

Happy Easter!

This bumper Easter edition is so packed with the funny, inspiring, informative, helpful, caring, kind and interesting people getting up to some fantastic stuff and sharing it with you all, that there's no room for us to go blathering on about how wonderful it all is. You too could get involved or contribute, or just go along to these amazing events and enjoy yourselves... So instead - Happy Easter and "on with the good stuff!"

The Fabulous Fowl Company

Louise Webb starts off our Easter edition with her children's feathered business venture and how its success depends less on the current economic climate than on rogue canines and cold weather.

The idea for the Fabulous Fowl company came in January last year. Like all mothers in this day and age, I was being pestered by my two eldest to get them a Nintendo DS for their birthdays (that's a handheld games computer to those who remain blissfully unaware of these things). It's easy to be overly pious and create an anti-technology bubble in our rural idyll. However, there's always a balance in life. Millions of other mothers can't all be wrong and so I resolved to come up with a cunning plan that bridged both worlds.



Billy showing off his 'stock' - a silkie chicken

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From this moral dilemma Fab Fowl was born, a start-up company that would teach the children an understanding of business, allow them to earn some money and pay for the ever-increasing cost of corn. If they then wanted to a buy Nintendo DS with their hard-gotten gains, that would be their choice. Archie, Flora and I discussed this in detail. We talked about what jobs they could do and how to sell our hens' eggs. I thought it would be a good idea to make the arrangement official by setting up a company. So, each of my children was nominated a director and chose the name The Fab Fowl Company (first letter of their names; Flora, Archie and Billy). As with all new entrepreneurial ventures getting started presented plenty of unexpected challenges.



Directors Flora and Archie demonstrating a hands-on approach to business.

At the time we had 3 loyal layers who, on exiting the winter months, were showing little sign of yielding well. Every day the children opened the nesting box disappointed to find it empty. No stock equals no revenue, so we invested in two new layers. They started to produce the odd egg but only enough to feed the family with no surplus to sell. The arrival of a feisty cockerel, encouraged our 3 loyal layers to swing into production. The business was finally in action and two boxes of eggs were sited at the entrance to our house with an honesty tin beside it. The first box was sold to a visiting Granny who could not resist the sales techniques of her three grandchildren.

Then it happened. Two days later the second box had gone. A £1 coin was discovered at the bottom of the honesty tin. This was received with great whoops of joy by the company directors. Frankly I was shocked that a total stranger bought the eggs. We live up a dead end lane with no passing traffic. What's the chance of a walker having £1 in their pocket and wanting to carry half a dozen eggs on their walk? So, I too enjoyed the moment as much as the children and thought that finally our luck may have changed.

As we were all celebrating our first commercial success, all was not well with the production line. The influence of the cockerel, whilst initially a success, seemed to now have the opposite effect as several of our hens went broody. Once again egg supply began to diminish. Undeterred the intrepid directors swiftly turned their focus to chick-rearing in order to create a new market selling birds rather than eggs. A few calculations in corn and time to market seemed to show healthy margins.

With this strategy in mind the Fabulous Fowl Company started procuring a variety of fowl in pairs that could reproduce over the course of the spring and boasted in it's portfolio a duo of golden pheasants, runner ducks and guinea fowl as well as a couple of goslings. One of the first rules of business is managing one's inventory. By the summer months, our inventory seemed to have multiplied exponentially, making a mess of the garden borders and eating enormous amounts of corn week after week. Maintaining the chicks, ducklings, keets and pheasant chicks was proving a challenge to the young directors, coupled with daily patrols keeping them safe from the local cat population. However the directors worked stoically away thinking about how to advertise their finished stock and took to devising their marketing strategy.

Autumn arrived. The birds were growing up and heading towards the point of sexing. Without warning illness took hold of the flock. Much of the young hen stock that was destined for sale or to be layers for next year was lost as well as the less hardy golden pheasants. Just when it seemed the fates couldn't conspire against our intrepid entrepreneurs further, we lost 3 mature hens to walking dogs as they wandered free range around the garden. The company year end approached and the business entered its winter recess with accounts showing a £2 income and a rather greater sum of outgoings!

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Flora, Billy and Archie with new additions to their inventory - wriggly ducklings.

However the New Year brings new hope and we were offered 10 ex-battery hens to re-home which we readily accepted. The second year of The Fab Fowl Company was to start with a more promising omen. Unfortunately, they could not cope with this February's cold and left us as quickly as they arrived but not before they had managed to lay an enormous amount of eggs in the couple of days they stayed with us.

I am glad to announce that as the year has progressed we seem to have a happier balance of fowl that survived through the ups and downs of last year. There are still some tweaks required to happy hen husbandry, namely moving them away from the lane which will be taking place soon in order that they can roam freely without the threat of dogs.

Happily the children did save up for their DS's and managed to get them by Christmas but it goes without saying not from any profits of the Fab Fowl Company. Luckily car washing remains a more lucrative source of income! If you do think you would like to sample any of the Fabulous Fowl Company's wares, it may be best to email or phone in advance to check the stock levels rather than making a special journey. Any advance orders will of course be catered for. You can contact the children on my email address or on our home number: louise_webb80@hotmail.com and Tel: 884319.

