

"I mean that the bells that the children could hear were inside them."

"I only hear thunder sometimes, never bells."

"There were church bells, too."

"Inside them?"

"No, no, no, in the bat-black, snow-white belfries, tugged by bishops and storks. And they rang their tidings over the bandaged town, over the frozen foam of the powder and ice-cream hills, over the crackling sea. It seemed that all the churches boomed for joy under my window; and the weathercocks crew for Christmas, on our fence."

"Get back to the postmen."

"They were just ordinary postmen, fond of walking and dogs and Christmas and the snow. They knocked on the doors with blue knuckles...."

"Ours has got a black knocker...."

"And then they stood on the white Welcome mat in the little, drifted porches and huffed and puffed, making ghosts with their breath, and jogged from foot to foot like small boys wanting to go out."

"And then the presents?"

"And then the Presents, after the Christmas box. And the cold postman,

with a rose on his button-nose, tingled down the tea-tray-slithered run of the chilly glinting hill. He went in his ice-bound boots like a man on fishmonger's slabs.

"He wagged his bag like a frozen camel's hump, dizzily turned the corner on one foot, and, by God, he was gone."

"Get back to the Presents."

"There were the Useful Presents: engulfing mufflers of the old coach days, and mittens made for giant sloths; zebra scarfs of a substance like silky gum that could be tug-o'-warred down to the galoshes; blinding tam-o'-shanters like patchwork tea cozies and bunny-suited busbies and balaclavas for victims of head-shrinking tribes; from aunts who always wore wool next to the skin there were mustached and rasping vests that made you wonder why the aunts had any skin left at all; and once I had a little crocheted nose bag from an aunt now, alas, no longer whinnying with us. And pictureless books in which small boys, though warned with quotations not to, would skate on Farmer Giles's pond and did and drowned; and books that told me everything about the wasp, except why."

"Go on to the Useless Presents."

"Bags of moist and many-colored jelly babies and a folded flag and a false nose and a tram-conductor's cap and a machine that punched tickets and

(Continued on page 33)



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## WEST FELTON WI (WFWI)

The Annual Meeting was held 14th Nov in the Village Hall. President Gillian welcome Kerry Grove, Independent Teller for the Annual

meeting. WFWI Policies were reviewed and deemed to be in

order. The Financial Statement and Budget, having been emailed earlier to members, were officially adopted with thanks to the Treasurer and those who contributed.

**Committee for 2024:** The committee agreed to a short meeting after supper when committee members volunteered for the roles of Treasurer, Correspondence Secretary and Minutes Secretary. The 2024 Committee remains unchanged with the exception of the resignation of Ann.

The officers and various sub-group leaders gave their annual reports thanking everyone for support and hard work throughout the year. Gifts were presented to officers standing down and to Ann, stepping down from committee after 40 years a dedicated member of WFWI.

Guest Teller Kerry oversaw the election of Rhian as the new President.

The regular November meeting followed. Gillian welcomed one new member, Charmaine.

WFWI annual Bursary two available £50 each towards and educational course. Members were reminded to read and sign the risk assessment, a requirement for WI meetings. Birthdays were acknowledged, thank-yous noted from recipients of cards and flowers delivered during the previous month. Library books were available for anyone who wants them.

Members attending the Group meeting hosted by St Martin's WI reported it was very entertaining.

**Forthcoming Events:** Fundraising continues to be a vital part of membership. Members were encouraged to support events in order to raise funds for extra outings etc.

- Plans for the Christmas Fair Saturday 30th Nov. 1-3pm were discussed.
- Group Carol Service Monday 2nd December St Martins Church 7pm. Board.
- The WFWI Christmas meal was set for Wednesday 4th Dec. Queens Head
- Cocktail making, Sat 18th January 7-9pm. Village Hall.
- Glass necklace workshop, Sat 8th Feb 1.30pm VH £2 per person
- January meeting is a Members Night. Members to bring a wrapped parcel to the value of £3 to £5.

There followed an evening of musical entertainment by Clare Harrison. She sang beautifully a selection of songs from musical theatre – show stoppers from Rogers and Hammerstein, Wizard of Oz, Phantom of the Opera and the Greatest Showman to name but a few. Date of next meeting 12th Dec 2024, 7pm. ♦

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## ***A Child's Christmas in Wales***

Dylan Thomas

One Christmas was so much like the other, in those years around the sea-town corner now, out of all sound except the distant speaking of the voices I sometimes hear a moment before sleep, that I can never remember whether it snowed for six days and six nights when I was twelve, or whether it snowed for twelve days and twelve nights when I was six.

