

DECEMBER 2011

SUCKLEY NEWSLETTER



A Festive Feast for Suckley

As the tension mounts during the Christmas season, it's sometimes hard to look up from the endless list of must-do's, want-to-do's and how-on-earth-am-I going-to -do's to actually get into the Christmas spirit. Suckley Newsletter is here to give you some well earned time out and do our best to help kindle that tingle of Christmas excitement.

Firstly there's a warm up lap with Suckley author Steve Gray revisiting his championship past, very closely followed by an update on some very exciting activities at the village school, including their own cookbook! Then we're off to the Far East on a wonderful adventure in search of exotic plants and flowers with Adrian Holmes, the Newsletter's very own horticultural specialist.

Getting right to the heart of what Christmas really is all about, is a thought provoking letter from Andrew Bullock, and for those whose thoughts turn to their stomach at this time of the year, a 'cracker' of a Christmas pudding recipe. There are, of course, all the details of the Christmas and New Year Church services, and if you're feeling creative, how to make your own Christmas star decoration for any fiddly fingers.

Looking into next year, we have a new Suckley website from the Parish Council, plans for a Flower Festival, details of the Neighbourhood Development Plan and how it will affect us all and a new look for the Talbot. There is also Surgery News, flu jabs, an extended area and appointment reminder texts, and the Parish Council have been super busy with new members, speeding cameras, salt bins, flood barriers, footpaths and plans for the Diamond Jubilee.

A proper feast of a newsletter!

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and Happy New Year!

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Email: suckleynews@gmail.com

Next Issue: First week in February 2012

Content for newsletter to be submitted **25th January 2012**.

Suckley Post Office: Roger & Barbara Blackburn - 884201.

Shop Open: Mon – Fri 7.00am – 6.00pm, Sat 7.00am – 1.00pm

Post Office Open: Mon – Fri 9.00am – 5.30pm (till 1.00pm Weds)

Sat 9.00am – 12.30pm

Village websites – for up to date information on what is happening in the village as well as a list of businesses and trades: www.suckleypo.co.uk & www.suckley.net

Village Hall: Steve Boughton - 884210

Suckley School: Mr Matthew Meckin - 884283

Suckley & Alfrick Pre-School: Joanne Hall - 884766

Church: Wardens: Dr Anne M Lewis – 884552

Parish Clerk: Mrs Diana Taylor - 01684 569430

District Councillors: Mr D Hughes - 833049, Mr A Warburton - 832753

Playing Fields: Bookings & Pitches Mr & Mrs Luton – 884558

Skateboard Arena: Mr P Beaumont – 884550

West Mercia Constabulary: Emergency 999. Other matters 0300 333 3000

PC3381 Sarah Ransome-Williams, CSO 6494 Tracey Caldwell,

CSO 5481 Collin Davies.

Have YOU something to say?

We welcome all contributions to the newsletter and are very grateful to those who have written for this issue. If you would like to write something (or ask a question) for the newsletter, whether it is about a Suckley past or what the village needs for the future, please get in touch – call Hilary on 884355 or email suckleynews@gmail.com

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Steve Gray - Kart Champion

After a break from racing Karts (and winning competitions), Steve Gray returns to the track to see if he still has the speed and fitness to return to racing.



After an absence of almost nine years a chance remark to a client led to an opportunity to drive a Kart again. Most people call them Go-Karts but the racing fraternity get a touch precious about the correct form of address. Go-Karts are for kiddies! So it was that on a wonderful sunny October afternoon I arrived at Whilton Mill Kart Circuit in the rolling Northamptonshire countryside for a one hour test session to find out if I still had what it takes.

Standing by the side of the circuit, breathing in the fumes from hot racing engines brought back many memories, not all of them good, but it did make me realise how much I had missed not only the competition but the camaraderie.

The Karts looked frighteningly fast. Many people will have driven a four stroke

kart on indoor circuits but a two stroke racing machine is a different beast altogether. They will accelerate to sixty miles per hour in 3 seconds - almost as quick as a Formula One car (a F1 car takes roughly 2.5 seconds to accelerate to 60 from a standing start) and give a top speed (depending on the circuit and gearing) of up to 90 miles per hour. There is no clutch and just a single disc brake on the solid rear axle. The driver sits less than an inch off the ground with their legs either side of the steering column and with the left foot operating the brake. They look fast from the side of the circuit and they are mind blowing when you first drive one!

Having changed into my racing gear the first thing I had to do was step on the scales to make sure I was above the minimum weight limit. Had I not been it would have meant weighting the Kart with lead as I had had to do when I raced previously. The first challenge was actually getting my overalls on as my weight has increased somewhat over the last few years! I managed it but the rib protector had to remain in the kit bag!

