

THE SIGNAL

A Community Newsletter for
KINNERSLEY-SARNESFIELD-LETTON- NORTON CANON- BROBURY
STAUNTON-ON-WYE-MONNINGTON-ON-WYE-MOORHAMPTON

no.80

MAY 1989

15p

Staunton-on-Wye of yore (part 2) by R. Pantall

January 9th 1783

To be sold by private contract, at the Swan Inn, Staunton-on-Wye, on Monday the 20th day of January, all the household stuff and furniture, together with all the livestock, formerly belonging to James Davies, seized and taken in distress for rent due to the Rev. Mr. Thomas Higgins, Clerk of Letton Church.

March 10th 1790

Last week a melancholy accident happened at Staunton-on-Wye. Mr. Francis Lewis, who kept the Redstreak Tree Inn in the Cittie of Hereford, returning home from that neighbourhood, was thrown from his horse, and received so violent a concussion in his head as to occasion his death in a few hours. The unfortunate man has left a widow and several small children. An Inquisition being held by the Coroner, a verdict of Accidental Death was returned by the Jury.

Lost, Supposed to be Stolen:

On Thursday night August 18th, or early the next morning, from a meadow near the Portway, TEN FAT WETHER SHEEP and ONE TUP, marked on the crup with the letters J.C., and a hole through each ear. If strayed, any person who will bring them to Garnons shall be handsomely rewarded; and, if stolen, whoever will give information, so that the offender(s) may be convicted of the same, shall receive a reward of TEN GUINEAS by applying at Garnons.

All contributions for the JUNE issue should be sent to Gareth Evans, Lanzerac, Norton Canon (0544 318505) by Saturday 20th May.

August 8th 1792

At the Hereford Assizes last week, William Davies was tried for stealing four sheep, the property of William Pantall, Kilkington, Staunton-on-Wye. He was found guilty and sentenced to death, but reprieved before the Judges left the city.

August 29th 1792

Yesterday died, at Ludlow, Lady Cotterell, relict of Sir John Cotterell of Garnons. Lady Cotterell was Anne, only surviving child and heiress of John Geers of Garnons, who married John Brookes Cotterell, of Saintbury, Gloucestershire, at Mansell Gamage Church, on 13th October 1756. Lady Cotterell inherited her father's estates at Garnons, The Marsh at Bridge Sollars, and Hatfield Court near Leominster. Her husband was knighted in 1761 for presenting "An Address of Congratulations to the King on his Accession to the Throne." (George the Third 1760-1820).

February 11th 1795

The highest flood on record was on this date, with the waters reaching exactly 20 feet at Hereford, when the river rose 15 feet within 24 hours, doing enormous damage throughout the county. The Rev. L. Maxey, Rector of Byford, made the following entry in his Church Register "Great flood, many cattle lost. Caused by sudden thaw, the ice on the Wye was more than one foot thick."

February 10th 1802

Stolen from the Portway, in the parish of Staunton-on-Wye, on Monday night the 25th January: A Brown Chestnut Mare, with a new saddle and bridle,

From a letter in "The Times"

Sir

The daffodils in our front garden are all pointing towards the street and away from our house. I bought them so that I could look at them out of the window but they seem to reserve their beauty not for me but for the passers by who did not fork out last autumn for the bulbs as I did.

My wife tells me they are looking towards the sun but that does not explain the behaviour of the daffodils in the back garden which are also facing the other way. Is there something fundamentally wrong about the way we planted them or are we doing something of which they disapprove?

Short of wringing their necks or cutting off the flowers and placing them in a vase on the dining room table or changing our highly provocative life style can anything be done? We need an answer fast as their un-cooperative attitude is already beginning to infect the primroses."

about thirteen hands high, the one ear slit and the other notched. Whoever will give information of the offender(s), shall upon conviction, receive a reward of TWO GUINEAS, by applying to Mr. Morgan, Portway.

