

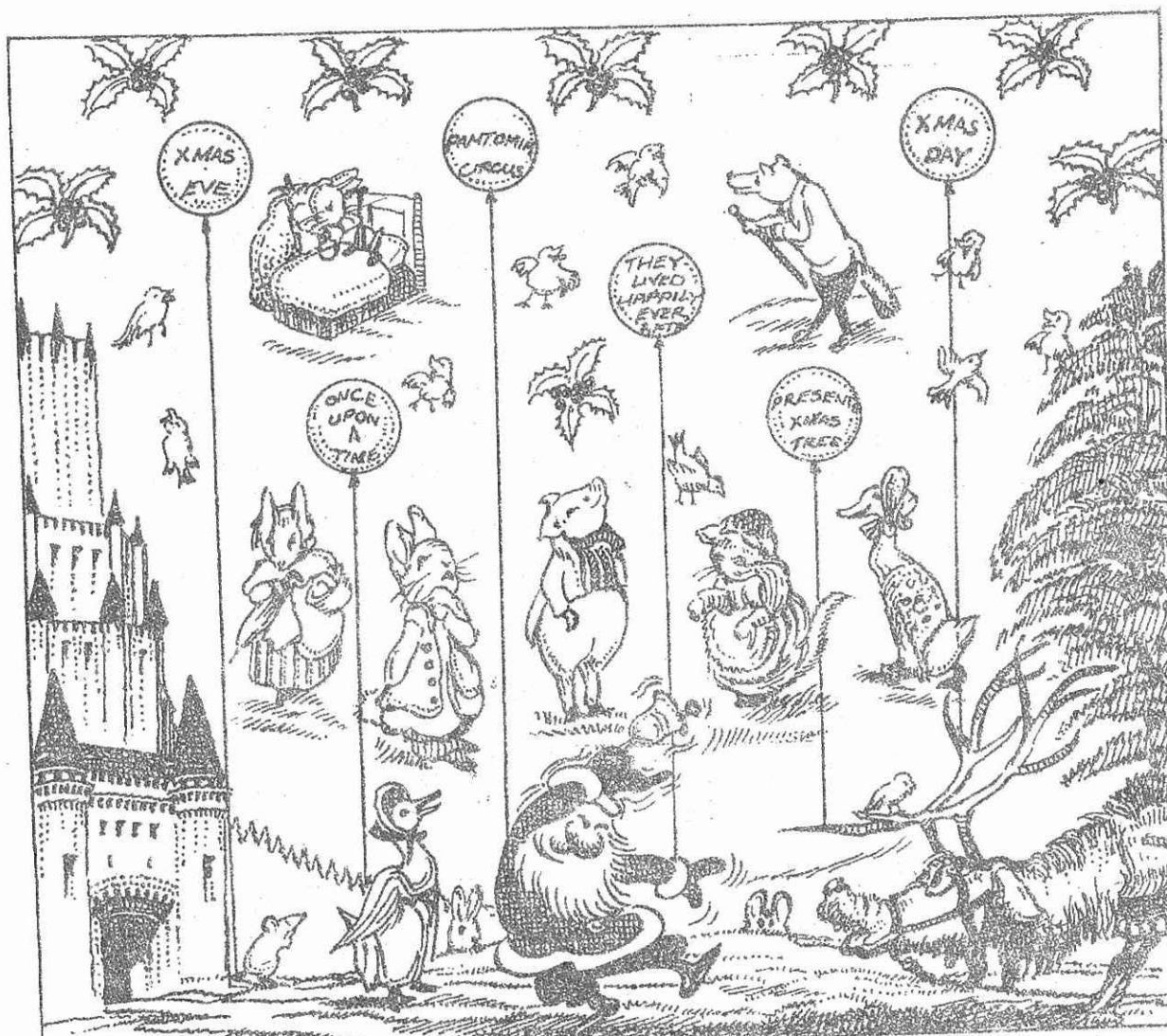
# THE SIGNAL

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

No 87

Christmas 1989

15p



CHRISTMAS TIME IS CHILDREN'S TIME, A TIME OF CHILDISH IMAGERY.  
A TIME OF JOY, A TIME OF THRILLS, A TIME OF DREAMS & FANTASY.  
A TIME WHEN CHRIST HIMSELF A CHILD BEGAN HIS LIFE-LONG MINISTRY.  
A TIME WHEN CHILDREN EVERYWHERE STILL LOVE THE XMAS MYSTERY  
WITH ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.  
FRANK A. EVANS, 1989

## ST. MARY'S CHURCH

I would like to thank all the people who have so generously given me flowers all through the year. I do thank them so much, it really does make the church bright and cheerful and it's surprising how many visitors come to see the buildings and also to visit graves.

P. McCann (Churchwarden)

A meeting was held at the home of Mr & Mrs Wrixon, Norton Canon to form a Branch of the Leominster Conservative Association. Sixteen people attended and Mr Wrixon agreed to be the Chairman; it is hoped to hold another meeting after Christmas, February time to arrange other business. Anyone interested please look out for notices.

Three little kittens who're doomed to roam  
Please, can you give them a happy home  
A little nervous and frightened, but they  
would befriend someone who fed them each day.

Eyebright, the one which is mostly white,  
has one bright eye, but the left has no sight.  
The other two scamps are tabby grey,  
They're all very frisky and play in the hay.

Now, Donald Prosser has asked if I would  
find good homes for them if I could.  
I said "well that won't be easy for  
folks don't seem to want any more".

In exchange for kindness and attention  
I'm sure they would pay you with affection.  
WANTED. Someone with patience to give  
three little kittens the chance to live.

Please 'phone Mrs Davis on Weobley 318083

Dear Signal Readers

Here's wishing you all a Happy Christmas and a cheerful New Year. We would also like to express our real gratitude to all our contributors and also to those who have so cheerfully distributed the monthly copies.

May we yet again repeat our request for contributions in 1990 because, as you have already heard so many times before, you are the ones upon whom we utterly depend. Without you we would be sunk. Would any children, for instance, like to emulate the 10 year old whose splendid article is included in this issue? And, by the way, is there any one of you who would like to help in the 'paste up' of articles for the monthly issues.?

So let's raise a glass to '90 and all the very best to you all.

Good plain grub at home is fine  
It's a change to lunch or dine  
Where the hung green bough once showed  
Hospitality's abode  
We have such in Staunton now  
Though bereft of shady bough  
Modern kitchen, cellar new  
Modern comfort all for you  
Parking space for many cars  
Newly furnished, both the bars  
Yet some old-world feeling's here  
Try that good old-fashioned beer!  
Landlord Peter welcomes you  
Barbara, Nicola, smiling, too  
They will offer tasty fare  
Ample portions cooked with care  
(Straight from heaven it would seem  
Comes the apple pie with cream)  
When you've eaten need you haste?  
Try the special coffee's taste  
The modest bill won't cause you pain  
Your wife will want to come again  
That's a date you'd like to fix?  
Just ring Moccas 346

H Aldhous

You are invited to a  
**CHRISTMAS FAYRE**  
on Thursday 7 December  
8pm. Staunton School  
Childrens' knitwear and  
clothes; Usborne books;  
Toys; Dried flowers;  
Cake Stall; Raffle; etc.  
Coffee and Mince Pies.  
In aid of Staunton Playgroup

## CHEERS !

The Editorial Board

# *Christmas in the Glasshouse*

BY Michael Jennings

Christmas 1940. We were stationed at a barracks in West London. The platoon rooms on their various floors were disposed around a series of parade grounds and these, in their turn, were separated from the street by a tall meshwire fence. The external architecture had a certain Victorian grandeur but the rooms and the passages were without decoration. There was snow and a bitter wind.