At 860 metres Whilton Mill is one of the shortest outdoor international circuits. I had set myself a target time of 46 seconds some two seconds off the pace but my main aim was to get used to driving again. After only four laps I realised how desperately unfit I had become. I felt as though I had just run a marathon so a two and a quarter hour endurance race was clearly out of the question!

I did go out again later in the session and did achieve a respectable time. I have been offered a drive for next year but I'm undecided as to whether I want to put myself through the punishing regime to get fit again. Getting up at 5.00 am six days a week and working out for two hours takes huge commitment. As does sticking to a rigid diet with no alcohol but then again, maybe I'm not ready for the pipe and slippers just yet! Watch this space!!

ANDREW JELLEY OPTICIANS

Andrew Jelley BSc (Hons) FC Optom
Teresa Davies FBDO
Duncan Edwards FBDO
Alex Lane BSc (Hons) MC Optom

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Up, Up and Away ...



... to a bright new future for Suckley School!

The children of Suckley School release balloons (biodegradable!) to celebrate their school officially becoming an academy. The oldest living ex-pupil, Jim Griffin (aged 92) and the youngest, Lily Smith at 4 years old, cut the ribbon and unveiled a plaque which will be put up in the School.

Morgan Blood (Yr5) details below what is happening at the school this term.

This term our whole school topic is Spain. We had a flamenco dance company visit us and each class learnt a different dance and performed them to each other. Each class has worked towards producing something for the parents to see on 17th November.

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Class One have been making their classroom into an art gallery and have had a visit from Pablo Picasso! He has taught them how to draw and paint in all different ways. They also went on a class trip to Wolverhampton Art Gallery to learn about how a gallery is set up.

Class Two have become restaurant managers and are making a restaurant in their classroom. They have made a logo and have come up with a name. They have been making food and have visited a Tapas restaurant in Worcester to try some Spanish food and to get ideas for their menu.

Class Three have become board game designers. They have written letters to Mr Meckin to ask for a budget so that they can make a Spanish learning development board game. They have visited The Entertainer Toy Shop in Worcester to get ideas and to buy board games to evaluate.

All the children and teachers are enjoying this topic and are looking forward to showing their friends and family what they have done.

Get cooking with help from Suckley School.

Suckley School Friends Association is a group of school parents who work hard to raise money for equipment and activities for the pupils at Suckley School. This term we have been working on a school cook book. The pupils and teachers have shared their favourite family recipes – some of them have been family secrets for generations! We held a competition to design the front cover of the cook book. This competition was hotly fought and our local Master Chef, Pat McDonald, had the difficult job of being the judge. The standard of entries was very high but the competition was won by Hester Hill, aged 7 with William Howells, aged 8, being a close run second. The cook book will be on sale at the Christmas Fair on 3rd December and thereafter at Suckley Post Office at the cost of £3.50. We think it will make an ideal Christmas present – plus it has no less than 5 recipes for cheesecake so it must be good!

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Suckley Parish Council Meeting 24th October 2011

CO-OPTIONS – The Parish Council formally co-opted Mr Barry Kearley and Mr Peter Whatley onto the Council. Cllr Peter Whatley agreed to represent the Council (together with Cllr A W Huband) on Suckley Charities and Cllr Barry Kearley agreed to represent the Council on the Worcs CALC Area Committee (together with Cllr A Grieve). Cllr Whatley also offered (in consultation with the Clerk) to update and maintain the Parish Council Website posted on the Worcestershire County Council Website.

SPEEDING - Cllr J Green reported that he had met up with Mr G Brienza (County Highways Engineer) regarding the locations for the VAS camera. The proposed sites were the bank by The Bruff; Knightwick Road (village hall); Longley Green (Grove Hill Drive); Holloways (school turn in from Knightwick Road). The only site not approved by Mr Brienza was Grove Hill, and he suggested a better site would be almost opposite the Nelson Pub, where there is already a post that could be used. As far as the other locations are concerned, we will not need to put in any new posts. The Clerk to write to Co Cllr Clive Smith to try and get the VAS purchased as soon as possible, and put to use.

HIGHWAYS – Grit/Salt Bins - The Clerk reported that she had ordered three grit/salt bins from Worcestershire County Council. Locations of Parish Council bins are - Stocks Cross Roads and each side of the Knowl. Parish Bins will be green, WCC Highway Bins are yellow. Highways/MHDC Bins are located at The Bruff, Damson Way (by the village hall car park), 3 along Birchwood Lane, 1 at Suckley Green (Knightwick Road). Stocks of grit/salt had been delivered to Alistair Griffiths (A J Griffiths Engineering, Green Acre, Suckley) last year (unknown to Suckley Parish Council). We now have around 8-9 tones of salt/grit stored under cover at this site (with the agreement of Mr A J Griffiths). However, we need to be able to refill the green bins as and when they run out. Mr Griffiths has agreed to refill the three bins but we need to inform him when the bins are empty/getting low, possibly by the Lengthsman checking the bins, or local residents informing us.