ANDREW JELLEY

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

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Suckley Jubilee Celebrations - Monday 4th June

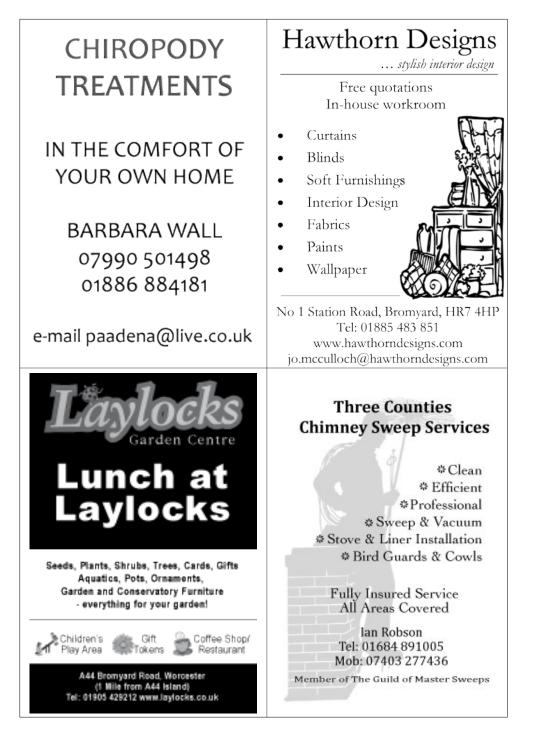
Preparations for the exciting village Jubilee celebrations are now moving into full swing for a fun filled family event on Monday 4th July. Get the date in your diary now so you can be part of your village's official Diamond Jubilee festivities! Diamond Jubilees don't come around often (the last one was in 1897!) so look out for ticket sales announcements in the coming weeks.

The Suckley Village Playing Fields will be at the heart of the celebrations with an afternoon of family sports and fun, finishing with a traditional children's tea party. There will be bouncy castles, competitions, side stalls, ice creams and hopefully the June weather will be kind to us but we will have a large marquee to provide indoor cover in case it does rain. There will also be a display of historic items by the Suckley Local History Society and a performance by Arthur Bancroft's Suckley Children's Orchestra, plus many more items to be announced.

The whole day will be rounded off with a family Ceilidh Barn Dance with food and bar in the marquee with the ever popular Suckley based Stone the Crows Ceilidh Band

The Jubilee Celebration group under the leadership of Andrew Grieve (01886 884795) and Ness Haworth (01886 884383) will meet at the Village Hall at 7.30pm on Wednesday 4th April and welcome all offers of help to organize and run this event





Pit-Stop Update - Steve Gray's back on the track

In our January issue, Steve Gray was contemplating a return to kart racing after a break of nine years. Well, he made his decision but was it the right one? Read on to find out....



Steve on the track (just) in earlier racing days

In the end the decision to return to Kart racing was taken out of my hands. Prior to Christmas I was pondering over a contract, one year of racing with a one year option as part of a three man team, when a delivery van arrived with a box containing a set of racing overalls, team jacket, hat and kit bag all with my name neatly embroidered! How could I refuse?

Winter training went slowly. Every time I pushed myself muscles that hadn't been exercised for some time decided they didn't really want to play! Then, the first official test session turned into a disappointment. I drove down to Buckmore Park in Kent in mid February to find the circuit covered in snow. A six hour four hundred mile round trip for nothing!

However, Friday 24th. February dawned bright and cheery as the team made its way to Buckmore Park for a three hour test session followed by the two and quarter hour race on Saturday.

The team had spent a great deal of time studying the rules and devising a strategy based around the five mandatory fuel stops. We also had a concern regarding weight. All the drivers must weigh a minimum of 82kg. This includes

all the kit such as the drivers crash helmet. If you are underweight lead ballast is used, fastened to a post on the Kart or, in the case of drivers with short legs, with the lead shaped around the seat insert which is a seat placed within the Kart seat. We had both but unfortunately I hadn't realised that my weight had gone south and I couldn't fit in my seat insert! We did however have a Plan B. One driver needed no weight, with myself and my other team mate needing 5 and 4 Kg's respectively. To save time at driver changes we decided to send our heaviest driver out first with me last which meant we would only need to put on 1kg of ballast before my stint at the wheel.

Friday testing went reasonably well until a high speed spin by me and bounce across the kerbs caused a chest muscle injury which would mean that we had to revise our race strategy. Saturday dawned bright and unseasonably warm. Qualifying went exceptionally well as we managed 2nd in class, out of thirteen, and tenth overall, out of thirty six. The first hour of the race saw us climb as high as seventh and with two excellent pit stops we remained in contention for a top ten finish and a class podium.

Then it all went wrong.