May 9th 1804

Yesterday died, at the advanced age of 103, at Staunton-on-Wye, Elizabeth Shepherd. This venerable matron retained her faculties to the last, and had never known an hour's illness till two days of her death.

September 5th 1804

List of Persons in the parish of Staunton-on-Wye, who have already voluntarily offered their horses and carriages with drivers, to convey the Volunteers of the County of Hereford, in case of their being ordered to march in the defence of their country:-

William Powell	...	1 wagon	4 horses	1 driver
John Bird, Clutterbuck Hall	...	1 "	3 "	1 "
Mr. Nott	...	1 "	4 "	1 "
John Lewis	...	1 "	4 "	1 "
Richard Powles	...	1 "	4 "	1 "
Mrs. Pantall, Pound Farm	...	1 "	4 "	No driver
E. Waring, Old Letton Court	...	1 "	4 "	1 driver
W. Baker, Portway Farm	...	1 "	3 "	1 "
David Pantall, Kilkington	...	1 "	4 "	1 "

February 26th 1806

On Monday a fox was found between Staunton-on-Wye and Norton Canon by the hounds of J. Parry, Esq., of the Weir, and ran the distance of 35 miles without a check, before it was killed close to the town of Kington.

July 22nd 1807

Whereas Robert Williams, an Insane Pauper, of Staunton-on-Wye, has been missing ever since Sunday the 12th instant, and every possible means have been used to endeavour to find him, but all to no purpose. It is supposed (as he hardly ever wandered a great way out of the parish), that he must have perished under some hedge, or be covered in some piece of grain. Whoever may find him, or give information of him, to Mr. David Pantall, the Overseer of the said parish, at Kilkington, shall be handsomely rewarded.

January 1st 1808

Coal Wanted Immediately: On account of the late Mr. Jarvis's Charity, from fifty to one hundred tons of good English or Welsh hard fuel for fire. Any owner of barges, being desirous to supply, upon the most reasonable terms, to be delivered at Bredwardine Bridge, or by others for delivery by land carriage at the same place, are requested to send their proposals directly to Thomas Williams, Clerk to the Trustees, at Brobury.

February 3rd 1808

The following person has recently been convicted of offences under the Game Laws - George Lambe, in the penalty of £20, for coursing and killing a hare without a certificate, in the parish of Staunton-on-Wye.

IT ALL SOUNDS CHINESE TO ME

(from Lois Fisher's 'Go gently through Peking'.)

A British friend who spoke fluent Chinese said that it was sometimes impossible to be understood because some Chinese were unwilling to believe that any foreigner could speak their language. He recalls an instance when he was on his way to the Ming Tombs and, being uncertain about the route, he asked two aged Chinese to help him.

'Is this the way to the Ming Tombs?' he asked in fluent Chinese. They stared back at him as if they were deaf and said nothing. He repeated his question several times but they continued to look blankly at him.

He returned disgruntled to his car but not before he heard one Chinese say to the other 'How strange! It sounded just as if he asked us 'Is this the way to the Ming Tombs?''



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VISIT TO CENTRE OF ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGY
AT MACHYNLLETH, Tuesday 30th May

A day trip to the Centre of Alternative Technology is being run by Weobley Council of Churches. This will give the opportunity to inspect and discuss a whole range of energy saving projects and see a style of life aimed at living happily on limited material resources, with a minimum of waste and pollution.

The Centre is established in a disused slate quarry three miles north of Machynlleth. Cottages in which staff live have been built incorporating energy saving devices powered by sun, wind and water. Various types of wind machines can be seen with their different applications, and biogas (methane) provides another source of power. This is run alongside organic methods of gardening and fish cultivation.

The trip into this lovely part of Wales will give a chance to enjoy some fine mountain scenery over the mountain road to Staylitttle, and a possible stop at Llyn Clywedog.

Probable time: 9.30am - 7.00pm

Likely cost (depending on numbers) Visit to Centre, £3 (Senior Citizens £2), plus meals, plus transport (say £4 if by coach).

Inquiries and booking to Rev Chris Rhodes, Bell Brook by Friday 12th. May.