WOODLAND ROAD - The Clerk had heard from Paul Bingham that the work should be now near to completion. However, the pipe work draining water from the Woodland Road area and Edward Holloway's field now feeds into an 9" pipe, which means that although the water is now diverted from Woodland Road residents, it will now flood across the road and into the field on the other side. The Parish Council have been asked by Festival to get the Lengthsman to widen and deepen

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the ditch on the other side of the road, and the Clerk will be contacting Severn Trent about clearing the ditch on their land which runs through to the Sewerage Works

FOOTPATHS - Footpaths Wardens Richard Harward and Peter Markins have been busy as usual. A new 4 way direction post at Upper House has been installed, and the ditch crossing below Chapels Farm has also been checked. Two Finger Posts have been sawn and snapped off at the base and stolen from Crews Hill in August. These have now been replaced. A query about field boundaries and directions of Rights of Way has been investigated and re-signed where necessary. The boundary between Baston Hall and land owned by the Walker's at Knightwick did not seem to be clearly marked. The footpath that runs towards Winthill through a small piece of woodland needs clearing.

COMMUNITY PLAN - Cllr A Grieve reported that the Community Plan teams now needed some money to move the Plan forward and he was looking for funding from the Parish Council and from Co Cllr Clive Smith's Parish Budget. All the volunteers were very enthusiastic, and Mark Malloy was now ready to start the survey work to create an appropriate Community Plan based upon evidence and information gleaned from parishioners. The Clerk confirmed that she had budgeted £300 for the current year and £400 for 2012/13. Plans were in hand for a Diamond Jubilee Fete in June 2012 and after some discussion the Council agreed to allocate a budget to give a commemorative coin or mug (yet to be decided) to all children up to the age of 11 in the Parish or attending Suckley School. If you live in the Parish and would like your child to receive a commemorative mug or coin and he/she does not attend Suckley School, please contact the Clerk, Diana Taylor at dtaylor@suckley@msn.com or any of the Parish Councillors so we can register your request.

BUDGET/PRECEPT 2012/13 - This is the time of year when the Council have to set their budget or precept for the following financial year. Because County and District Councils budgets are being severely cut down, more and more costs of services are being pushed down the line to Parish Council level, with the provision of salt/grit stocks and bins being a case in point. After a lengthy discussion, the Parish Council agreed to an increase of £732 in the precept for 2012/13. This will not cover all the increases in expenditure for next year which the Council will seek to absorb from reserves.

NEXT MEETING DATE - Monday 9th January 2012 at 7.00 pm, Suckley Village Hall.

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..... **REMINDER!**

If you still have not booked your flu jab it is not too late!
Please contact the Surgery to make an appointment.

PRACTICE BOUNDARY: The Surgery has extended its Practice boundary to include Stoney Cross in the south and Stanford Bridge in the North. A detailed map of our area is available on our website at www.knightwicksurgery.co.uk, on the Clifton on Teme website www.temetriangle.net and at the surgery on request. We are currently accepting new patients onto our list. If you would like to register please contact Reception.

CHRISTMAS MEDICATION ORDERS: Over the Christmas period we are closed on Monday 26th & Tuesday 27th December only. We would therefore ask our patients to order their medication in the usual way during December – allowing 2 working days for processing. This will ensure that the Dispensary Staff are not overwhelmed by unnecessary orders coming in from patients who have adequate supplies for the Christmas period. Thank you for your co-operation. Orders arriving early will not be processed before the medication is due.

APPOINTMENT REMINDERS: We will soon be able to send text message reminders of your appointment to your mobile phone. The system will also allow us to contact you with reminders concerning health campaigns and messages from surgery staff. To assist in this, please inform us of your mobile phone number next time you contact the surgery. If you do NOT want us to contact you in this way, please inform Reception. For more detailed information about this service please contact Kate Parkinson on 01886 821279.

SPOTLIGHT ON: Caroline Fennell

Caroline joined the Practice 11 years ago as an Administrator. She is responsible for our computerised Document Management System which is used for processing all incoming mail, including results, clinical reports and letters. All documentation is incorporated into your patient record and Caroline ensures that information relating to your care reaches the relevant GP promptly, securely and efficiently. Caroline also co-ordinates the recording and sending away of all test requests, specimens and outgoing post.

The full A4 version of this Newsletter is available at the Surgery. It will also be available on the local Clifton on Teme website at www.clifton-upon-teme.co.uk or www.temetriangle.net courtesy of Bernadette Higgins and on our own dedicated website – details above. For feedback / comments about this Newsletter, please contact Sharon Salter on 01886 821279 or email sharon.salter@nhs.net
A large print format is available on request.