Two badly timed pit stops and several spins, a couple of which were caused by over ambitious rivals and the others by driver error and exhaustion saw us slip down to 32nd by the two hour mark. With fifteen minutes to go we came in for a final fuel stop and driver change with me driving the final stint. To my horror we couldn't find the one kilo weight and rather than waste time I opted to do the final few minutes without it. The reasoning was that we were so far behind at that stage that it would make no difference. We remained 32nd but when I came in at the end of the race all the drivers were weighed and I was half a kilo under the limit resulting in the inevitable disqualification and a zero points score in the championship.

Fortunately the regulations state that only a teams best 8 scores from 11 rounds count so this will be one of our dropped scores. The next round is at the wonderfully named Clay Pigeon circuit near Dorchester in Dorset. We all have much work to do before then to improve our fitness. The only way is up, I hope!!

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Suckley Good Neighbour Scheme

From April 1st Suckley will have its 'Good Neighbour Scheme' in action. **Remember the number 01886 840480.** (NB this is change of number)

Why have a Good Neighbour Scheme?

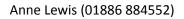
When populations were stable over generations, everyone knew everyone else, and being aware of our neighbours was easier. Suckley is one of the largest Worcestershire parishes, but with only just over 200 households has one of the lowest populations; so, with our increasingly mobile lifestyle it can be difficult knowing who to ask for help when problems arise. Here are a few examples of how the Scheme might be used:

Fetching prescriptions, help with forms or letters, practical tasks at home, shopping or doing errands, walking or feeding pets, advocacy (helping you make an informed choice about something), or sometimes just being a friendly face. If you know of any Suckley folk that could benefit from a visit by a volunteer who could help with a particular problem then please remind them about the Good Neighbour Scheme.

If you would like to be part of the Scheme (as a volunteer with time, or skills, or know-how, or if you have a useful 'something' that others could find useful too), then we look forward to hearing from you too. We expect that our volunteers will be supported by a growing network of information that will be increasingly useful. That is a work in progress, and we will hope you all will help us to continually expand this.

A leaflet will come through your door soon, with all the details on. Keep it safely where you can refer to it, and tell your neighbours about it. TALK ABOUT IT! So... when someone in Suckley needs help...remember the Suckley Good Neighbour Scheme. Help us to help our village!

REMEMBER 01886 840480...... Suckley Good Neighbour Scheme





APRIL 2012

Suckley Local History Society – Come and join us!

All are welcome to the second meeting of our brand new season. Our next event is on Thursday 19th April at 7.30 in Suckley Village Hall where will be joined by Dr Katherine Lack. Her topic is

"Change and Migration in the Hereford/Worcestershire border area in the 18th and 19th centuries."

Katherine is an academic historian and writer. Her talk is the story of who went where, when and why, and is illustrated with specific life histories. This promises to be a fascinating evening, looking at the reasons behind the immigration and emigration in our area in the past, and how it has shaped our community now.

All are welcome; admission £4 to non members, FREE to paid up members, or you can join on the night for £10 which entitles you to free admission to the next four events. Refreshments; wine and soft drinks and nibbles will be available at a small charge.

For any further information, please phone: Andrew Grieve 01886 884795 / Liz Devenish 01886 884787



In the 4 weeks since its installation, the VAS camera, situated near the Bruff, has clocked up 5,160 vehicles exceeding 32 mph.

Most of the speeders are local residents, so have some consideration for your own community and SLOW DOWN!

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The working horses of a century ago

Andrew Grieve's article in the last issue of the newsletter reminded us how fortunate we are in still having a larger-than-average number of riding horses in our village. Turn the clock back a century and Suckley would not only have had even more horses, but more uses for them too. As well as being ridden they would have pulled traps and market carts, brought deliveries to the village, and – most significantly – provided the farmer with power in a premotor age.

Some of us can remember farm-based horses at work in the village, but the number of us who actually worked with them is declining steadily. For on many farms, not just in this area but throughout the country, the late 1940's brought the working horse to the brink of extinction – a process that was all but complete by the 1960s. With the advance of the tractor and mechanisation not just the horse, his harness and traditional implements were in danger of being lost - the skills, knowledge and memories of generations of workers who had grown up knowing no other way of farming were also disappearing.



An archive image of working horses pulling a harrow before mechanisation, this would have been a common sight in the fields around Suckley.

The following extracts are taken from tape recordings made in the 1980s when oral history was becoming more popular. They feature the words of several horsemen who were willing to share with me their memories of life on the region's farms nearly a century ago.

To begin with, Oscar Morgan (b. 1903) remembers his youth;

The first work that I really done with a pair of horses myself was in the first year of the war, 1914. The farmers had to plough a little land up in those days for the government. And, as I say, my father and we were at the Kite's Nest and he got kicked with a cart horse, we'd got a lot of horses, and they put me to plough. I was eleven. That was the first time I actually used a pair of horses myself.

Another horseman (MA, b. 1897) recalls an unexpected event on a bright spring day in wartime;

I'd been harrowing for some time in this field and I came to the gate next to the homestead. I noticed the one mare cocking her tail and of course, I didn't know, didn't think what it was, she cocked it again and I saw two feet sticking out! So I had to slip the chains off the collar and loosen the mare away from the harrow and out through the gate and onto the pasture. I pulled her bridle off and her collar, and I'd no sooner finished than she got on with producing this foal. And then, of course, I got hold of the two legs pulling for all I was worth to help her. And in no time at all we'd got a foal born and I pulled him round to the old mare's head.