A gentleman is a person who is never rude unintentionally

Writing about music is like trying to make love by post.

Pentabus's latest show - "Becca's Children" - premiered in Staunton last month, highlighted once again their originality and ability to put across a complex story with compassion, wit, and great skill.

The dramatisation of the 'Rebecca riots' against toll gates in Wales in the 1830's proceeded with great pace, linking the wider aspect of the events to their effect on personal behaviour and attitudes, often in a very moving way.

What a great pity that only a handful of people from Staunton could manage to turn up for a show that deserves much wider support.

John Phillips.

Robert Loxston

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MID WALES by M. Jennings

By the summer of 1971, we had been house-hunting for two years or more. After sampling the agencies of West Sussex and Hampshire, we had been driven westwards by the rising prices through Wiltshire and Gloucestershire and Gwent, until we came to rest in Radnorshire.

I shall always remember our first visit, one hot afternoon in July. We had come across the 'mountain' and then rounded a bend in the road to see a shepherd on horseback, silhouetted darkly against the unclouded sky - a timeless apparition.

The house itself lay in the valley. Seen from its village, across a large field of grass it was set against some woods on the hill behind, flake-white with a roof of grey slate. A rough road, shaded by beeches and sycamores, led to a bridge across a stream beneath a chestnut tree, floppy with leaves. Beyond a swing gate, the grass had grown to four feet tall and we needed the help of the farmer's scythe to reach the door. Inside all was cool and mostly dark. Such shafts of the sun as could penetrate the cobwebs on the windows cast their light in lazy movements on the opposing walls. Everything was silent. We had already made our choice.

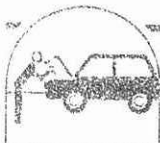
By the autumn, we were installed. Indoors a battle against the calendar began. As for the garden, we were to leave much of it in its pristine state, thickets of elder and yew on the banks, willow branches above the stream, 'over which nymphs and under which naiads dream'.

Elsewhere, we set about clearing the grass and the nettles and the dock, like stern colonists who revel in the knowledge that all remains to be done by themselves alone and, yet, are astonished to discover in due course the glass trinkets, the broken chariots and even the bones of a past civilisation.

In due course, the children went to the Primary School and even learned some Welsh, remembering in particular what they had been taught to sing. There were songs of ancient battles often enough, not like those of the Scots, lamenting their defeats, nor those of the English, celebrating their victories, but those which the Welsh themselves assumed that they were going to win, though not always correctly.

From the beginning, I had felt stimulated by the presence of the Welsh language on every signpost and notice board. After some hard times at night school, I became slightly less ignorant of its meaning, although it has been a case of slowly learn and quickly forget. At least I learned enough to discover two important traits in the Welsh tongue, its idealism and its Christianity. For instance, while the name of colours are as numerous as the rainbow in the Welsh sky, there is a predominance accorded to translucent blues, whiteness, purity. If I am not mistaken, the name Blodwen belongs to one whose footsteps leave behind her a trail of white flowers.

As for Christianity, the names of the parishes alone give a constant reminder of the spreading of the Gospel. Our own parish was named 'Eglwys Oen Duw', 'L'Eglise de l'Agneau de Dieu'. The Church of



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the Lamb of God'. Mid-Wales has long been familiar with Romance languages. From the 1st Century AD onwards, the Romans marched across this valley, grumbled in uncouth Latin beneath the shelter of the 'testudo' and ousted the Celts from their ring-forts on the hills.

Twelve centuries later, the descendants of the selfsame Celts marched down from Snowdonia at the call of Llewellyn, their Prince, only to lose heart when he died at the hand of an English trooper. This surge of an army down the Wye valley, that might well have taken the Welsh past Hereford and into the Midlands of England, petered out in face of Edward I. Unable to save de Montfort at Evesham in 1265, they were now unable to match his conqueror in 1282. More than a century was to elapse before Owen Glendower; and nearly as long again before the Welsh fighting man helped the Red Rose of Lancaster to victory at Bosworth in 1485. Thus did the Welsh have the last word in The Wars of the Roses, placing the Tudors and hence their successors upon the throne.