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Travels and Travails in China with a Chinaman

Adrian Holmes recently visited China on a horticultural trip which although started off badly, was rich in scenery and plant species, many of which grow in our gardens.



Lilium primulinum: a tall and striking lily which likes a shady spot and leafy soil. A highlight of the trip to China.

Dotted around the cabin of KLM Flight 1432 to Amsterdam was a motley assortment of expert, not so expert, and some even less than not so expert, horticulturalists, drawn together by fate and an urge, inexplicable in some cases, to venture high into the mountains of Western China to look at some flowers. The summer haze shimmering a few feet above the runway was already giving way to the lengthening shadows of the evening sun when the Boeing 737 went full throttle and accelerated for take off.

Which was a bit of shame really because by that time it should have been landing at Amsterdam. So the connecting flight was missed and the motley assortment headed south on different flights to Paris for a brief reunion before turning left for China and arriving in dribs and drabs in Kunming some with,

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some without, their luggage. Not the best of starts, but at least the Chinaman, Dr Dowel (the closest we could get phonetically to his name, and not in the least like the spelling) was there to meet the various flights on which spare seats had been found for the assortment. Dr Dowel is an expert horticulturalist.

Kunming is the capital of Yunnan and is known as the City of Eternal Spring because of its year round equitable climate. It has a long and turbulent past – often associated with many of the Chinese ethnic minorities who settled, or were settled, in China's south west. The hills around the city are home to a good many plants that are now household names in our gardens – rhododendrons, camellias, hypericums, berberis, primroses, chrysanthemums, hydrangeas and so on. But a day had already been lost so we could not dally there. It was a bright warm morning when we boarded the minibus to set off westwards through a labyrinth of highways, freeways and several other ways, all of which made Spaghetti Junction look like child's play.

The Kunming – Dali road goes through Dinosaur Valley, exceedingly rich in these fossilised remains from the Jurassic and Cretaceous periods (230 - 65 million years ago) with many more yet to be uncovered. It also passes not far south of the site where two human teeth dating back to 1.5 – 2.5 million years ago were found, establishing Yuanmou - Yunnan man – as the oldest hominid found in central Asia, preceding Peking Man, and indicating that modern humans were in this part of China much earlier than had been previously thought. But enough of palaeontology and on to botany and deep into the Nu Jiang valley.

We know the Nu Jiang as the Salween river, and is the western most of the three great rivers of China the others being the Lancang (our Mekong) and the Yangtse. We were on the lookout for lilies and were not to be disappointed. High up on a steep hillside, by the side of a ravine gouged deeply into a field of maize was the first sighting. To say accessing them was difficult would be an understatement. They had survived grazing by goats because even they could not get close, but undaunted we scabbled, scratched and clawed our way up to them and suddenly we were up with them. Species identification was difficult, but the expert opinion was that we had found *Lilium giganteum* growing in the wild. For a botanist, there are few sights better than observing a plant in its natural habitat.

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The assortment based itself in Liuku for a couple days, described, perhaps a bit unfairly as an unpleasant town of ugly concrete buildings. It is a centre for the Lisu people, one of the ethnic minority groups who have experienced hard and difficult times of late. The scenery, as you climb out of the town is impressive. The Nu and its tributaries have gouged deep ravines through the ancient rocks and on all sides the hills and mountains tower over you. When you break into some open ground the views are breathtaking. It is of course also very rich in a whole range of plant species, from trees such as *Pinus yunnanensis*, *pyracanthas*, *buddlejas* and *alders*, to *ginger* and *foxtail lilies*, through to *grasses* and *ferns* in abundance. The highlight, probably of the whole tour was coming across *Lilium primulinum* arching out from a bank over the road. A beautiful Turk's cap flower in a *primula* yellow with a deep maroon stripe highlighting the prominent anthers. It is rare, but you can buy the bulb in the UK for about £10 (plus p&p!).

Next time, we move on to the Myanmar border and on to the 99-Dragon Pool Mountain.



*One of the many stunning gorge views on the trip, with *Pinus yunnanensis* in the foreground.*

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An opening for a key volunteer!

A plea from Anne Lewis, Suckley Church warden to friends and parents of Suckley School.

As many of you walk past the church regularly, I wonder whether any of you would please consider joining a rota of volunteers who would regularly open the church front door in the morning about 9am, and lock it again at about 3.30pm?

The School office will hold the Volunteer Rota key, and I would expect that a volunteer would open and later re-lock the church door every school day (Mon to Fri term time) either a week or a month or a half term at a time, and then return it to the School office for the next person.

If you are happy to consider being part of such a key holding team, please contact me as below.

I am sure you would agree that it is much more welcoming to visitors (and there is a surprisingly numerous stream of visitors) to be able to walk in to the church immediately, rather than, as at present, needing to collect and return the key to Holloways (who are our present key holders).