Long days were expected of the horseman, who had to care for his charges before and after work;

You had to get up about six or quarter to in the morning to feed them and to get them ready, see. And you went out to work at half past seven, when it was light. I've seen them out with hurricane lamps hung on the harness of the horse waiting for light to come to start. And you went out 'til twelve o'clock when you came in and had two hours for dinner, but all the two hours was took in getting litter round and various things because the horses were stabled in the winter. And then you went out to work again 'til it got dark in winter, 6 o'clock in summer, the six days of the week, like.

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Although nearly all working horses were born on farms there was an established trade with the towns that saw over half live out the rest of their lives in urban areas. By the age of five many of the heavier geldings would be at work in the docks, pulling railway drays and making commercial deliveries.

Preparing these horses for sale was trusted to the senior horseman; The head waggoner, of course, always had the head team, he always had the best horses. He had the horses, the young horses, that were being got up ready for being sold at 3 years old, to go to the docks or somewhere or other. Young stock was coming and going all the time.

Lighter horses would also be sold from farms for use with passenger vehicles. This demanding work meant that many were worn out after five years in the towns, with cab horses often managing as little as three before the long hours and poor roads had taken their toll.

For some horse breeders the downturn in this trade was hastened by the onset of war;

Dad stopped horse in the breeding in the 1914 war, when the army took away his two stallions: we never saw them again. And after the Fourteen War nobody wanted trap-horses any more: everyone wanted cars. My father, though, he never took to cars. He never could drive, and he was always dead agin' motors.

Bill's father was not alone in losing his prized horses to the war effort. In the month before the 1914-18 war was declared the British Army had 25,000 horses. Over the next fourteen days a further 145,000 were compulsorily acquired.

Alongside the million men who died in the conflict nearly half a million horses were lost. Those that returned after the war faced a new rival, for in the darkest days of 1917, when food shortages were becoming critical, over 10,000 tractors had been imported from the United States to plug the gap left by the exodus of horses to Europe. The first steps to a mechanised farming future had been taken, and a new chapter begun for the horse.

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Recipes from the Suckley Masterchef

Thai Spiced Potato and Salmon Fishcakes

Serves 4

450g/1lb Desiree potatoes, very finely diced	1/2 teaspoon of grated fresh ginger
50g/2oz butter	Juice of 2 limes
85g/3oz shallots, sliced	1-3 Tablespoons sweet chilli sauce
2 garlic cloves, crushed	225g/8oz poached salmon
2 tablespoons Soy sauce	50ml/2 fl oz milk
2 tablespoons of Thai Fish Sauce	125g/4oz Japanese or dried breadcrumbs
2 eggs for breadcrumb coating	Salt and pepper
A small bunch of chopped coriander	

Method

- 1. Place the diced Potatoes in a saucepan of cold salted water, bring to the boil, then turn down the heat and simmer until tender.
- 2. Drain and return to the warm pan to dry thoroughly.
- 3. Meanwhile, melt the butter in a saucepan, add the shallots and garlic, and cook over a low heat until soft but not browned.
- 4. Put the potatoes in a large bowl. Put in the shallots, and garlic, soy sauce, fish sauce, coriander, ginger, lime juice, chilli sauce, and seasoning to taste
- 5. Mix together well and then add the flaked poached salmon and mix together lightly but evenly.
- 6. Chill in the refrigerator for 3-4 Hours.
- 7. Beat the eggs and milk together in a bowl and spread the breadcrumbs on a plate. Divide the potato mixture into twelve fish cakes.
- 8. Dip the fish cakes into the egg mixture to coat evenly. Then coat in breadcrumbs.
- 9. Serve hot with a spicy tomato salsa.

Robin Hill

What's on, what's happening in and around Suckley

Suckley Village Hall

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Bank Holiday Monday 4th June 2012

Plans are now ahead for a great family day with a Children's Sports Day & Tea, entertainment and evening Ceilidh Barn Dance. Volunteers still needed for final arrangements and help on the day – contact Nessa on 01886 884383 / 07792 552458

PLEASE NOTE: If you live in the Parish and would like your child to receive a commemorative Jubilee mug and he/she does not attend Suckley School, please contact the Clerk, Diana Taylor at dtaylorsuckley@msn.com Tel 01684 569430 or any of the Parish Councillors so we can register your request.

Local Services:

Mobile Library Timetable 2011

Fridays only at Suckley - Cross Keys 1.45-2.00pm Damson Way - 2.10-2.25pm Longley Green Post Office 2.40-3.35pm **Dates:** 20th April / 11th May Enquiries about this service should be made to Malvern Library, Graham Road Malvern or telephone 01905 822722, or email malvernmobile@ worcestershire.gov.uk

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Suckley Church News and The BIG Clean Up!

At last the PCC is happy that the right architect has been chosen to help Suckley Church adapt to the changing needs of the village, and find the best way to become more user friendly for all of us.