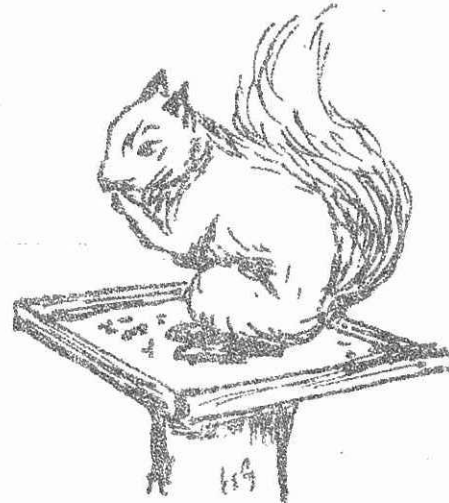
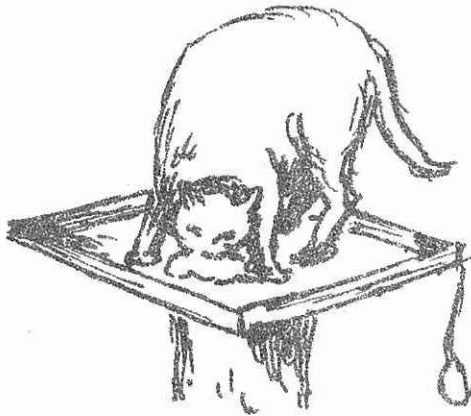
The thickness of the undergrowth gave us a false idea of the size of the garden. Actually, we were surrounded on all four sides by a farm, with its farmhouse and massive old barn and its acres of grazing land. In the mornings, the farmer would ride out on a pony to inspect his ewes on the hill; at teatime, with the shadows falling longer, the great cows, up to their knees in buttercups, would come to the stream to drink before making their way in single file to the byres.

Our children ran fairly wild, played on a remote island in the woods balanced on fallen tree trunks, swam beneath waterfalls and discovered toad-spawn in the still waters where the kingcups grew. The farmer kept a quizzical eye on their activities and provided a quiet education when he had the time. Once, with a face at least as straight as usual, he told them of even hotter summers when the salmon would come out of the water to rest themselves on the bank.

It is the beginning of April and time to stop feeding the birds, I am told, because there is more food about and it is better for the young ones to be fed naturally by their parents and to learn to find their own food. But they sit on the hedge opposite my kitchen window and reproachfully tell me that it is not a good idea, so I will have to stop gradually. There has been a stranger among them occasionally, its head and neck are brilliant yellow, as bright as a daffodil and the rest is brownish. It looks like a cross between a canary and a sparrow.

I have been feeding them on mixed corn, wholemeal bread and fat. There has been a marauding cat about that takes the fat when it is tied up on a piece of string from the bird table, or even from the branch of a tree. Also a squirrel has been a daily visitor, sometimes with a companion or two but usually alone.

Every year squirrels have come from the trees in the fields to inspect the hazel bushes to see how the nuts are getting on, and whether they are ripe enough to gather. By the time I think they are ripe, of course, they have all gone.



Last year my neighbour put a big nesting box in the tall tree at the bottom of my garden hoping barn owls would nest there. The squirrels used it instead and raised a family in it. It was lovely to watch the babies learning to run along the branches and play about in the trees.

It is the corn that the squirrel likes. It picks up the grains in its little front paws and lifts them up to its mouth which is a slow process. While it is there the birds stay away although the squirrel never takes any notice of them. Peanuts are its favourite food. I had to stop putting them out for the tits in a bag because it just gnawed the bottom out and took the lot. So I put a few at a time on the bird table when the squirrel had had a meal and gone away.

I think this squirrel must be one of the parents from the nesting box, because apparently they push their offspring out to fend for themselves at the end of the summer, or perhaps it is a precocious youngster. Whichever it is, it is very handsome and bushy. No wonder, it is very well fed.