Of course, the monotony of the beds, lockers and stove were merely the visible surface of things; beneath, there lay the world of the spirit, traditions, regulations and taboos, and, most importantly, companionship in shared troubles. The military ghosts, with their pipes and their side-whiskers, who stalked these purlieus, men of Salamanca and Sebastopol, of the Modder River and the Marne, would have cast an approving eye at our stoicism and our readiness for unspecified adventure.

Nevertheless, the real war seemed remote at the time. There was an Italian squadron of bombers who flew high over the barrage balloons one evening. Their wingtips caught the glint of the setting sun as the smudges of exploding flak began to appear between them. Evening turned into night and the skies were raked with searchlights but we heard no more of the Italian airforce; London seemed a very large place.

We were mostly taken up with our own preoccupations; the soldier who knew one song and one alone, 'greeting the sun halfway' at six in the morning; the cold showers; the kit inspections with razor, comb and lather-brush, hussif and spare socks laid out at the foot of the bed; the taste of porridge at breakfast; the trestle tables wet with khaki blanco; the arms' drill and the bayonet practice and the weapon training.

The instructors were mostly those who had survived Dunkirk six months before and in some cases they must have owed their lives to curing the stoppages on the Bren gun. They had been taught to memorise the drills and repeat at speed in a loud voice, as they lay across their groundsheets, with the shining bits of the gun laid out around them. Even now, the saving words come back like a shibboleth. 'Gun coughs three times and then stops firing'. Woe to the poor wight who had forgotten to have his spare barrel cooling in a puddle.

A very wet morning, shortly after breakfast. The chronically sick, and some of those debilitated by the route march of the previous day, are outside the medical hut in full marching order with the rain streaming over the brims of their steel helmets and down their ground sheets. Festooned with double packs, rolled blankets, webbing equipment over the greatcoat and pouches for ammunition, water bottle, bayonet, scabbard and rifle, respirator holder on the chest and yet the whole effect rather spoiled by the shapeless anti-gas cape, they are smoking cigarettes down to the last millimetre. Plainly, they are ready to move if posted away; if not, the area round the barrack room stove will reek for many hours ahead with the smell of steaming serge.

On Saturday mornings, the two battalions would form up for massed drill. In time with the taps of a drum, itself in time with a metronome, we would learn to move every which way under the glare of the drill sergeants. This would continue for a couple of hours and then, as a treat, the band would break into stirring music, the R.S.M. would bring out his pacing stick and a thousand hearts would beat in something like unison. It was encouraging too to see the ladies of the borough crowding against the meshes of the fence.



They were never quite sure that we were not leaving for abroad and among the handkerchiefs there fluttered, no doubt, the odd affiliation order.

One such Saturday morning ended with the announcement of Christmas leave. Those on the list went off to smarten themselves up and gather their things before presenting themselves at the main gate where a full-length mirror and a warrant officer guarded the reputation of the Regiment. While our platoon corporal took the blacked-out train to Scotland, the sergeant, a well-known harrier in more senses than one, ran home to Weybridge. This left the barrack room in the charge of the Trained Soldier, one with eighteen years of service but no promotion, who slept in a cubicle and was waited-on hand and foot by the rest of us. No doubt he was a tiger on the field of battle, but in times of phoney war his most useful function was that of uniting the platoon in opposition to himself.

The next twenty-four hours passed in unusual harmony. It was not that we were quit of polish and blanco; indeed, all four of us were due to be on Main Guard the following morning. However, the element of rush was for once removed. While one man played the mouth organ, another showed us how to climb round the walls of the barrack room without touching the floor. Even the Trained Soldier became expansive.

After a while, we drifted off to the n.a.a.f.i. for a cup of tea and a bun, which cost a penny-halfpenny. As I thought of the seventeen shillings and sixpence, minus deductions, which had been placed in my cap on pay parade the day before, I felt distinctly flush. We ended up by sharing two tins of chipolatas, which we opened with a bayonet and cooked on the barrack room stove, followed by pineapple cubes and whipped-cream walnuts. The deeper happiness of the situation lay in what we were not doing; not on a period of 'interior economy' bumping the floors of the corridor; not running a cross-country round the Heath; not in the gymnasium emulating the high-stepping action of a P.T. instructor in a red-and-black striped jersey. Arcady indeed!

On the following morning we mounted guard. The Orderly Officer found much



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to criticise and little to commend when he made his inspection. There need be no supposing, he explained, that we were worthy of the traditions of the Regiment. Indeed he found it difficult to remember when he had been less impressed. However, he was eventually prepared to concede that we would do at a pinch. At the word of release, the guard commander marched us off with indecent haste to the secrecy of the guardroom and carried on where the Orderly Officer had left off. He then posted the first pair of guards and read them the standing orders from a board. The one piece of information they really needed, whom they might shoot and whom they might not, was smothered in military persiflage.

On our arrival in November, we had been intrigued by a certain officer who was kept in close confinement in an annex to the guardroom, with a member of the Military Police and an alsation to guard him. He was seldom visible but he would emerge in the evenings to wash or take exercise in a small yard. In the bitter December weather he might come out with nothing on but a towel round his waist and throw a bucket of cold water over his head and shoulders. He seemed to be impervious to hardship and quite self-sufficient. Secretly, we admired him.

After our supper of bread and butter and mashed potato and tea, an argument developed in the guardroom concerning this officer. One man said that he knew for a fact that he had jumped the ship before it sailed for Dakar; another that he had committed mutiny by defying an order to punish an innocent recruit; another that he had formally deserted but not from overseas operations, just deserted full stop.

I had no theories but, as it turned out, I was one of those on guard at midnight when the bell of a nearby convent tolled a rudimentary version of 'Silent Night'. Suddenly, I heard the officer in the glasshouse begin to sing in a fine, melodious voice. 'Stille nacht. Heilige nacht'. Slow and inspiring, the beautiful music rang out. Feeling indefinably sad, losing in a sense my moral bearings, I gathered my shoulders inside my greatcoat and stiffened my grip on the barrel of the rifle I held in my slippery, woolen khaki glove.

Later on in the day we came off guard. As our Christmas pudding was being served to us by the officers and we wore the paper hats from the crackers we had pulled before the turkey, I heard that a party had come to take him away in handcuffs. That had been in the early morning; the morning, that is, of Christmas Day 1940. It hardly seems like the best part of fifty years ago.

---

The man who says he is willing to meet you halfway is usually a poor judge of distance.

A lawyer is a man who helps you to get what is coming to him.

The man who worships the ground his girl walks upon probably knows that her father owns the property.

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#### ST NICHOLAS CHURCH NORTON CANON

The PCC would like to thank all who contributed so generously to the Harvest Appeal. A grand total of £210 was collected.

Very many thanks also to all who helped to decorate the church, gave fruit, flowers and vegetables for this decoration and also those who provided the cakes and sandwiches for the refreshments.

#### KINNERSLEY CHURCH SERVICES FOR DECEMBER

3rd.	10am	Advent Carol Service
10th.	6.30pm	Carol Service
17th.	10am	Holy Communion
24th.	11.30pm	Midnight Mass with Carols
25th.	10am	Holy Communion with Carols
27th.	10am	St John the Evangelist Holy Communion
7th Jan.	10am	Holy Communion

# Professor Peabody's Invisibility Pill

by  
Rhiannon Drew- age 9

I was playing in my garden when there was a tap on the gate. I went to the gate and there, squatting on the ground, was the strange Professor Peabody. He was my friend and in the past he had invented loads of peculiar things. "Hello, what do you want now?" I said. "Well" he said, "I've invented another pill and I'm dying to try it out. Can I try it out on you?" "Last time we did that, I got into trouble with the police" "Yes, but this is going to be fun. You take the pill and you become invisible! Now, please could you come over to my house at the week-end? I'll be ready." Off he went. I went indoors and made myself helpful to Mum, peeling carrots and potatoes. "Mum" I said, "could I go out on Saturday?" "Where?" she said "Well, I'd like to go to the park and then to the shops to buy a new riding hat, I've saved up the money". "Alright, but don't go to that funny friend of yours, you might get into trouble". The week-end came. I got my money took out my bike and went off to Number 2, Mad Street where the Professor lived. I knocked on the door. The Professor opened it. "At last" he cried. "I thought you weren't coming". "Hello Professor" "Call me Bert" he said. "Now I'm going to show you my secret cellar, where I make all my potions and pills and mixtures. Come along."