David Duckham is a well respected local architect and has been doing our statutory 5 yearly church 'check-up', for many years. He supervised the major tower repairs in 2007. Since the open meeting last summer (about our church's uncertain future financial viability) the PCC has visited many similar church projects and discussed our particular needs, on site, with 5 architects. This has been very rewarding, and opened our eyes to the many different ways our church building could be adapted to better meet our present and future needs. It is reassuring to find that we still believe our 'own' architect is the one we have most confidence in to oversee the necessary changes.

Thank you for all your ideas and thoughts, which have been summarised and given to the architect. He has been informed of the hesitations and concerns, as well as the many ideas (both conservative and innovative) that have been put forward as possible ways of developing our church.

Suckley Village School, now an Academy, is growing in numbers and reputation, achieving an 'Outstanding' Ofsted report recently. Our recent accounts show that yet again last year our income could not match our outgoings; so partnering our needs with those of the school so that we create an income stream for the church still seems the best way to keep our church open and relevant.

Our next move is to 'get our house in order' and organise a Spring Cleaning Session at the church. John Ranford and Reg Taylor do a great job keeping the churchyard looking neat and tidy, but there are some overgrown areas, some areas where rubbish has accumulated, and some old graves that would benefit from a tidy up and a bit of love. The church too has developed neglected corners over the years with accumulated 'bits and bobs' that need a sort out.

Please will anyone with a personal interest in our church and/or churchyard come along any time on Saturday May 19th (bin bags and refreshments provided!!) and help us de-clutter and tidy up.

BIG Thank you, Anne Lewis (Church warden 01886 884552)



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Suckley Church

Suckley Services for April and May

Palm Sunday, April 1st, There will be a procession with Sooty the Shetland pony, to the 11am All Age Service at Suckley Church. Meet in Suckley Village Hall car park at 10.30am

Monday April 2nd at 7.30pm, Holy Communion (Common Worship) Good Friday, April 6th at 10am, All Age Service (NB the date and time!) Easter Day, April 8th at 11am, Family Communion with Andrew Mottram preaching

Sunday April 15th we go to Alfrick for their All Age Service with a baptism at 11am,

Sunday April 22nd we go to Leigh for their 11am service

Sunday April 29th at 11am, Family Communion Service, when Leigh choir will lead the music for us

Sunday May 6th at 11am, All Age Service (a lively informal service)

Sunday May 13th at 6.00pm, a 'Healing Service' (a quiet contemplative service, with the opportunity for prayer for healing)

Sunday May 20th at 11am, we go to Alfrick for their All Age Service (a lively informal service)

Sunday May 27th at 11am, Family Communion

Sunday June 3rd at 11am, All Age Service to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee (Leigh Church has Bishop John at the 9am Common Worship service that day)

Suckley Church is pleased to be able to be open to visitors most days now, thanks to a small generous hearted group of volunteers. Please let me know if you are able to join the rota and make it even easier! (The groups cover as follows: "School Days, half a term at a time", "Saturdays", "Sundays" and "Mon to Fri in School hols, a week at a time")

Anne Lewis (Church warden 01886 884552)

APRIL 2012

Travels and Travails in China – Part 3 – the Tibetan/Zhongdian Plateau

Adrian Holmes, resident horticultural specialist, writes on the highs and lows of the next leg of his Chinese adventure, including a visit to Shangri La!

When James Hilton published his novel The Lost Horizon some 80 years ago, rumour had it that he based some of his descriptive prose on the narratives coming out of China from the early 20th century plant hunters such as Joseph Rock. After nearly three-quarters of a century, Shangri La, the Himalayas lost paradise has been found. It is here, in the far north west reaches of Yunnan and we are on our way to it.

From Jianchuan, you climb steadily out of the Yangtze valley, clinging to the steep valley sides and round hairpin bends until the road rather suddenly levels out. The scenic change is quite dramatic. One moment you are chugging up the winding road where each corner greets you with a new vista of wooded slopes covered with lush broad leaf sub-tropical evergreen forest, and the next you are some 10,000 or so feet high and presented with a broad, flat, almost tree-less vista, dotted with the scattered huts that serve the Tibetan farmers as summer quarters while they graze their livestock on these pastures. It is an area where rural folk eke out a living from the land.

The road to Zhongdian is flanked on either side by wide, flat, flower rich meadows – lilies, terrestrial orchids, semi-parasitic pedicularis, primulas, asters, alliums, sundews, spurred gentians, ligularias and so on. We could probably have spent a day wandering around and still found more little gems tucked away in the tussocks and in the wet marshy bogs. We're at about 10,000 feet here, and the winters are harsh. It is mid-July, but you wouldn't want to be wandering around in shorts and a T-shirt. The road snakes on, and eventually bisects Xiao Zhongdian, which apparently means Little Zhongdian. I wondered what Greater Zhongdian would be like, since the Little one is smaller than Longley Green (but not as pretty!). Lunch was taken here - and typically excellent it was too. When on the Tibetan plateau, trying Tibetan tea is a must. It is made with an exotic mix of ingredients, such as Yak buttermilk and real tea leaves. No tea bags or semi-skimmed up here. Well, I'm glad I can say I tried it, or at least a mouthful anyway. I won't have to try it again.