CHURCH SERVICES

KINNERSLEY - MAY

1st. at 10.00am (St Philip & St James,
Apostles) Holy Communion
4th. at 10.00am (Ascension Day)
Holy Communion
7th. at 10.00am Holy Communion - preacher
the Rev. Jonathan Still
14th. at 10.00am (Whit Sunday) Holy Communion
21st. at 10.00am Holy Communion
28th. at 10.00am Family Service

JUNE

4th. at 10.00am Holy Communion



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WEOBLEY & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Alfred Watkins was the subject of a deeply interesting lecture by Mr Ron Shoesmith, the City of Hereford's archaeologist, given on 22nd March at the Willow Gallery. As one of Hereford's best known sons, he achieved widespread renown in his early days in the field of photography as the inventor of the Bee light meter in 1890, and in his later years as the propounder of the theory of ley-lines in his book 'The Old Straight Track' first published in 1921, and still in print.

His father was a successful brewer and business man which included flour-milling. Alfred was born in 1855 at the Imperial Inn, Widemarsh Street, and the business soon expanded by taking on the re-named Imperial Brewery in Bewell Street. It was the flour business, taken over in 1876, which proved to be the business interest of Alfred, and on that site was built the meter factory, which still stands as a modest shed off Friar Street.

However Alfred's interest lay in photography and archaeology, and his best memorial must surely be the fine collection of glass plate negatives now in the custody of the City Library, but sadly in need of care. The slides shown by Mr Shoesmith from that collection showed both the quality of the photography and the value of the subject since he recorded in this way every feature of historical interest which came to his notice. This included features of the City walls, which led him to propound theories on the City's defences, and the photographs which provided the basis for his study of 'Old Standing Crosses of Herefordshire' perhaps was the stimulus which set him off on 'The Old Straight Track'. He died in 1935.

NORTON CANON PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

At the meeting on the 11th April, 1989 the Revd R Birt informed those present that Mr M P West had indicated his intention to resign from the office of Churchwarden. Mr West has given devoted service to the church in Norton Canon for many years both as Churchwarden and as Treasurer and it was with great sadness that we accepted his resignation.

The Revd Birt wished to thank Mr West for all the years of devoted service. So many tasks and duties he had undertaken in his own quiet and unassuming way we all agreed that he would be sadly missed at future P.C.C. meetings.

Mr G Lewis and Mr J L Hughes were elected Churchwardens for the coming year.

Thanks were also expressed to Mr David Price who spends a considerable amount of time and energy in keeping the Churchyard in such good condition. It really is a pleasure to walk through the Churchyard and see the grass, drives etc so very neat and tidy.