We went through a long corridor and down some winding steps. I felt as if I was going into a dungeon. It was dark, so Bert took a lantern. When we got into the cellar Bert turned on the light and I gasped. There were lots and lots of bottles of all shapes and sizes and in the middle of the room was a big black cauldron. "Now to work" said Bert. "Pass me that bottle on the right at the very end - the one with the orange coloured mixture."



We put in many differently coloured mixtures. The mixture at last began to harden and the Professor scooped some out and rolled it into little balls. "Fantastic" he cried, "It's ready" He began to dance wildly round the cauldron. "Right" he went on, "Now to test it, open wide" I hesitated, then closed my eyes. Bert popped the pill into my mouth and I swallowed it quickly. Bert

Professor say, "the potion only lasts for a couple of hours. You must make sure you are back here by then".

A little later, I set off into the street. By the Professor's house there was a sweet shop. There was a very grumpy man who served the sweets, I went in. The man was shouting at a child - as usual. I went up to the shelf and fetched down the bottle with bon-bons in it. The man hadn't noticed yet, but when the bottle went floating across the room, he really did notice. His eyes were wide open and his mouth gaped and gaped. I got my sweets and went on to the park.

When I got there I found a swing and started to push myself. Unluckily, a child came up to the swing and sat down on it. Of course, she was sitting on me. I thought she wouldn't feel me, but she did. The child got up and told her mother. Her mother came and felt the swing and she felt me as well. "We're going away from here" said the mother. She dragged her child to a car and drove away. Next, I went on the slide. I climbed up the steps and waited for someone to go down. Meanwhile, behind me, someone was having a quarrel with the next person. He was saying "why don't you move up?" "I can't, something is blocking the way". I went down the slide. The person behind me wobbled and nearly fell over, because I had gone. Suddenly, I heard the ear-splitting noise of a ghetto-blaster. I looked round, it was Horace, the school bully. He had his gang around him, all shouting their heads off. The smaller children fled in fright. The gang spread themselves around the swings and the roundabout and turned the volume up. I was over-joyed. This was my chance to teach them a lesson that they would never forget.

Horace the bully had the ghetto-blaster next to him on the round-about. I went over and turned it off. Horace frowned and turned it on again. I turned it off. Horace turned on his yes-man, Creep, who was sitting next to him..

"Ere" yelled Horace, "you pack that in, Creep" Creep looked totally innocent.. Just then, I grabbed the round-about and started to run as fast as I could. Horace and Creep lost their balance and fell off, and so did the ghetto-blaster, SMASH, on the ground. Horace grabbed the unfortunate Creep and started to pummel him. The rest of his spotty crew gathered around cheering. At this point I stepped in, pulled Horace's earphones off his head and stuck them on my own. Horace stopped pummelling Creep. He froze to the spot. His eyes grew as big as saucers at the sight of his ear-phones dancing about in the air by themselves. "Come on Creep, I'm getting out of here" he yelled, "this place is haunted". Horace fled with the gang after him. Slowly, the smaller children began to come back. I had thoroughly enjoyed myself, but now it was time to go back to Mad Street.

Back at the Professor's house, Bert held a mirror in front of me so I could watch myself coming back bit by bit. When I had completely re-appeared, I told the Professor about the adventures I had had. We both laughed our heads off when I told the story of Horace and Creep. What a day! Thanks to Professor Peabody.

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An atheist is a man who has no invisible means of support.  
(John Buchan)

All contributions for the February issue should be sent to  
Gareth Evans, Lanzerac, Norton Canon (0544 318505) by  
Tuesday 23rd January 1990.



# countryman

As the year creeps into the routine of short days and long nights, we gardeners have to alter our habits. No longer can we stride outside after tea with hoe or spade in hand with a cheery 'won't be too long'. No all we can do is to add to our list of "jobs to be done"; the weeds we just noticed along the front border, the leaves and grass mowings we composted during the summer, which have now - miraculously - rotted down into a rich compost to be spread over the flower beds, and the vegetable plot which looks very sad and needs turning over. The potting shed too requires a thorough cleaning out, and a couple of tools have broken handles. Yet such is the amazing keenness of the gardener that these jobs, and dozens more, will all be completed before spring comes around, bringing more demands.

Do yourself a favour and organize your precious winter daylight hours. Get cracking with those essential duties this weekend. The greenhouse probably needs a jolly good tidying, but go one better; move all the plants out and give it a really thorough spraying inside and out with Jeyes Fluid; it is incredible how many insects overwinter under glass, and a drenching with Jeyes works wonders. If you do this on a Saturday morning leave the ventilators open, then hose the glass down next day; you can have all your plants back in a clean home by Sunday night. Of course you must watch out for frost warnings if you have put your plants outside for the night.

A job that must be done soon is the application of winter tar-oil wash to fruit trees, bushes and roses. This is a messy, smelly job and it can be done in conjunction with, and just after, the greenhouse cleaning. Follow the instructions on the container and, after using your sprayer, give it a good wash-out with hot water together with a squeeze of washing-up liquid; then rinse out with plain hot water. If you don't do this, and many folk don't, your sprayer will be bunged up with tar-oil and won't work when you need it most. However, don't be put off just because it's not the best job in the world; it does mean that you'll have a clean start next year.

The early Britons made their houses of mud and there was rough mating on the floors,

Exam. answer

## Robert Loxston

- \* Extensions
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The next important job is the vegetable garden. The soil should be dug over and next years pea and bean plot will be much improved by the addition of FYM or some of the compost heap. The remainder of the heap can go onto next years flower bed, unless you are planting trees; these should have priority in the compost allocation. Don't forget, when digging, to pull out all the dandelions and other perennial weeds. It really is folly to dig them in - they just come up again in a couple of months.

Turning to the flower garden, you have probably cleaned this up after digging the summer bedding plants up. You havn't? Well! Never mind, out with the wheelbarrow and put those French Marigolds and Petunias on the compost heap. Talking of which, make sure you tread the heap well down. I saw a compost heap today which was more air than compost: of course, it won't rot down like that. I would recommend the use of a rotting agent like Garotta to help you produce a good compost heap. After tidying the beds up, and remembering not to chop the tops off your daffodils, (which, like some I saw today, may be already poking through the surface) you might like to plant a few pansies for winter and spring colour. Make sure you plant them deep enough and firm them in well - don't forget that frost, when it comes, tends to lift loose soil together with your precious pansies!

Herbaceous plants will benefit by a good hard pruning down now; gone are the days (and yes, I remember them well.) when the plants were trimmed down to 12 inches in the autumn and then cut again down to ground level in the spring. Chop them right down now - you save yourself a job and deprive slugs of a comfortable feed. The exceptions to this are of course the evergreen types like the Hellebores and Ajugas. It's nice to have plants like this - there's always something to look at through the winter.

Finally please don't neglect your indoor plants. I know that they are often pushed off their usual shelf to make room for Christmas decorations, but they won't thank you if they are relegated to a draughty badly lit spot for a few weeks. Plants hate sudden changes of temperature and light, and some, like the Christmas Cactus and cyclamen, will react by dropping their flower buds. Begonias will drop their leaves. In fact, one of the few types of plant not to do the dirty on you for moving them around are the desert cacti. Surprisingly these chaps seem to shrug off dusty, dry, cold spots. Ask my 35 year old Echinopsis; it could tell you horrible tales of freezing dark places its been to.