In the future, we hope it may be possible to install a timed lock on the church door, but at present this is not possible.

With many thanks.

01886 884552
annelewis@doctors.org.uk

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Suckley 'Neighbourhood Development Plan' – Open Meeting

On: Monday 16th January 2012 **Time:** 7.30 – 9.00 **Place:** Suckley Village Hall

What is this all about?

For those of you who didn't have the opportunity of reading the last Newsletter a brief resume of what this is all about.

The Localism Bill, which is expecting to become law sometime during 2012, will in different ways be giving a greater voice and influence of local people at parish level over local matters. In summary these are the key points for us to take note of in Suckley at this stage:

- **Neighbourhood Planning – what is it?** Instead of local people being told what to do the Government thinks local communities should have genuine opportunities to influence the future of the places where they live. The Bill will introduce a new right for communities to draw up a 'Neighbourhood Development Plan'
- **Neighbourhood Development Plan – what can it achieve?** It will allow communities to come together through a local parish council or neighbourhood forum and say where they think things like new houses, businesses/shops and services should go – and what they should look like
- **Neighbourhood Development Plan – what might it look like?** It could be very simple, or go into considerable detail where people want. Neighbourhoods draw up their plans in a way which identifies their own needs and look to address these.
- **Neighbourhood Development Plan – how will the Government help?** The Government will fund sources of help and advice for communities. This will help people take advantage of the opportunity to exercise influence over decisions that make a big difference to their lives.

In summary the Localism Bill says:

'We want to pass significant new rights direct to communities and individuals, making it easier for them to get things done and achieve their ambitions for the place where they live.'

What Next?

To help us all understand the new legislation and its intentions and how we can best use it for the benefit of Suckley residents an Open Meeting has been called for: **Date:** Monday 16th January '12 **Time:** 7.30 – 9.00 **Place:** Suckley Village Hall.

What can you do as a Suckley resident?

- Attend the Parish Open Meeting on Monday 16th January to hear more about the Neighbourhood Development Plan
- Think about what knowledge/skills/experience you can contribute to the development of the Plan
- Respond to a Suckley Community Questionnaire when published
- Talk with your Parish Councillor/s about your views on priorities for the community

Mark Molloy (Team Leader - Neighbourhood Development Plan)



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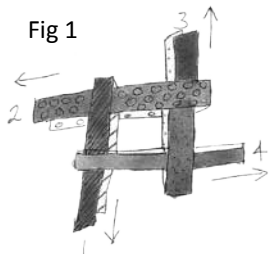
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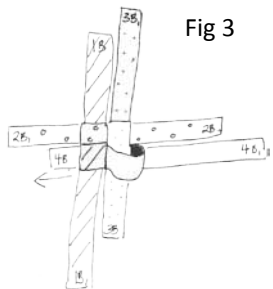
Origami Christmas Star

This looks impossibly difficult, but once you've made one, you'll be doing it in your sleep - our house is now littered with them. The process is incredibly simple, and a child could easily do it if shown, but might need an adult determination to decipher the instructions to start with. It could be the Christmas challenge you were looking for!

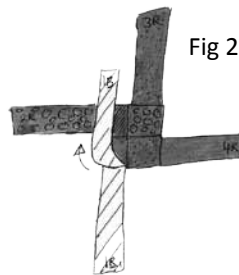
YOU WILL NEED: 4 strips of paper measuring 50cm x 2cm and folded in half - and a little patience.



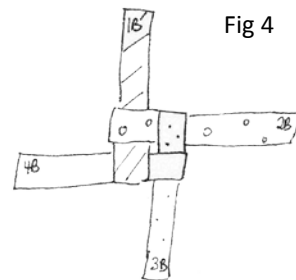
1. Thread the strips through each other as shown in Figure 1 and gently pull tight



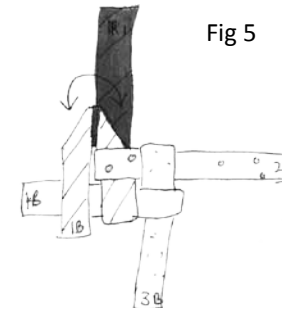
3. Repeat this with strips 2 and 3, then repeat with strip 4, but tuck the end under the fold made by strip 1, as in Figure 3.



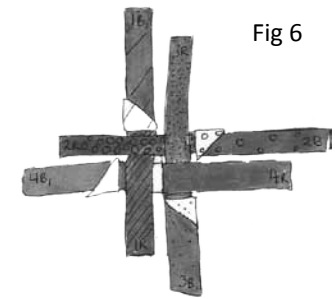
2. Fold the top layer of strip 1 over as shown in Figure 2 and press flat.