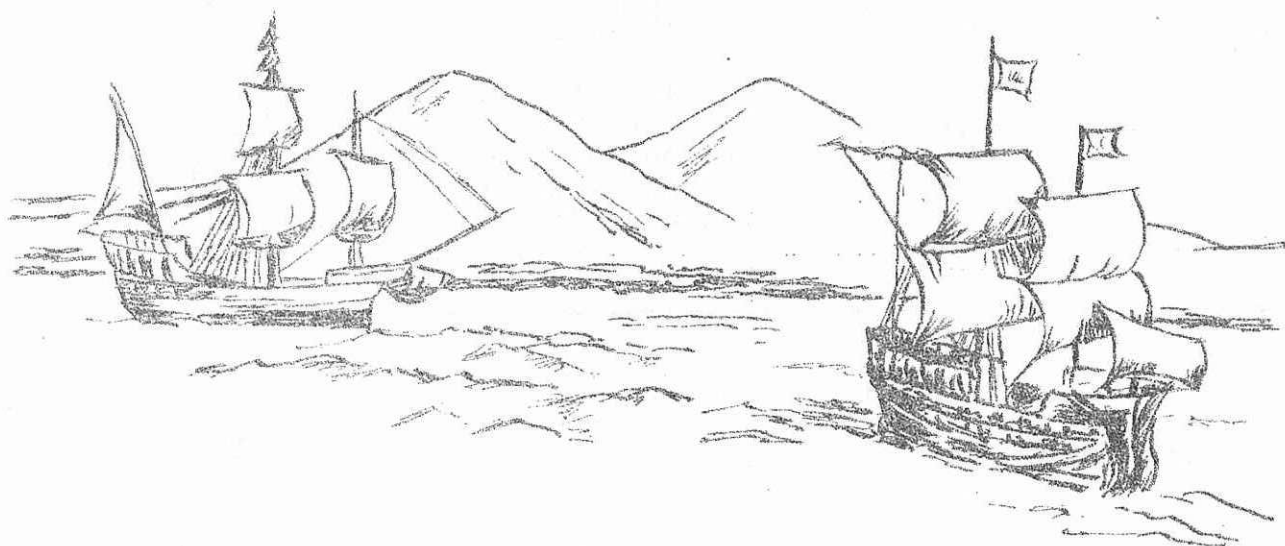
N Medcraft

NEVER GO BACK

Gareth Evans

A year or so ago I found myself in Looe in Cornwall where, by a strange chance, I was forcing down a drink at the local. As a stranger I was initially on my own but soon found myself in conversation with a friendly companion. After complimenting him on the local brew I added "And what's even better than the ale is this lovely view and situation." My remark was meant as a sincere compliment but, from my friend's darkened frown, you'd have thought I'd delivered a mortal insult. "You may think its beautiful but you should have seen Looe when I was a boy. They've really ruined it now."

As I hastened to soothe his ruffled plumes - with a second pint - I suddenly came to realise that his unexpected reaction was exactly the same as my own when an English visitor, a decade or so ago, made a similar comment about my childhood home - New Quay, Cardigan-shire. The unsightly caravan parks and the tarted up shops have now made the little seaside village a travesty of the place I remember in the early '20s and '30s. I hav'nt been back for years and doubt if I ever will again.



I cannot define any logic in this feeling of "never go back" but it is something that is deeply ingrained. Perhaps - in fact no doubt - New Quay has attracted a lustre in my imagination that it could never have achieved in reality all those years ago but it is still a truly basic feeling that I can never shake off.

We all have dreams of perfection - finite or imaginary - and how saddened would we feel should they ever turn out to be illusory. To illustrate this point let me end with a tale from 1945 when I and a naval friend found ourselves on an expedition to Balikpapan in Borneo a month or so after the end of hostilities. It was a peerless day with the air as clear as crystal as we gazed across to the far horizon and saw two matchless peaks piercing the cloudless blue. The sight so fascinated us that, when we returned to base, we hastily checked their identity on the map. "Good Lord" cried Michael "They are the historical peaks of Ternate and Tidore which look down on the fabled Spice Islands of the age

of Drake ! In my imagination, I can just visualise their beauty with stately galleons loading spice from caravans by the shore. But, Michael added sadly, it is a beauty that reality could never match. Don't let's ever go there so that we can keep our dreams". And so we never did. It wasn't just a case of "Never go back" because we never even went there at all.

Editor's note: If you have had the patience to reach the end of this article and have had personal experiences which support its point of view please do write and tell us. And to those of you who think the whole thing is a load of cobblers we would be just as delighted to hear from you - Go on.

AN EDITORIAL PLEA FROM THE HEART

As the Signal enters into its 8th year may I repeat my old parrot cry - in fact I'm getting to look more and more like one as the days go by - by beseeching you all yet again to write to us as often as you can. We are utterly dependent on your efforts and will have to close down if you pack it in.

To those of you who are too unused or too busy to put pen to paper I would beg you to pass on our appeal to your friends. Ask them, for instance, to write on your behalf a tale of your own which might well encourage them to write a tale of their own. And don't tell us that you haven't got any friends ! So contributors please keep coming - you will always be welcome.

Little boy (in church to mother
at the end of an interminable
sermon) "Mummy - is it still
Sunday ?.