Above all enjoy your gardening. Don't look on it as a chore. Next time you're among your plants take time to remember what they looked like back in the summer. Remember too, that come February we start sowing seeds for the summer ahead. Winter is not so long after all. Better repair those broken tools. Now.

#### NORTON CANON: FOUND

1 black male cat -  
phone Weobley 306

#### **CHRISTMAS 1989**

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T'was battered and scarred and the auctioneer  
thought it scarcely worth his while  
To spend much time on the old violin  
But he held it up with a smile.

What am I bidden for this ? he cried  
Who'll start the bidding for me ?  
A dollar once; then two - only two  
Two dollars are bidden; say three.

Three dollars once; three dollars twice  
Going for three - but lo  
From the back of the crowd, a grey haired man  
came forward and picked up the bow.

Then wiping the dust from the old violin  
and tightening the loosened strings  
He played a melody, passing sweet  
The kind that haunts and clings.

The music ceased and the auctioneer  
with a voice that was soft and low  
Said, now what is bid for the old violin  
and he held it up with the bow.

A thousand dollars, who'll make it two  
Two - two thousand, say three  
Three thousand and once, three thousand twice  
Three thousand gone, said he.

The people cheered, but some exclaimed  
We do not quite understand  
What changed its worth, and the answer came  
Twas the touch of the Masters hand.

And many a man, with soul out of time  
And battered and scared by sin  
Is auctioned cheap by the thoughtless crowd  
Just like the old violin.

But the master comes and the foolish crowd  
Never can quite understand  
The worth of a soul and the change that is wrought  
By the touch of the Masters Hand

## the touch of the masters hand

---

A nice thing about egotists 'is that they don't talk about other people  
because they are always me-deep in conversation.

There are three kinds of friends - best friends, guest friends and  
pest friends.

### PUT DOWNS

That woman speaks 18 languages yet can't say "No" in any of them.  
(Dorothy Parker).

She was the original good time that was had by all.  
(Bette Davis on young starlet)

Most of the time he talks as if he has a mouth full of wet toilet paper.  
(Rex Harrison on Marlon Brando)

I could dance with you until the cows come home. On second thoughts  
I'd rather dance with the cows until you come home.  
(Groucho Marx)



An Account of Life in Staunton-on-Wye at the Turn of the Century  
By Amie Marguerite Ellwood (1891-1974) Youngest of Eight Children  
of the Rev. G.R. Ellwood, Rector of the Parish 1888-1921  
By Kind Permission of her Niece, Mrs. M.H. Seymour.

The Ellwoods at the Rectory

A Quiet Village

Staunton-on-Wye ('Stan' to my family and most people) was not one of the most picturesque villages of Herefordshire. It was very scattered, and its 450 inhabitants lived in some cases a mile or two apart. Some of the houses were black-and-white thatched, many were in a very bad state of repair, and continued to exist only because the inhabitants refused to move and resisted ejectment by every means in their power. Practically all the adults worked on the farms and in the woods. A great deal of fruit was grown and cider making was one of the seasonal occupations. Food was cheap, but wages were low. Even so, a large family often had to make do with meat for "father," and vegetables and eggs (9d. a dozen) for the children once a week. There were perquisites for those who worked on the farms - butter, wood for fuel, free cider, a pig from the litter.

But people in our village were proud. For the most part the children were well-dressed and clean, in spite of the fact that water often had to be carried in buckets across a field, and heated in a kettle for washing, although some had a well or pump in the garden. Most cottagers kept a pig, and when it was killed the rule was to give some spare-rib to the neighbour in the left-hand cottage, and chitterlings to the one on the right. People were very kind and generous, and for the most part we were all happy. There was poverty, an accepted, if regrettable fact. It was considered a disgrace to let any elderly relative go to the "Poor-house," and those who were obliged to do so felt it very deeply.

The income of the Rector was derived from the Glebe Land, and rather depended on the rental. The largest part was Stan Commons - large meadows let for grazing. The biggest was 60 acres. There was the Sally Common, and others were called 'Bullocks,' 'Bowers' and 'Gardeners.' The Secret Meadow ran along-side Duke Street, a very watery and muddy lane. At its entry from the village there was a hollow tree and from it rose a spring of milk-looking water, said to have curative powers. The Commons had a brook running through and in a rainy season when the Wye rose high it used to flood all the meadows round, and also some of the cottages in Duke Street, World's End and Little London. It is said that in one bad flood an old dame and her pig were marooned for a fortnight in the upstairs bedroom of her cottage on the Ark field, and were rescued by boat. Flowering rushes grew by the Commons brook, also moonwort, globe flowers, adder's tongue and many kinds of orchid. It was a wonderful place for rare flowers.

In the early spring we used to look for plover's eggs on the lower Common. There was no birds' protection act in those days, and these eggs were considered a great delicacy. We had them hard boiled and served on a bed of watercress. The white of the eggs was pale blue and semi-transparent, they made a very pretty dish. The shooting-rights over the Commons were always kept by the Rector of the Parish. My father was a keen sportsman, and a very good shot, and we fed ad nauseum on pheasant and partridge in their season, hanging them 'until their tail feathers dropped out.' Father liked his game "gamey." I don't know whether anyone else did. I didn't! Poaching was the one and only really deadly sin in our parish. I always hoped (and believed) that game found its way into larders other than our's all the same. Mushrooms and blackberries were free for all and plentiful. None of the farmers thought of marketing them in those days, and the lovely pink field mushrooms had such a fine flavour.

### The Ellwoods at the Rectory cont:

The Church topped a sloping green hill, and from it there was a wonderful view. To the south the Black Mountains rose behind Moccas Deer Park, to the east Dinedor Hill and the Sugar-Loaf, and to the west the Radnor Forest could be seen. The most wonderful time to be there was at sunset in late spring, when the golden rays slanted across the old Churchyard and its grey stones, and hundreds of swifts with their spectacular bat-like cries would circle and swoop after groups of dancing flies. Inside the Church the sunlight managed to get in through the small west window of clear glass and strike on the figure of Christ enthroned (a rather crude colouring) on the east window. The interior had been restored in the bad 19th century style, and there was not much of interest left. The Vestry was ornamented with circular wooden plaques with queer carved heads. There was a door, partly blocked and opening on to nothing from the Belfry, which I suppose must have given entrance to the Gallery. There was a peal of six good bells, and when anyone died the tenor bell was always tolled. After a pause, the bell rang so many strokes - one for each year of the life of the departed. On New Year's Eve the bells were muffled for the first peal, and when the clock struck twelve tolled for the dying year, then unmuffled they rang out a merry peal. About 1 a.m. the ringers came down to the Rectory and were regaled with cake and cider.

The Churchyard had been buried over for many many years, and as I was rather friendly with the Sexton I often watched him digging a grave and disinterring very ancient bones, and a skull which interested him because of its peculiar structure. One day he was finishing his preparations and it got rather near to the time of a funeral for which he had to toll the bell. "Hold out your pinny, Miss Bumpy," said he, "and take these bones and put 'em under the rubbish heap. 'Twould never do for the mourners to see 'em lying about." After that I was rather nervous of passing the rubbish dump, just in case the articulated bones rose up and came in pursuit! The north side had only a few graves, as it was supposed to be reserved for suicides and the unbaptised, and I think there were not many of either. There was an interesting flat stone with the inscription 'In Memory of Simon Barjona Love, Gent. 1726, and the Coat of Arms at the upper end had a beautifully carved leaping stag. I often wondered who he was with such a lovely name, and where he lived.