All the Christmases roll down towards the two-tongued sea, like a cold and headlong moon bundling down the sky that was our street; and they stop at the rim of the ice-edged, fish-freezing waves, and I plunge my hands in the snow and bring out whatever I can find. In goes my hand into that wool-white bell-tongued ball of holidays resting at the rim of the carol-singing sea, and out come Mrs. Prothero and the firemen.

It was on the afternoon of the day of Christmas Eve, and I was in Mrs. Prothero's garden, waiting for cats, with her son Jim. It was snowing. It was always snowing at Christmas. December, in my memory, is white as Lapland, although there were no reindeers. But there were cats. Patient, cold and callous, our hands wrapped in socks, we waited to snowball the cats. Sleek and long as jaguars and horrible-whiskered, spitting and snarling, they would slide and sidle over the white back-garden walls, and the

lynx-eyed hunters, Jim and I, fur-capped and moccasined trappers from Hudson Bay, off Mumbles Road, would hurl our deadly snowballs at the green of their eyes.

The wise cats never appeared. We were so still, Eskimo-footed arctic marksmen in the muffling silence of the eternal snows—eternal, ever since Wednesday—that we never heard Mrs. Prothero's first cry from her igloo at the bottom of the garden. Or, if we heard it at all, it was, to us, like the far-off challenge of our enemy and prey, the neighbour's polar cat. But soon the voice grew louder. "Fire!" cried Mrs. Prothero, and she beat the dinner-gong.

And we ran down the garden, with the snowballs in our arms, towards the house; and smoke, indeed, was pouring out of the dining-room, and the gong was bombilating, and Mrs. Prothero was announcing ruin like a town crier in Pompeii. This was better than all the cats in Wales standing on the wall in a row. We bounded into the house, laden with snowballs, and stopped at the open door of the smoke-filled room.

Something was burning all right; perhaps it was Mr. Prothero, who always slept there after midday dinner with a newspaper over his face. But he was standing in the middle of the room, saying, "A fine Christmas!" and

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smacking at the smoke with a slipper. "Call the fire brigade," cried Mrs. Prothero as she beat the gong. "They won't be here," said Mr. Prothero, "it's Christmas."

There was no fire to be seen, only clouds of smoke and Mr. Prothero standing in the middle of them, waving his slipper as though he were conducting.

"Do something," he said.

And we threw all our snowballs into the smoke—I think we missed Mr. Prothero—and ran out of the house to the telephone box.

"Let's call the police as well," Jim said.

"And the ambulance."

"And Ernie Jenkins, he likes fires."

But we only called the fire brigade, and soon the fire engine came and three tall men in helmets brought a hose into the house and Mr. Prothero got out just in time before they turned it on. Nobody could have had a noisier Christmas Eve. And when the firemen turned off the hose and were standing in the wet, smoky room, Jim's Aunt, Miss Prothero, came downstairs and peered in at them. Jim and I waited, very quietly, to hear what she would say to them. She said the right thing, always. She looked at the three tall firemen in their shining helmets, standing among the smoke and cinders and dissolving snowballs, and she said:

"Would you like anything to read?"

Years and years ago, when I was a boy, when there were wolves in Wales, and birds the colour of red-flannel petticoats whisked past the harp-shaped hills, when we sang and wallowed all night and day in caves that smelt like Sunday afternoons in damp front farmhouse parlours, and we chased, with the jawbones of deacons, the English and the bears, before the motor car, before the wheel, before the duchess-faced horse, when we rode the daft and happy hills bareback, it snowed and it snowed. But here a small boy says: "It snowed last year, too. I made a snowman and my brother knocked it down and I knocked my brother down and then we had tea."

"But that was not the same snow," I say. "Our snow was not only shaken from whitewash buckets down the sky, it came shawling out of the ground and swam and drifted out of the arms and hands and bodies of the trees; snow grew overnight on the roofs of the houses like a pure and grandfather moss, minutely ivied the walls and settled on the postman, opening the gate, like a dumb, numb thunderstorm of white, torn Christmas cards."

"Were there postmen then, too?"

"With sparkling eyes and wind-cherried noses, on spread, frozen feet they crunched up to the doors

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