COLD COMFORT

Friends of ours lived in a Sussex village that had a high percentage of elderly residents. Sunday morning service invariably showed the front two pews seating people in their eighties and nineties.

For real good to be achieved
in this world we should
not only try to comfort
the afflicted but also
afflict the comfortable.

One of these ladies died and in the absence of the vicar a young and newly ordained curate had to visit the widower. He was acutely conscious that the couple had been married far longer than he had been living and was at a loss to find words of comfort for the bereaved spouse. (90+) After a few minutes he found himself on the receiving end with the timely remark, "Don't 'ee fret, Parson, she were a vexatious toad".

HOW ABOUT A CLEAN-UP FOR SPRING?

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ALL TYPES OF GARDENING UNDERTAKEN

ARROWVALE WINE CIRCLE

Talk on Peru by Mrs J Smith

Anyone coming to the Arrovale last month expecting to hear just another anodyne travel talk, matched by equally anodyne slides was in for a splendid shock. Mrs Smith (with her Crusader group, family and friends) described a Peru that rarely comes across in world headlines - a land of scenic beauty, human deprivation in urban squalour and all set against a background of frightening banditry. Her love, however, of the people and the Crusader work in which she was engaged - helped by first rate photography - came across very clearly to give us a stimulating if, in some senses, unnerving evening. But so worthwhile.

We had a splendid turn out and so ended another intriguing and convivial evening.

Gareth Evans

A NEW HOBBY ?

Thinking of taking up a new hobby or interest this Autumn? Would you like to see a new evening or daytime activity in your village? If so, Kington Further Education Centre may be able to help. We can run one-off or short courses in most subjects in the village Hall or even your own home.

Let us know what you want and we'll see what we can do !

Please ring Cathy Moon, Eardisley 360 with your ideas.

Yours sincerely

Cathy Moon
Principal

Make a note in your diary
SIGNAL ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING & SOCIAL

Friday 19th May at
'Trisanna' Staunton On Wye
at 7.30 pm.
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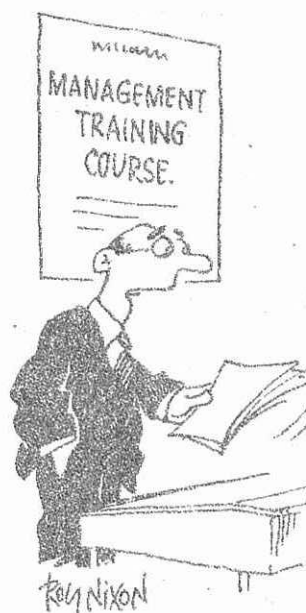
If you are interested in, or know someone who is interested in and could benefit from these services, please contact Kingswood Hall on Kington 230309 and one of the Senior Staff team will be happy to give you more details and arrange to come and see you at home to discuss it further.

Then came faire May, the fairest mayde on ground,
 Deckt all with dainties of her seasons pryde,
 And throwing flowers out of her lap arounde,
 Upon two Brethren's shoulders she did ride,
 The Twins of Leda, which on either side,
 Supported her like to their soveraine queene,
 Lord! How all creatures laught when her they spide,
 And leapt and daunc't as they had ravish't beene!
 And Cupid selfe about her fluttered all in greene.

Spenser

A SPEAKER'S PRAYER

Lord, give me confidence, humility and
 humour so that I may communicate with
 ease; and when I sit down may no one
 be moved to give thanks to YOU.



"We'll break for lunch now, and I'll see you tomorrow."

An Irishman was on his hands and knees in the gutter of London's Regent Street at 2am when a policeman came along and asked what was the matter.

"I've lost me wallet with all of £50 in it" replied the Irishman.

The officer offered to help and both went on searching but without success.

"Where exactly do you think you lost it ? queried the policeman after a while.

"Oh, it was in Hyde Park" was the reply. "Well, why the hell are we looking for it here in Regent Street" exploded the Law.

"Why, because the lighting is so much better here" came the obvious response.