The only house near was Church Farm, which had a door leading from the farmyard into the Churchyard through a high wall. The farmer was old Mr. Everall, not always amiable, even though he did look like Father Christmas with his long white beard, and the deer-stalker cap he always wore. He used to come to Church on Harvest Festivals, until one year some ailment prevented him, but the harvest was just as good as other years, so after that he didn't bother. He used to watch us toiling up the hill to Service on a Sunday morning, and say to mother "Bring up a child in the way it should go, that's the way I was brought up!" He hadn't much opinion of "schooling." "This 'ere edication will be the ruin of the country, you mark my words" was another favourite saying of his. I don't think he cared much for children, I found him rather alarming, but his second wife was sweet and gentle, and I had an occasional meal of mashed potatoes and cream with her at the farm.

Twelfth Night still retained some of the old customs - relics of fertility rites, I suppose! The apple trees had to be wassailed with cider, and a farmer would spike a cake on the horn of a cow and the cowman would throw a bucket of cider into the animal's face, causing it to toss its head violently so that the cake flew off. Whoever caught it would have good luck for the year. There was always plenty of cider for all these occasions, and Twelfth Night was a merry night for all the farm hands. Villagers sometimes used to make an expedition to see the 'Holy Thorn' which grew in a distant

### The Ellwoods at the Rectory

village. We had one in our garden which used to burst into blossom at midnight on the Feast of Epiphany (6th January), we used to bring in some buds to watch them open as we sat in comfort by the fire.

My mother used to collect remarks of local ladies who came 'calling' (another Victorian habit). One such came in a great flutter one day, asking for sympathy because "My Dear! Such a disaster! Cook spoilt all the Christmas puddings! They were quite uneatable. We had to give them all away to the poor!" Another time it was the Workhouse Committee, of which my mother was a member for a short time. She had suggested that the inhabitants might be provided with comfortable armchairs instead of benches and a few upright wooden ones. The reply was "But it is quite unnecessary. They wouldn't appreciate them because they are not used to such things. Well, we have come a long and bitter way since those days. I remember visiting with my mother a cottage where the 'lady of the house' had to look after her very elderly and very deaf mother-in-law. The old lady was not at all grateful, and said, "Ah! 'er do feed I, and 'er do look after I, but 'er don't talk to I." Daughter-in-law threw up her hands and shook her head in silent protest.

The inhabitants of the Almshouses were endowed with a weekly distribution of bread and meat, and were provided with a ration of coal. Each had a kitchen-cum-sitting room with a bow window and ledge for plants, and outside the window a small flower border. There was a small bedroom, and in the little backyard a pump for drinking and washing purposes, the latter shared between two houses and often leading to disputes. I used to go with my mother to call on them. Some were great characters. One of my favourites was Mrs. Probert. She was very generous and loved giving presents to those she favoured. Every festival Mrs. P. would come to the Churchyard, basket on arm, "to drop a few flowers on Probert!" When she met me she would hold my hand and give me such good advice, telling me to 'braid my hair,' which was, I must confess, usually extremely untidy. To 'obey my mother,' 'say my prayers,' and not be running about, but stay at home and mind my 'stitching.'

Then there was poor old Betsy Bubb, who had very red and inflamed eyes. I imagine it was conjunctivitis, but the villagers accused her of having 'the evil eye!,' and whenever a cow miscarried or a brood of chickens mysteriously died, it was attributed to poor Betsy. "Sally the Rag" was another of the old ladies. She and her husband had been rag-pickers, and when he died some of the kindly Trustees decided to instal her in the Almshouses, where she was a great trial to her more respectable neighbours. She was certainly more than a little mad. I remember calling on her one time as she sat brooding by the fire. Suddenly she pointed to a cupboard and said "'E come out o' there, in the night it were, and 'e did creep and crawl, and then 'e did pounce. After the Book 'e were." I think Bibles must have been provided, for there was a large one lying on the table, and Sally certainly couldn't read! "Ah! Tom was a real bad 'un, Tom" was." Her neighbour, Mrs. Baker, must have been very tried, I think. She was a gentle lady and always wore a black net cap with a flower, and a black silk dress in the afternoon. Stephen Hopley, I remember chiefly because he wore smock frocks and had a beautiful Sunday one of silk elaborately smocked. Another old character, 'the last of the Baskervilles,' was accused by Sally the Rag of every evil practise under the sun. Of himself he said that he was the black sheep of the family, and was rather proud of the fact that in his young days he had been 'a bit of a lad?'

There were a good many 'gentlemen of the road' calling in those days, as well as gypsies from camps on farms, when they arrived annually in their caravans for the hop-picking. I remember one old dame, very bent, with her



### The Ellwoods at the Rectory

nose and chin almost meeting in a most witch-like manner, used to call very desirous to tell fortunes, and if not encouraged used to mutter a curse and foretell evil happenings for those who refused. Other callers were more welcome and more interesting. Hurdy-gurdies turned up fairly frequently, as did a German band, which had cages of parakeets trained to fly round and pull a slip of paper from a slot with a 'fortune' written on it. A young Italian came quite often, and he had a little monkey dressed in a red coat sitting on top of his barrel-organ, and when the music came to an end the monkey would hold out its cap to collect pennies. Then there was the dancing bear. I can't think how far the poor creature must have walked in the course of the day. Sometimes it would be seen with its owner at the side of the road taking a rest.

Like most country villages we had a wise woman who dealt with charms and remedies for various ills. A strange cure for whooping cough was to give the sufferer a piece of bread and butter to take to the cross-roads, and there beat it with a bramble and bury it. Efficacious for many complaints was the hair from the cross on a donkey's back! A piece of bread soaked in vinegar and put into a stocking - the one you had worn all day, and tied round the throat, was the remedy for quinsy. A boiled onion applied hot for earache; leaves of a garden leek to draw a boil; eat parsley for heartburn; and a skein of red wool worn round the waist for rheumatism and lumbago. There were hop pillows for sufferers of insomnia, and a bag of pounded salt made hot in the oven, to soothe a stiff neck or an aching tooth.

We had a cook called Edith, and in the afternoons she would take me and the three dogs - a setter, a big black retriever and a spaniel, for walks in the fields, and to pick flowers. She always knew where the best pink primroses or scented blue violets could be found. She supervised my reading. In the mornings she wore a lilac print dress, the bodice was boned and the skirt very full with tiny 'stoked' gathers, and a large apron. In the afternoon she dressed in black, and for outdoor walking a stiff black sailor hat, and short black tippet and gloves. She often took me to see a village concert, or to a Missionary meeting if coloured slides were shown.

We had a gardener living in the cottage whose wife had an accident - an oil lamp exploded, setting her on fire, from which she died six weeks later. The dressings for burns in those days consisted of lint soaked in carron oil to 'keep the air out.' It was extremely painful to change two or three times a day. The poor woman died of brain fever when the burn had already begun to heal. We then had a change of gardener, whose cottage was full of interest. There was a grandfather clock with a painted face and a ship that rocked as the clock ticked. There was a 'weather house' from which issued the figure of a little woman if it was dry, or a little man who came out to prophesy rain. On the mantle stood a "goffering" tongs, slim and elegant on a little brass stand. Mrs. Watkins goffered frills on under-clothing and pillow cases, and sometimes let me try my hand on a piece of paper or a doll's dress. On Fridays she baked the most delicious lardy cakes, and as I was usually haunting the cottage door on those days, she would give me one, split and stuffed with brown sugar. On Sunday evenings Mr. Watkins played hymns on a melodium, and sometimes on an 'Otto' Harp, which lay flat on a table. Tunes on this instrument were played with a tin plectrum worn on the thumb. He was also an expert making whistles out of elder.

Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee was a great occasion and a universal holiday. We all stood at our front gate at the Rectory to watch the procession go past. It was a wonderful sight to see half the villagers dressed up, including my brother, Dick, in a smock frock driving a

## The Ellwoods at the Rectory

"Jerusalem Cuckoo" - a donkey and pony in tandem. There was a Service in the Church, and a cold beef and pickle lunch at the school for the men of the Parish. The schoolchildren were given medals with the Queen's head on them and the date of the Jubilee round the edge, also a mug for each one. There were fireworks in the evening, and games and dancing in the Weaver's Orchard, which I think belonged to the Jarvis Charity.

I remember the South African War, when everyone was singing Kipling's recruiting song 'The Absent Minded Beggar.' It was even ground out on barrel organs in the streets of Hereford. So many young men went out so gaily, saying it would be a picnic, but, alas, so many never came back. On Mafeking Day my youngest brother climbed our tallest fir tree to put up a Union Jack. The Relief of Ladysmith was also a day of rejoicing. I don't suppose any of us gave a thought to the terrible outbreak of cholera there. When the war ended the village got up a fete day. I remember the comic procession of dressed-up villagers, for which a girl borrowed my old riding habit and with an ostrich feather in her hat she rode on a cart horse.

We were on the whole a healthy community, and except for the usual epidemics of whooping cough, measles etc., which attacked the young, it was seldom anyone was laid up. Once there was a visitation of diphtheria when the doctor had to do an emergency tracheotomy which caused much excitement and interest, as he saved the child's life by operating on the cottage table with a penknife. Our postman's children also had the complaint, and Leonard arrived one morning bringing the milk, saying he "warn't allowed to carry the letters because of the 'Dip,' so he was giving a hand at the farm and helping Jones with getting the milk round. There was no District Nurse in those days, and no training for the task of Midwife in the village. However, we had a competent Mother Davies, who was also our washerwoman. She sometimes had to take her hands out of the suds and rush off in answer to a sudden appeal from a husband or child who came to fetch her in a hurry.

My father was very fond of card games and most nights we had to make a four at Whist. Then some friends from India came to stay and introduced the new game of Bridge, to which my father quickly became an addict. Then came Auction Bridge, of which, to my mind, the greatest attraction was that one could have a 'lie down' while the partner played the hand. I only wonder that I did not develop a permanent squint, what with keeping one eye on the game (father did not approve of his partner losing interest!) and the other on a book on my knee under the table.

Mrs. Delahay used to come twice a week to bake bread for us. She kneaded the dough in a big earthenware steen, and it was baked in a proper bread oven, heated by lighting wood in it, which was shovelled out when the oven was sufficiently heated to put the loaves in to bake. She used to make a 'cabbage loaf twist' for me, it was dough baked on a large cabbage leaf, which gave it a most delicious flavour, and also had the attraction of showing the perfect pattern of the leaf underneath. Our groceries used to come in boxes once a fortnight by the Carrier's cart from Hereford, driven by Mrs. 'Tumpy' Jones, who lived at The Tump, near The Sergeants. The sugar always came in rough lumps, and for making cakes or puddings had to be pounded.

I had one brother at college and three at school, and money was a bit hard to come by. It was not considered necessary to educate girls, so I and my sisters did not go to school, we picked up what information we could, and relied on my mother to teach us when she had the time.

Edited and contributed by Richard Pantall

## A RARE INTERVIEW - NO ON SECOND THOUGHTS A VERY RARE INTERVIEW

Lin Goodwin, Signal's much travelled highly acclaimed, sought after reporter, has once again, turned up trumps!! and managed with great difficulty, to get you, the lucky readers of the Signal, an interview with - wait for it - Father Christmas!!!

Here then, readers, for the first time in the history of this paper is the short talk which I had with this very dear gentleman on the 16th November 1989:-

LG: "Father Christmas" (I gasped at the sight of him - I even curtsied - I just couldn't help it. He is a big Ruddy man, maybe 6'6" with, as you will all know, a long white flowing beard and little twinkly eyes set underneath huge bushy white eyebrows. He also has as we have always been led to believe, dear little podgy red cheeks. He was dressed in red, but as he explained to me, this was his indoor attire - a plain red dress with big fluffy white slippers) "What a great, great pleasure to meet you".

FC: "Ho, Ho, Ho," (yes readers he actually does laugh like that). He held out his hand, which was big, warm and beautiful. "It is a great pleasure for myself and Mother Christmas also, to receive you into our home". Mother Christmas comes 'toddling' up to me. That is the only way in which I can describe it. She is round and rosy and jolly with a shock of white white hair and twinkling little eyes. "So pleased to meet you my dear".

LG: "Thank you both. I promise not to keep you long, as I know how busy you both are during this time. Can I just ask you a couple of questions, and then I will be on my way".

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CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR 1989/90

#### ARRANGEMENTS

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\*\*\*\*\*

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Sunday 24th December

Monday 25th December

Tuesday 26th December

Sunday 31st December

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\*\*\*\*\*

Peter and Barbara wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year



FC&MC: "Certainly my dear". They nod in unison.

LG: "How many people do you have working for you"?

FC: "Well now" (stroking his beard) "It's very hard to say. As you can imagine this is our busiest time of year, but we still have to employ a great deal of people all the year around. Obviously I have to pay treble time now, and that causes a lot of problems!! It takes a great deal of sorting out - we have our strikes and everything else like you all. My hair turned white years and years ago - Ho Ho Ho"(There it was again).

LG: "Yes I'm sure it is a big problem, Father Christmas may I ask you a rather personal question"? He nods. "How old are you?"

FC: "Ho Ho Ho". (beginning now to grate on my nerves) "A little bit older than my teeth - my girl. At this point he actually held his tummy whilst he Ho Ho Hood - you know what I mean ?

LG: "Ha Ha Ha"

MC: "Ha Ha He He Father Christmas, you are a one".

LG: "Have you ever thought of retiring and leading a normal life"?

FC: "Yes, I have, many times - I would love to be able to sit down with Mumsy Christmas on Christmas Eve, but how can I ? - However many hearts would I break, if that stocking wasn't full on Christmas morning ? - No - I shall never retire - out of the question.

LG: "Of course not, now as you are obviously getting older; don't you find it difficult to pop in and out of chimneys all night".

FC: "Rather, but I take a lot of exercise during the year and lots and lots of vitamin pills". (Mother Christmas nods at this statement and blurts out that he really is an awful hypochondriac.) (Father Christmas ignores her with a very disdainful look ! Perhaps the household is not the complete bed of roses of which I am led to believe). Father Christmas glances at the clock.

LG: "One more question Father Christmas. Tell me, do you really drink all the sherry and port and eat all the mincepies which are left for you ?

FC: His eyes twinkle and he smiles. "Well, I have to don't I, I mean, I can't upset any of them now can I ? (At this point again Mother Christmas snaps "Him refuse a drink, you must be joking! Another disdainful look).

LG: "I don't believe it. Do you suffer from a hangover the next morning"?

FC: "My dear girl, I have been doing Christmas Eve for so long now - it's second nature to me. Rudolph and the gang know exactly where to stop and bring me home quite safely. I take a couple of Alka Seltzers before I go to bed, then I'm fine on Christmas morning. Isn't that right Mummy Christmas." She nods.

LG: "Well Father Christmas and Mummy Christmas its been super talking to you and on behalf of all the readers of the Signal, thank you so very much for letting me speak to you.

He stood up and shook hands with me and kissed me on the cheek. Mother Christmas did likewise.

FC: "Goodbye my dear. Take care and don't forget to hang your stocking up on Christmas Eve".

LG: "Oh Father Christmas, at my age"!