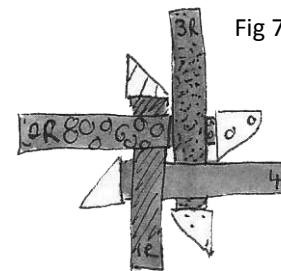
4 Flip the whole thing over and repeat step 2 (starting with the longer end of strip 1, then 2 etc) then flip the whole thing back again. You should now have Figure 4.



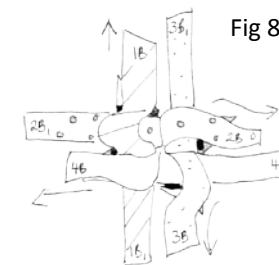
5. Fold the top layer of strip 1 under itself to the left to give a 45-degree fold, then fold it downwards, to create another 45-degree fold to make a point as shown in Figure 5.



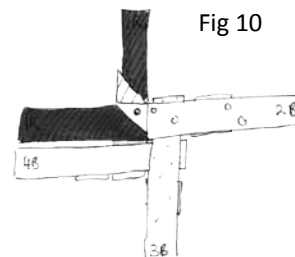
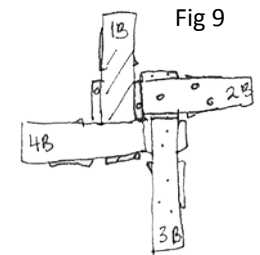
6. Fold the left half of strip 1's point back onto the right half and tuck the end of strip 1 under the fold made by strip 2 and carefully tighten.
7. Repeat steps 4 & 5 with strips 2, 3 and 4 to make Figure 6.



8. Flip the whole thing over and repeat steps 4-6 on the other side (starting with strip 1, then 2 etc) then flip the whole thing back again. You should now have Figure 7.

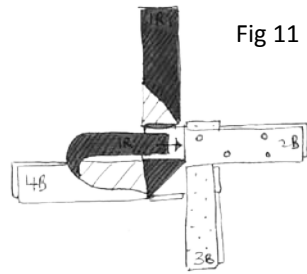


9. Fold the top layer of each strip back on itself and temporarily under the strip next to it (ie 1 under 2 and so on). You'll end up with no strips overlapping, flip the whole thing over and repeat on the other side, then flip the whole thing back again. You now have Figure 9.

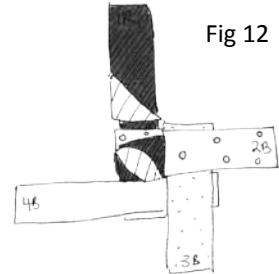


10. Fold the top layer of strip 1 over itself to the left to create a 45-degree fold and press flat. You now have Figure 10.

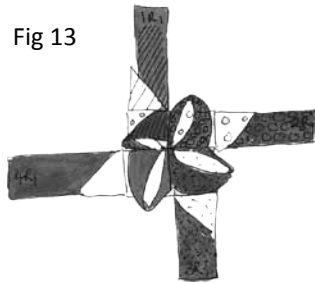
Nearly there - last steps overleaf!



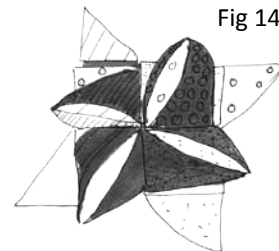
11. Bring the end of strip 1 back to the centre of the star and *tuck underneath strip 2* as shown in Figure 11.



12. Tease the end of the strip between the folds and pull gently to form a point as shown in Figure 12.



13. Repeat step 10 with strips 2, 3 and 4 and, if necessary, trim off any excess paper. You now have Figure 13.



14. Flip the whole thing over and repeat steps 10-11 on the other side. You now have your finished star, as in Figure 14.



That was the hard part, the next one will be far easier!

Illustrations drawn by Tilda Swabey.

For instructions on one A4 sheet with the illustrations in colour, please visit www.suckleypo.co.uk

Thank You

I would like to say thank you to the many people who supported my letter in the Sphere and Parish Newsletter and have passed these on in discussions with the Church Warden. Whilst discussions are ongoing and we await news from the architects, I am happy to organise a fund-raising event for the maintenance of the church. Next year is a year of celebration in our family as we are looking forward to retirement and also our 40th wedding anniversary, having been married in Suckley Church on 4th November, 1972.

I am proposing to arrange a Flower Festival, with the theme of Weddings, in the Autumn and I am sure there are many people out there who have businesses who would like an opportunity to advertise their wares at the Flower Festival. There will be further news on this in later editions of The Sphere and Newsletter.

Jenny Taylor



"A Get Better Soon" to Bill the Postie, who is recovering from an injury. Hope to see you back on the round in the New Year.