Going up to 4,500 m - the Langdu Pass. The pylons were built after 'The Lost Horizon' was written.

We're another 1,000 or so feet higher in Zhongdian, and the effect of altitude becomes quite marked. Unfortunately one of the motley assortment found it a bit too much and had to leave for lower pastures. Even more unfortunate, a passport was lost or stolen somewhere en route from the hotel. One would expect that in this day and age of modern communications, internet etc etc, it would not be a major problem in confirming identity, authenticity and so on in order to get a temporary passport and replacement visa. It is not. And there began a sorry saga of multi way communications between Consulates, the Chinese Police, the individual and our Chinese hosts, which took nearly two weeks to resolve, resulting in a prolonged stay in China and not inconsiderable additional expense for the hapless soul. If there were passports in Confucius's day, he would have had some words of wisdom about not losing it.

Anyway, back to botanising. We're going up to 4,500 metres, about 500 metres lower than Everest Base Camp. The oxygen content of the air is reduced to about half of what it is at sea level. You tend not to forget it as any normal movement, such as getting up too quickly from taking a photo of a plant a few inches high will make you so dizzy that you are likely to fall down again and crush the plant - and a few others as well. But what plants there are to see on this true alpine mountain scree! Poppies, including one of such a deep blue it is almost purple, saxifrages, starry sedges, blue, yellow and bi-coloured corydalis, tiny delicate pink primulas hugging the ground for shelter, bizarre cremanthodiums whose single deep maroon flower looks a bit like a fritillary, a gorgeously bright red plant called Rhodiola discolour and startlingly vivid blue gentians bravely defying the elements by standing slightly taller than the scrub around them. You can buy this one in England, but unless you live in the Welsh or Scottish mountains, you might do better to buy something like dahlias instead. In more ways than one, this visit to the top of Langdu Pass was the highlight of the trip: it surpassed expectations. It was quite awe inspiring to look around at the plants at this desolate, exposed location and to try to comprehend that what we were seeing was the result of 180 million years of evolution. It was worth a quiet moment of reflection.

Next issue, the final leg: black and green dragons, a World Heritage Centre and home via Shanghai. Nothing else could go wrong now, could it?

Medical (?) Bulletin - Allotment Fever!

There has been an outbreak of this disease in Suckley. Whilst not thought to be terminal, it is obviously quite contagious. Thirty eight cases have been notified so far, in Alfrick, Bransford and Leigh Sinton, and the exclusion area has reached Malvern, Bromyard and Worcester. More and more people are succumbing to its addictive lifestyle. You can spot sufferers if you notice blistered hands and a smiley weather-beaten face. Some patients also have signs of aching backs, but, strangely for a modern disease, no one has needed counselling, or rehab, to overcome this addiction. In all clinical trials to date the vegetables and fruit produced are totally wholesome, and the allotment addicts appear to be in better health than at the beginning of the research period.

Unfortunately there are no NHS plots in this 40 bed(?) unit, but if you want to book one of the 2 remaining private places at £2 per week, you can bypass your GP, and phone the admissions secretary directly on 01886 884221.

Jill Hammonds

the greenhouse café

at Holloways

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Free Quotation

Andrew Grieve, has asked that this letter from Rt Hon Caroline Spelman MP, be included in the Newsletter.

APRIL 2012

HOUSE OF COMMONS, LONDON SW1A 0AA

5th March 2012

Dear Councillor

£60m Rural Economy Grant Scheme

I just wanted to make you aware of a new \pm 60m grant scheme for rural entrepreneurs that we announced a few days ago.

This is an exciting new scheme whereby rural businesses can apply for individual grants which could range from £25,000 to more than £1m each. The objective is to support the businesses in increasing competitiveness and profits.

Successful applicants will receive up to 40% of the cost of projects and the five areas we anticipate the scheme supporting will be in farm competitiveness; agri-food; tourism; forestry and micro enterprises such as digital media technology and small scale, high value manufacturing.

Applications for grants are now being accepted and further information is available at: http://rdpenetwork.defra.gov.uk/funding-sources/rural-economy-grant

This announcement is part of a broader £165m package we are delivering to unlock the economic potential of our rural areas. It is further proof of how this Government is investing in our rural economy, supporting our countryside and driving growth in rural businesses. It also demonstrates this Government's appreciation that we need to foster a growing and robust rural economy - for the benefit of both rural communities and the economy more widely. This contrasts sharply with the approach of the previous Government.

So often we all come across small rural businesses asking where they can go to apply for additional funding. This is one approach you could suggest to them and I would urge you to draw it to their attention. If we can be of further help, please don't hesitate to get in touch either directly or through Cllr Clare Whelan (clare@whelan.net).

Yours ever

Rt Hon Caroline Spelman MP Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Suckley Local History Society - First Meet

Liz Devenish reports on the first meeting of new season held on March 8th.

This popular group has now restarted, and our first meeting was a great success. Some 30 members have joined for the new season and we welcomed a good number of newcomers who had not heard of the society before....an excellent turnout.