FC: "Never too old for Christmas, just believe in it". And putting his arm around Mummy Christmas gave me a final blast of Ho Ho Ho !!

(footnote:- As Cathy my daughter said, when she had read this - "Mum are you sure you are O.K. - It's the Christmas spirit see !! LG.

---

About a month ago a long red  
radish reached us from a reader  
the norman size of a carrot.

Amateur Gardening

Said a Farnborough shop-keeper "The  
Council is pulling the bread and butter  
out from under our feet."

Hants paper

**REFUSE COLLECTION:** Christmas arrangements. There will be NO refuse collected week commencing December 25th. For the week commencing January 1st those who normally have a weekly collection will have a 2 week break and those who are normally collected fortnightly will have a break of three weeks.

**MILKMAN** - No milk today. By today I mean tomorrow, as I wrote this yesterday.

"I am afraid this scheme is a sacred cow which has come home to roost with a vengeance, and a great bang.

Tory MP in Commons

Miss Goldhurst has NO male goat this season and refers all clients to Mr Harris.

Advert in Grantham Journal

#### CHRISTMAS BINGO

Staunton Village Hall

FRIDAY 8 DECEMBER

doors open 7.30pm

eyes down 8pm

proceeds to Village Hall Improvement Fund

**Kinnersley Group Parish Council** will hold their next meeting on Thursday 18th January 1990 at Newchurch.

#### STAUNTON ON WYE CHAPEL

Mr & Mrs J Maddy will be leaving Staunton Chapel on 31 December this year, Mr Maddy has been secretary there for about 14 years Pastor P Arnold of Preston-On-Wye will be taking over the responsibility.

**STAUNTON NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH** wish the residents of Staunton, Monnington & Brobury a happy Christmas and prosperous New Year. Please keep a sharp look-out for anything suspicious at this time of year - your co-ordinators are Bob Doody (311) Peter Clarke (346) Margaret Shears (234) Barbara Arthur (567) Val Andrews (439) Ivor Courtney (344) & John Phillips (470) + Martin Powell (621)

#### SO YOU THINK YOU ARE INDISPENSIBLE

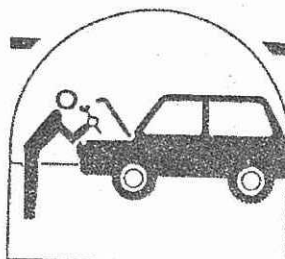
Some day when you're feeling important  
Some day when you're ego's in bloom  
Some day when you take it for granted  
You're the best qualified in the room

Someday when you feel that you're going  
Would leave an unfillable hole  
Just follow this quaint example  
And see how it humbles your soul

Take a bucket and fill it with water  
Plunge your hand in it over the wrist  
Pull it out and the hole thats remaining  
Is the measure of how you'll be missed

You may jump up and down in your fury  
And fuss up the water galore  
But stop and you'll see in a minute  
That it looks just the same as before

So the moral of this quaint example  
Is do just the best that you can  
Be proud of yourself but remember  
You are no indispensable man



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# FOOTPATHS

The main item of discussion at the November meeting of the Parish Council was footpaths and rights of way. A new set of maps and schedules have been received from the County Council and it was recognised that a lot of the local network of paths is in a poor state and, in some cases, impassable.

The Parish Council has agreed in principle to support the opening and maintenance of all designated rights of way in the parish but needs to have the views of local residents about individual paths before seeking County Council assistance in getting the network open. The PC would also like to know what support there would be for a local volunteer group to clear paths, erect stiles, etc.

All the maps and schedules will be on display in Staunton Village Hall from 4pm to 8pm on Wednesday 7th February FOR DETAILED EXAMINATION AND for comments to be recorded if people wish.

The following Wednesday 14th February at 7.30pm there will be a Parish Council meeting, which will as usual be open to members of the public. At this meeting it is hoped that final decisions will be taken about the footpath network and for this reason look for a good turnout of local people to give their views on the issues raised above.

IF YOU HAVE A GENERAL VIEW OR A SPECIFIC COMPLAINT ABOUT LOCAL FOOTPATHS COME TO EITHER OR BOTH OF THE ABOVE EVENTS AND HAVE YOUR SAY - THERE WILL BE LITTLE USE IN COMPLAINING ABOUT IT AFTERWARDS.

These dates will be publicised nearer the time on notice boards and in the Village Shop.

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## WEOBLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL P.T.A. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Grand Christmas Bazaar...Dec. 16th. 11am - 2pm...This promises to be a festive occasion, the main objective of which is to raise £700 to provide much needed musical instruments to enrich our children's education.

The P.T.A. have turned to local industries and retail outlets this year to help in funding the Christmas draw. The response to the requests has been overwhelming and we would like to express heartfelt thanks to all those who have given so generously and have enabled us to present this wonderful list of prizes:

Cut Glass bowl	... Chadds of Hereford
6 bottles of Pomagne	... Bulmers
Signed picture by Danelo	...
6 Cinema tickets	... Mrs Westwood
2 bottles of wine	... Barclays Bank
£5 voucher	... Briggs shoe shop
3 watches & T-shirts	... Halifax
6-½ bottles of Cider	... Symonds Scrumpy Jack
Cider	... Westons
Childs rucksack	... Goodie Two Shoes
Diary of an Edwardian Country Lady	... The Bookseller Hereford
Bottle of wine	... Greyfriars Restaurant
Bottle of wine	...
Bottle of wine	...
Box of chocolates	... Gateway Supermarket Leominster
Box of chocolates	... Cadburys Leominster
Ice Cream Gateau	... Giovanni Refridgeration Sales



Tickets will be on sale before the bazaar, so don't miss this chance to win these lovely prizes.

Father Christmas will be there to see the children in his magical land and there will be lots of interesting stalls. Amongst these will be Craft supplies, Cakes, sweets and biscuits, gift stall, plants and produce, decorations, games stalls, bottle stall, guess the weight of the cake - this will be well worth winning!

The children will be providing Christmas music for your entertainment and there will be ploughman's lunches, hot dogs, cakes and drinks on sale. Why not make an outing of it and save yourself the trouble of providing yet another meal so close to Christmas?

Looking forward to seeing you there.

Mandy Lowe  
P.T.A. Vice Chair

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Heredity is what sets the parents of a teenager wondering about each other.  
(Laurence Peter)

Every man of genius is considerably helped by being dead.

(Robert Lynd)

When choosing between two evils I always like to choose the one I've never tried before.

(Mae West)

I never hated a man enough to give him his diamonds back.

(Zsa Zsa Gabor)

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WOBLEY & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY  
"The Printed Maps of Herefordshire"  
by Mr W D Turton

A large number of members came to the first meeting of the winter season to hear Mr Turton talk on the Printed Maps of Herefordshire, illustrated by a fine display of original prints from his fine collection. He introduced the subject with a description of early map-making, and mystified his hearers by referring to the 'Mappa Mundi' as one in the 'T & O' style. 'T' referred to the effective division of the map in three divisions by the Mediterranean, Asia and the East occupying the top, Africa and Europe the bottom two sectors, while 'O' referred to the map's shape like the circumference of the world.

The maps of the county turned out to be all variations on the original survey by Christopher Saxton, whose atlas of the English and Welsh counties was published in 1579. No fresh survey seems to have been attempted before mid 18th century, and even then Saxton continued to be copied.

So the maps in between those dates as by Speed, Blaeu, Moll and Morden show their resourcefulness in decoration, fineness of print and layout but give no additional information, or increase of accuracy.

The major innovation came with John Ogilby's road maps done at one inch to the mile scale, which gave interesting details of features along the way, including buildings, nature of the countryside and side roads. These were first published in 1675 under the title "Brittania: a Geographical and Historical description of the Roads of England and Wales", and went through many editions under later editors.