The Flower Patch Company
 is a specialist nursery based at The Glasshouse, Holloways.
 We offer an extensive range including Old fashioned roses, perennials, citrus and Mediterranean plants as well as herbs, shrubs and trees.
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A Christmas Letter - from Andrew Bullock

“Doubtless we shall all soon be saying “Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year”, which is fitting as a greeting. But will it be a happy or even a merry time? I have just had an advertisement from a supermarket saying “Christmas and indulgence go hand in hand.” Is that what secures happiness? I used to work in Wandsworth prison, and I came to realize that this is often a very difficult time that can be a time of unrest. (The summer holidays are another time which puts the greatest strain on family life.) So how do we ensure we have a Happy Christmas?

I remember a vicar reporting a conversation he had with the Managing Director of a major oil company who was sitting opposite him at a dinner party. He asked the MD why he kept his employees working such long hours, damaging their family life? The MD replied, after thought, that were his employees to return home earlier, they would not know what to do!

Now I think that these are connected. How do we, should we, live and enjoy life? So often it seems that ‘Happy’ is more connected with how many material goods we can amass and not the people or relationships we build. When all is said and done, we are social beings - made for relationship.

And maybe this is why some of us will struggle this Christmas. We know only too well how important relationships are, but this year, for whatever reason, perhaps a loved one will be missing from the table; or there may be no one to share your meal.

So how can we change our attitudes and actually ‘enjoy’ this season? I think that it has to be by focusing on our relationships with others and resisting being taken in by the adverts’ lies. The closest relationships are not based upon e-mails, Skype, Facebook, or Twitter, although of course these help - especially if your nearest and dearest live abroad!

Nor are they dependent on how expensive a gift we receive, how many vegetables surround the turkey, how many designer clothes we or the children wear, or how many bottles of wine or beer we imbibe. The closest relationships are based on such qualities as love, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, service, self-control; upon time spent together.

So enjoy the parties. Be determined to appreciate the family visits. Help the frazzled cook. Show kindness to lonely neighbours. Spend time with the children. And above all, consider that God himself comes to us as Immanuel, (which means ‘God with us’). Whether we are on our own or charging around catching up with all the relatives, Jesus knocks at the door of our hearts asking to be let in. Will we push him away, not because there is no room at the inn, but because we are too preoccupied to notice him? He comes with the best gift on offer - new life. Shall we receive his gift gratefully?

Nothing ventured, nothing gained! Join us at one of the many services around the parishes. It’s a first step! When all is said and done, I truly hope you all have a blessed and happy Christmas.

Andrew Bullock (Team Vicar).



A new look for The Talbot

Su Arrowsmith of The Talbot writes: As many of you will have noticed, there has been much building activity over the autumn which has culminated in a wonderful new extension to the lounge bar.

After much deliberation and consultation with the Planning Department, owner Annie Clift decided to go with something contemporary rather than trying to blend the new addition into the existing structure, which has resulted in a beautifully light and airy space. "Although we have built this to be an extension of the lounge we are happy for it to be used as a private dining room or for meetings as well. Since its completion at the end of October we have had so many people phone specifically to book it for family get-togethers and work Christmas parties" said Annie.

The Talbot would like to thank Lett & Sweetland Architects and Neil James Construction for their help in making this venture such a resounding success.



Suckley Church

Here are the services for Suckley over the next couple of months. It looks as if Suckley Church will be BUZZING with activity. Hurrah!

Sunday December 4th Christingle Service 4pm. A lovely family event to begin the Christmas season.

Sunday December 11th All Age Service 11am, a lively informal service

Wednesday December 14th Holy Communion 10am

Sunday December 18th 9 Lessons and Carols 6.30pm, a traditional service with the Benefice Choir

Christmas Eve Saturday 24th A Barnyard Nativity 4.30pm, Colles Place, Hill Road, Lulsley. Step inside the Christmas card and become part of the story. Follow Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. Smell the hay. See the animals. Sing some carols. Bring your family and friends. Wear wellies, wrap up warm, bring your torch and enjoy some refreshments. This is a one-off Christmas Special so don't miss it! It will be well signposted, but if you need directions phone Helen Cook 01886 821784.

Christmas Day December 25th Family Communion 10.30am

New Year's Day January 1st All Age Service 11am, a lively informal service

Sunday January 8th Evening Prayer 6pm, a formal said service

Wednesday January 11th Holy Communion 10am

Sunday January 15th We join Alfrick for their All Age Service at 11am, a lively informal service

Sunday January 22nd Holy Communion with Sunday School 11am, a traditional service.

Sunday January 29th All the churches in the 'Worcester West Rural Team' join Bishop John for Holy Communion 11am at Clifton on Teme church. Bishop John is always worth hearing.

Sunday February 5th All Age 11am, a lively informal service

Suckley Church reordering update - nothing to report as yet.