Our speaker, John Bateman, is a lifelong railway enthusiast who proved to be an expert on the history of the Bromyard branch line. He described the long gestation period, nearly 50 years, which led to the eventual construction of the line. The original, ambitious grand plan for the line to reach Aberystwyth was never achieved, but it did eventually extend as far as Leominster, having halted for a number of years first at Yearsett, and then at Bromyard.

The story of the line could be described as doomed to failure, according to our speaker, but he was just being realistic. Although the line was extremely picturesque, and in it its heyday, boasted many well kept stations with dedicated staff, the line, like so many branch lines, never stood a chance of commercial success.

Although in the early days the local fruit production generated plenty of business, and huge numbers of hop pickers used the line in season, competition from the car, bus and lorry was just too strong, and eventually the lines' survival was dependent almost entirely on one or two local industries, notably the Linton Tile works in Bromyard. Ironically, the success of the works at The Bruff actually accelerated the railways demise, by advancing the mechanisation of the hop picking process. John illustrated his talk with some excellent archive photographs, many of which are unique.

The evening ended with some sociable refreshments and we look forward to our next meeting on 19th April when we shall find out about the Who Why and When of immigration and emigration in the area in centuries past. Do join us.

SURGERY NEWS - ISSUE 7 APRIL - MAY 2012



..... REMINDER!

To help us keep you informed, please ensure that the surgery has your mobile number on record. Text it to 07745 209308 or fill in the form on our website

Alcohol Awareness: How much is too much?

Following an increase in media attention regarding alcohol consumption, particularly at home, and the rise in alcohol-related problems, we thought you might like to have an idea of 'How much is too much!' See the Change 4 Life website: www.nhs.uk/ Change4Life

Women - not more than 2 to 3 units of alcohol a day: a **175ml glass of wine max** Men – not more that 3 to 4 units of alcohol a day: a pint of strong lager, beer or cider

unit = 25ml single spirit and mixer or 50ml glass of sherry
5 units = 275ml alcopop
units = 440ml can lager, beer or cider (4.5%)
units = 1 bottle of wine
If you would like any more information or have any concerns please do call the surgery.

Spotlight On: Sharon Salter IT & Data Coordinator / Health Care Assistant

Sharon has been with Knightwick Surgery for 5 years. In her main role as IT & Data Coordinator, Sharon ensures that all patient records are properly maintained and kept up to date. She deals with the security of all patient information held by the Practice and uses data extracted from our system to help implement relevant service provision. Sharon trained as a registered nurse and gained further experience in this area working in Australia. She uses this expertise in her role as Health Care Assistant (HCA). Sharon's interests outside work include art – examples of which can be seen around the surgery. She has recently exhibited and sold some of her pieces locally.

Information Governance: All the information held by the surgery about you is subject to the Data Protection Act 1998 which strictly governs the ways in which information is stored, used and shared. The right to see information is regulated by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Access to Health Records Act. Information relating to deceased patients is also strictly controlled. We have a duty to ensure that our patients are kept informed of the way we look after their records. Please ask if you have any questions about this.

The full A4 version of the Surgery Newsletter is available at Knightwick 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.

Suckley Parish Council Meeting 12th March 2012

FOOTPATHS - Mr Peter Markins reported that he and Mr Richard Harward had a successful annual appraisal with Tracy Sutton, the Area Countryside Officer. She was very pleased with their work. They had replaced various signs and posts and cleared fallen trees blocking footpath 685, also branches overhanging the bridleway 680. They had also spent some time sorting out stiles and signs on the land above Tundridge.

COMMUNITY PLAN - Cllr A Grieve reported that the Group were working hard on the survey. It was planned to give a full report to the Annual Parish Meeting in May.

DIAMOND JUBILEE - The Clerk reported that she had now received the Jubilee Mugs* (see centre pages) for distribution to pupils at Suckley School and children up to the age of 11 resident in the parish. Cllr A Grieve confirmed that a Jubilee Celebration Event would be taking place on the Playing Fields on Monday 4th June. This would take the form of a Family Sports Day, with teas and a Barn Dance in the evening. Further details yet to be released.

SPEEDING - An increasing number of complaints have been made to the Council regarding speeding issues – primarily along Knightwick Road and through Longley Green, although other areas have also been affected. This speeding traffic is a serious danger to all, especially school children along the Knightwick Road. We now have the VAS (Vehicle Activated Sign) camera in place by the Bruff. In the first seven days of installation it registered 1,274 vehicles exceeding 32 mph. Various calming measures were considered, including road narrowing, speed bumps, rumble strips, 20 mph signs, community enforcement signs. A Police presence with speed cameras would be an effective measure, but so far Suckley had not been considered a "high risk" area. The Clerk had contacted West Mercia Police to see if they would support a Community Speedwatch team, but this had been turned down. The Clerk was asked to arrange a site meeting with Highways to look at the various options.

HIGHWAYS – The Clerk reported a further delay in the replacement domed metal cage at the bottom of Birchwood Lane (at the side of the water depth gauge). The problem was a BT duct running across the front of the drain inlet which would have to be lowered by BT before any work could commence. The plan was now to construct a dished concrete apron at the entrance to the drain, and a brick manhole with access cover and open grid inlet. The Council agreed to renew the Lengthsman Contract with Barry Bennett for a further 12 months. All members agreed that Barry had done a superb job throughout the parish and we were very fortunate to have him as our Lengthsman.