One surprising titbit of information was that the jigsaw originated as an educational toy to teach the geography of England. It was a thoroughly rewarding evening.

# Norton Canon Village Hall

We reproduce below letters received in response to the article by Rod Kilvert printed in the November issue. Even though they cover largely the same ground we print them in full because it is SIGNAL policy to publish, uncut, the views of readers who have taken the trouble to write in.

SIGNAL aims to provide such a service to all who live in the distribution area. If exception is taken to the views expressed by any individual the right of reply exists. For our part we hope that controversy will not be the death of open debate conducted in a 'non personal' manner.

In the interests of space we must terminate this current exchange of views.

The Editorial Board

Dear Editor

It was evident from the Editor's note which accompanied the article entitled 'Norton Canon Village Hall & its Problems', that the decision to publish was not taken without some thought. I think it is sad that Signal should be used as a vehicle to express what I read as a one-sided view of a matter which is of concern to the whole community. While one would not argue that the content of the article was inaccurate, since in order to do so, it would be proper to cite evidence. I would point out that some sweeping statements were made which I regard as heresay. It is unnecessary, petty and not the least in extremely bad taste to make sarcastic and unsubstantiated comment in print about any member of the village. Many people are familiar with the development in the situation regarding the village hall. Those of us who have attended meetings are in a better position perhaps, to make comment, than those who have been unable to take an active interest in this matter. I would point out also that the writer of the article was not present at the Village Hall Committee meeting on 17th October 1989, therefore he is not qualified to issue a report on this meeting. He is obviously unaware that the decision was taken, at this meeting, to fully inform, in writing, every resident of Norton Canon and surrounding area of all developments concerning the hall.

I consider it remiss of the writer to take it upon himself to make statements on matters discussed in committee, of which he is evidently not fully informed. I would now hope that all persons concerned with the future of the village hall would work together, constructively, to resolve what are difficult and serious long-ranging issues, without recourse to bickering, or personal insults.

Yours sincerely

Mairion Jones

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Firstly the whole article was ill conceived with respect to the harmony of the village community, and created nothing but bad feeling amongst the normally friendly neighbourhood. It is a great pity that our News Letter has become a platform for personal feuds and ambitions.

However, last night after reading Rod Kilvert's article (and, in particular Paragraph 5) I recall looking out of our bedroom window where our field and garden used to be, but all I could see were houses and a new Vicarage Hall with two faces looking from a window - I recognised them.

I turned to Lin saying, "It's just about the last straw for the architects and their instigators to make public details of the proposed village hall development on our own land and garden before we were even approached or informed of such goings on."

Then suddenly with a sharp dig in my ribs, I woke in a terrible sweat, but looking out of the window, all I could see were two sheep looking up from the middle of our garden. Lin said "Go back to sleep! You must have had a horrible night-mare".

Frank Goodwin

Footnote:- At the time of writing we have not had any communication or approach from anyone with a view to developing our land for a new village hall.

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Dear Signal,

Rarely have I entered public debate, but having read Rod Kilvert's contribution on the subject of the Village Hall, in the November issue of the Signal, I feel moved so to do, in some small way.

While acknowledging the clarity and thrust of Rod's piece I am of the view that it, and his standing, is much diminished by his uncalled for personal attack on the former Chairman of the Village Hall Committee.

Ron Miles

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Dear Sir,

I have been a subscriber to "The Signal" since it was first published and have never found anything in it to which I have objected. I do feel, however, that the printing in last month's edition of a very thinly disguised personal attack on a Norton Canon resident, was not the sort of thing expected of this publication. What I find most difficult to understand is of what possible interest it could be to the readers to know of this person's whereabouts on a certain evening. Surely this is still a free country. I really feel that if this sort of article continues to be published mine will not be the only subscription to be cancelled.

M L Gittins

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Having been associated with Signal since its formation, and having been an irregular contributor over the years, I take exception to the tone of the letter written by Rod Kilvert in the last issue.

I do not take exception to the outline of events in the village hall saga, although this account is biased in my opinion. I do however take the strongest exception to personal comments which are made against the previous chairman.

There is no place in "The Signal" for such an attack against a person who although not named, can be easily identified in this small village.

This is one letter which, in my opinion, should have incurred editorial censorship. On the other hand, the editorial committee are entitled to publish a signed letter, in the knowledge that they were inviting heavy flack in return.

Many local people have spoken to me, some have made special trips to my home. All have had one thing in common, anger at the personal tone of a letter in our local magazine, which, without exception all felt was totally unnecessary.



I sincerely hope that after this issue the editors will consider the correspondence closed on this upsetting incident and allow the matter to be discussed objectively, in committee, in the knowledge that such discussions will be reported, again objectively, in due course.

Howard Jones

Dear Signal.

The controversy over the Village Hall could well have been avoided if a little bit of consideration was given to peoples feelings.

People who had lived here most of their lives and had been involved with Building the present Hall. This Village managed quite well before us outsiders came to live here. It's a pity that new residents can cause such up-heaval. When I came here to live the Village was a friendly place and lots of local people have been a great help to me. But now you cannot say the place is friendly.

There was no need to criticize how things were done in the past. Whatever was done was with friendly feelings and what was best at the time. Also to criticize the Chairman who wished to resign was bad taste to do it in public. Surely he could do as he pleased.

The piece about the ground landlord should never have been printed as that's putting a lot of pressure on the person or persons concerned. Surely this matter should be dealt with privately.

I do believe we must move with the times and all I want is what's best for the village as I am sure most of Norton Canon feels the same way.

Yes we all live here and it's nice to show one is interested in what goes on and should have a say in the village life. We pay our rates the same as everyone. But is it worth all the upset this problem has caused.

Mrs Elsie Price

I am not one usually to put pen to paper and write to a paper like the Signal, but Mr Kilvert's article in the November edition got my fingers twitching. This is not actually a different point of view, but I think someone should write something in rebuke to what he writes. I am sorry for any mistakes of grammar, spelling or punctuation but this is no literary work.

My first point arises from his accusation that the Chairman of the Village Hall Committee, in 1988, gathering support for his position. I find this ludicrous. I do not remember anyone telling me of the chairman going round the village asking for their support, but I do remember people remarking to me that a woman was going round asking for the resignation of the chairman, and actually proposing herself as a replacement.

My second point arises from the Annual General Meeting on the 5th October. The meeting only became 'vociferous' just after his wife, failing in her attempt to become chairwoman, proceeded in leading a heated debate on whether the meeting was in fact a public one. This wasted a good fifteen minutes, by which time tempers were becoming strained.

The meeting was then astounded when it was interrupted again by Mr Kilvert, and whilst making another point of order came out with the remark that in recent years he had attended more functions at the Village Hall than most people in the room, at which point the meeting again broke into an uproar and he apologised for his remark.

My third point is about Mr Kilvert's remark on the same meeting that "ord-

inary people from the parish were elected directly onto the committee". Does this mean that in previous years Committee members had to be extraordinary? Does he consider then that the present Committee, therefore, is sub-standard?

My fourth point comes from the same paragraph concerning the former Chairman. As he had already resigned why should he feel that his presence at the meeting be justified? And I do not think that it is any of Mr Kilvert's or anyone else's business where the former Chairman chooses to spend some of his time.

Mr Kilvert remarks on the acceptance, on the 17th October, an agreement to consider a new hall on a new site, 'to be a giant step to sanity'. I honestly hope it is, but I also hope the community is not left with another milestone around it's neck.

Mr V K Wood

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All husbands are alike but they have different faces so that you can tell them apart.

When a woman hires a detective to follow her husband it is probably to learn what the other woman sees in him.

When asked by an anthropologist what the Indians called America before the white man came, the Indian replied "OURS".

## **CANON MOTORS**

*(Brian Robbins)*

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