



Eastington Community News

Edition
201

<https://eastington.website>

December 2023-January 2024



Eastington Community News
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Your news.....your ECN!

Written by You, produced by
Sue Halas and delivered by many!



Dear Readers,

Welcome to our very festive edition of the ECN. Inside you will find all your favourite articles with a sprinkle of festive cheer!

I'd like to wish all our advertisers, contributors, distributors and of course you, our readers, a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Best Wishes & Thank You

Sue Halas, Editor

Jan Low, Technical Support

Gill Glover, Distribution Manager



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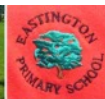
Deadline for the next exciting issue is

Monday 15th January

For delivery around

1st February





EASTINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Learning news from Class 2

Here in Class 2, we have been rather busy since we came back to school in September. Our favourite thing so far, this term, has definitely been our history lessons! Our history topic has been 'The Great Fire of London'. We have learnt all about what happened during The Great Fire of London. We have also used this learning in other subjects too!



In art, we have been learning all about sculptures and textures. We used different tools to make sculptures that showed different textures.

We used clay to make our final sculpture. We made clay houses inspired by what houses would have looked like during the time of The Great fire of London.

We used our learning about The Great Fire of London to write non-chronological reports about the event in our English lessons. We have also been learning about different conjunctions and including them in our work. Here is some of our writing. **Can you spot the conjunctions we have used?**

Eva: People camped under blankets when the fire spread.

Charlie: The houses burnt quickly because they were close together.

Lewin: The houses were made of wood, if the fire jumped on them they would set alight.

Eddie: The fire wouldn't have started if the spark was put out.

Freya: The fire spread quickly and that meant houses burnt down.

We hope you enjoyed hearing all about what we have been learning so far this term.



A Seasonal Recipe**Christmas Shortbread****Ingredients**

275g plain flour

100g caster sugar

150g salted butter, cut into cubes

2 egg yolks, beaten

Topping

100g dark chocolate, roughly chopped

15g dried cranberries, chopped

15g flaked almonds



1 Mix the flour and sugar together. Either rub the butter into the dry ingredients using your fingertips until the mixture starts to come together into a dough. Stir in the egg yolks. If the mixture is dry, add 1 tsp cold water and mix again until it comes together. Flatten the dough into a disc, wrap and chill for 30 mins.

2 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6 and line two large baking sheets with baking parchment. Roll the dough out between two large sheets of parchment to a ½cm thickness. Stamp out biscuits using a 6½cm round or shaped cutter. Bake for 8-10 mins until the biscuits are starting to turn golden at the edges. Leave to cool on the baking sheets for 10 mins, then transfer to wire rack.

3 Melt the dark chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water or in the microwave in 30-second bursts. Dip biscuits into the chocolate, put on baking trays lined with parchment and sprinkle over the cranberries and almonds. Leave to set at room temperature or in the fridge.

Eastington Village Hall

Eastington Village Hall has been a part of the local community and at the heart of the village for many years. The hall is available for events, from one-off celebrations to regular gatherings. If you need a space for a celebration, a meeting or a regular activity, please get in touch.....

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This term we have enjoyed exploring different textures, we have picked blackberries, used tools to mash them and then used them to paint with. We have been role playing camp fires and talking about how we make fire outside and how to be safe around it. We have been developing our fine motor skills and strengthening our hands, using scissors to cut up some of the vegetables that we have grown on our allotment. This activity is great in preparation for children holding pencils and beginning to write.



We explored the texture of pumpkins by scooping out the insides with our hands and using this in our messy play. We then continued to develop our fine motor skills by hammering golf tees into the pumpkins and then poking pipe cleaners into the holes we have made.



Thank you to everyone who offered to replace our pumpkins which were damaged and stolen during the theft at our allotment. We were saddened by the events but blown away by all of your very kind messages and generosity. How lucky we are to be supported by such a wonderful community.

We have spaces for September 2024 so please get in contact if you require a place.

It is never too early to register your child for a place, please email eastingtonplaygroup@hotmail.com for a registration form or 07977342742 to book a visit.