WOODLAND ROAD - The Clerk reported that as requested she was still chasing Severn Trent to clear the ditch from Knightwick Road to the Sewerage Works. The problem appeared to be that they had to be sure the ditch/land was owned by Severn Trent. A representative from Severn Trent had met with Cllr J Green and taken photographs. The Clerk was asked to contact Gerry Brienza from Highways and Severn Trent in an effort to finally get this resolved.

SUCKLEY PLAYING FIELD - Cllr J Green reported that he had shifted three bags of rubbish from the Playing Field, and a new load of conifer cuttings had been dumped on the Field. The Annual Safety check would be taking place in March.

SUCKLEY SCHOOL - Cllr L Devenish reported that the School had been given an "Outstanding" Report from Ofsted. All the Council agreed that this was an excellent result.

PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPT 2012/13 - A number of parishioners have remarked on the increase in the Parish Council Precept. To put the figures into context, the average Parish precept for 2012/13 for a Band E property in MHDC is £68.16. Suckley's is £57.91 or 15% lower than the average for MHDC as a whole. Our precept is £1.11 per week in Band E. MHDC and Worcestershire County Council have been capped by Central Government in the last three years. This has resulted in many services and grants provided by County and District being withdrawn or severely reduced. The increase of £732 is largely due to the Parish Council responding to requests from Parishioners for extra salt/grit bins to be placed in key spots in the Parish, and our efforts to combat the numerous complaints about speeding cars/lorries etc. We have had to purchase additional salt/grit bins from the County Council (they would not supply us with any more) plus the cost of purchasing and storage of salt/grit supplies which have to be kept secure and under cover. We also have to budget for refilling the bins if required. We have had to make provision for extra hours to pay our Lengthsman (who maintains our verges, drains and ditches) as he will be responsible for erecting and moving the VAS camera. These two services alone are budgeted to cost approximately £930 extra

for 2011/12 (current year) and £1025 for 2012/13. The Parish Council also supports and services a wide range of community projects/facilities within the Parish, including our Community Plan and the 2012 Diamond Jubilee Celebrations. Both these are an additional cost of approximately £1,000. Our improved Grant to the Playing Fields will be £600 for 2012/13. These are just a few of our local commitments – others are of a statutory and legal nature (insurance/health & safety obligations/administration costs etc.) On a wider front, the Council strives to improve the quality of life in the Parish, and represent the interests of the whole community from the grass roots level.

RESIGNATION - The Council very reluctantly accepted the resignation of Cllr Mrs Rosemary Harward who has been a most conscientious and hardworking Councillor during her service with the Council. The Clerk presented her with a bouquet of flowers as a "thank you" from the Council This means that we now have a vacancy for a Councillor. If you would be interested in joining the Parish Council, please contact the Clerk – Mrs Diana Taylor on 01684 569430 or e-mail dtaylorsuckley@msn.com

NEXT MEETING DATE - MONDAY 14TH MAY at 7.00 pm Suckley Village Hall.

DON'T FORGET OUR ANNUAL PARISH MEETING ON MONDAY 21st MAY at 7.30 pm in Suckley Village Hall.

Suckley Broadband Improvement Grant Update

Hilary Pitt writes: I received notification from Worcestershire County Council's Caroline Howard-Lewis, Business Analyst – BOLD Team that Suckley's Expression of interest was **not** shortlisted for the Green Infrastructure Fund to improve broadband speeds in the Parish. Caroline writes "This is due to the fact that the mapping data we have undertaken shows that less than 4% of the Parish currently receive download speeds of less than 2Mbps."

She continues: "In addition, the data shows that a number of premises in your Parish receive download speeds of 6Mbps and above and the funding available would not be able to provide a solution that significantly improved upon this."

I did contact Caroline's office to discuss the mapping data, as from my albeit limited fact gathering exercise, more than 4% of villagers receive 2Mbps or less but was told that as WCC had signed an non-disclosure agreement with BT (who provided the mapping data) she could not discuss these findings further.

I was also told, again based on the mapping data, Suckley's is not eligible for broadband improvement under a DEFRA grant. We will just have to wait (and wait...) until 2015 by which time, WCC plans to role out 'superfast broadband' to 90% of the county. My thanks to all those who showed their support for the Expression of Interest.

Points of contact:

Newsletter Content: Hilary Pitt – 884355 Newsletter Advertising: Tilda Swabey – 07739 264495 Email: suckleynews@gmail.com Next Issue: First week in June 2012 Content for newsletter to be submitted 23rd May 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 or for Parish Council business www.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish (select Suckley from alphabetical listing).

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 Suckley Good Neighbourhood Scheme: 01886 840480 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. Non-emergencies 101. Switchboard 0300 333 3000 PC3381 Sarah Ransome-Williams, CSO 6494 Tracey Caldwell, CSO 5481 Collin Davies.

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