Anne Lewis (church warden 01886 884552).

the greenhouse café

at Holloways

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DECEMBER 2011

Recipes from the Suckley Masterchef

My Grandmother's Christmas pudding

A Christmas pudding recipe from my dearly missed Grandmother's repertoire. This is seriously big!! and could easily feed 8-10 persons

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 6oz x raisins - soaked in port | Juice and zest of 2 oranges |
| 6oz x sultanas - soaked in port | 2 x apples peeled, cored and grated |
| 6oz x currants - soaked in port | 1/2 tsp x cinnamon |
| 6oz x almonds, ground | 1/2 tsp x ginger |
| 6oz x shredded beef suet | 1/2 tsp x cloves |
| 6oz x breadcrumbs | 2 tsp x mixed spice |
| 6oz x plain flour | 6floz x Newcastle Brown Ale |
| 6oz x Demerara sugar | 3floz x dark rum |
| 6oz x eggs size 1 | 3floz x brandy |
| 6oz x candied peel | 1tsp x salt |
| 6oz x glace cherries | |

1. Preheat the oven to 150C/300F/Gas 3
2. Place all the ingredients in a bowl and mix thoroughly, leave in the fridge for 24 hours
3. Place the mix into the large pudding basin and cover with greaseproof paper, wrap a tea towel over the bowl and tie with string
4. Place the basin in a deep ovenproof tray and fill the tray with boiling water sufficient that the water comes half way up the sides of the basin, cook in the oven for 6-7 hours whilst keeping the water topped up
5. When ready remove and allow to cool still wrapped for 24 hours, you should now soak it in brandy and more rum and leave until next year, however I don't believe you can resist.....
6. So to serve, simply steam in a steamer for 2-3 hours, turn out on to a plate cover with warm brandy ignite and finally sing two choruses of "Oh Come all ye Faithful"!



New Suckley website

Suckley Parish Council will be making more use in future of its website which exists as part of the wider Worcestershire County Council site. From now on, softcopy versions of Parish Council meetings' agendas and approved minutes will be made available on the site. Over time this will form an easily-accessible record of the PC's actions on behalf of parishioners in a single, dedicated location. Printed copies of Parish Council documentation will continue to be available to parishioners without access to the internet on request from the Parish Clerk (Mrs Diana Taylor - 01684 569430).

Documents relating to Parish Plans and developments at core parish facilities - specifically the school, church and village hall - will also be stored on the Parish Council website, again to provide a simple source of reference for parishioners. Finally, the site will feature a "noticeboard" which will provide the dates of Parish Council meetings and brief details of events at the school, church and village hall, plus other items which affect the parish as a whole: for example, the recent major changes to bus services through the parish. There will not be a wider "happenings" service via the noticeboard - the Suckley Newsletter excels at that! The Parish Council website can be accessed via: <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish> and then following the alphabetical list of parishes.

Peter Whatley

Local Services:

Mobile Library Timetable 2011

Fridays only at
 Suckley - Cross Keys 1.45-2.00pm
 New Road Estate - 2.10-2.25pm
 Longley Green Post Office 2.40-3.35pm

Dates: 16th December

Enquiries about this service should be made to Malvern Library, Graham Road Malvern or telephone 01905 822722, or email malvernmobile@worcestershire.gov.uk

Bus Service No. 423 - Alfrick Pound - Suckley - Alfrick - Worcester
 Monday to Saturday - from 5th September 2011
 Operator: LMS Travel - 01905 25252

| Service: | 423 | 423 | 423 | 425 | 423 | 423 |
|-------------------------------|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Notes: | | CPP | S | F | S | |
| Longley Green | 07-34 | 08-53 | 10-07 | 13-37 | | |
| Suckley, Stocks Cross | 07-36 | 08-55 | 10-09 | 13-41 | | |
| Suckley Green, White House | 07-40 | 08-59 | 10-13 | 13-43 | | |
| Worcester, Bus Station | 08-20 | 09-35 | 10-48 | 14-13 | 14-42 | 17-48 |
| Notes: | F - Runs Fridays only, S - runs Saturdays only | | | | | |

Bus Service No. 425 - Worcester - Knightwick - Alfrick - Gt Malvern
 Fridays only - from 5th September 2011
 Operator: LMS Travel - 01905 25252

| Service: No service on Bank Holidays | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Worcester, Bus Station | 09-40 | Gt Malvern, Church Street | 13.00 |
| Suckley Green, White House | 10-13 | Malvern Link, Morrisons | 13-08 |
| Suckley, Stocks Cross | 10-15 | Malvern Link, Co-Op | 13-11 |
| Longley Green | 10-19 | Malvern Link, Hospital | 13-14 |
| Malvern Link, Hospital | 10-40 | Longley Green | 13-37 |
| Malvern Link, Co-Op | 10-43 | Suckley, Stocks Cross | 13-41 |
| Malvern Link, Morrisons | 10-46 | Suckley Green, White House | 13-43 |
| Gt Malvern, Church Street | 10-54 | Worcester, Bus Station | 14-13 |