Budget friendly planting & bare root season

It's December and we are at the beginning of bare root season.

These plants may seem modest upon arrival—mostly sticks, roots, and soil—but they're harvested during their dormant season from November to March.

The advantage of opting for bare roots over established plants? It's a budget-friendly choice, some bare root hedging can be purchased for as little as £1.50 and Roses can often be 20-30% less when opting for bare roots. The catch? Patience is key for bare root plants to establish, but they are worth the wait!

Combining bare root plants and hedging with established plants can create instant impact where it matters.

As hedging can often be a large investment in the garden. I am sharing my top three choices;

1. Carpinus Betulus (Hornbeam), with year-round interest. It has lush green leaves in Summer and come Winter unlike most hedging the leaves do not drop offering beautiful coppery brown foliage.

2. Taxus baccata (Yew) offers dense evergreen elegance, ideal for formal looks or creative sculpting, but please be aware that it's toxic to livestock.

3. Mixed native hedging provides incredible opportunities for wildlife, and fantastic interest all year from blossom, to berries and beautiful Autumn colour.

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Eastington Memories Thank you to Megan Timbrell

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WALKS AND WATERWAYS

Paul Halas

Resuming the downstream walk alongside the paired watercourses of the River Frome and the Thames and Severn Canal – or Stroudwater if one prefers – at Chalford the nature of the landscape changes from rural to industrial, albeit mainly industrial from a bygone age. Straddling the river are a succession of architecturally beautiful old mills, although in the main they now house high-tech businesses rather than low tech manufacturing.



The river and the canal continue to play hide and seek as they descend the valley, although as twins they could hardly be less alike. While the Frome is quicksilver and effervescent, rushing from mill-pool to mill-pool, tumbling over shallow weirs and zigzagging through coppices and dense undergrowth, the canal is a ghost of its former incarnation, a skeleton of its former ordered and functional self. It's overgrown, shallow, muddy, and in places almost completely hidden. Locks have disintegrated, bridges have blocked or vastly reduced its course, and in places, even after the constant deluges we have suffered, its water has simply seeped away and been replaced by rough scrub.



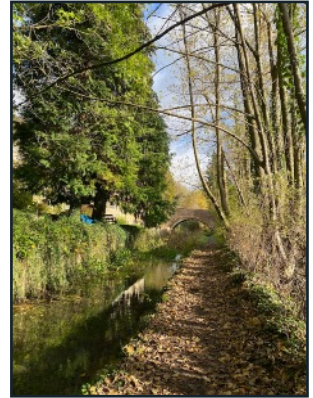
The pathway one takes follows the old canal towpath, while the river, frequently twisting and turning out of sight, is never far away. Peering into the sections that are accessible along this length one doesn't see a great deal apart from streamer weed and in the calmer mill feeder streams beds of watercress and reeds.



The water is high, somewhat coloured, therefore any hope of seeing any fish is dashed. In late autumn the trout spawn over shallow gravel-beds, and at when the water is lower and clearer they're far too preoccupied to be discreet about their business. This soggy autumn they remain obscured, as do all the smaller fish – the bullheads, the loach, the minnows – along with the invertebrates, the crayfish, the water beetles and myriad insect larvae.

Nature is preparing for winter. As the temperatures fall all of the above seek out the nest spots to see out the colder months: the more sluggish, deeper parts of the river, in silt or accumulated leafy detritus, under rocks. They're out of sight, but for the herons and kingfishers one sees from time to time, they're certainly not out of reach.

A few short weeks ago in the canal shallows that remain frogs were visible, plus all manner of aquatic insects, blazing dragonflies, rats (I'd love to say water voles, but I haven't seen any recently), a host of water-fowl, and the ubiquitous stickleback. As in the river, they're still there, they're just out of sight. The water-plants are dying back, the rushes losing their colour and collapsing, the willows shedding. Mist, frosts and gloom will make the canal look dead, but appearances deceive.



The downstream walk takes one past new developments, where scores of houses are taking shape either side of the re-routed river, and derelict industrial units, where nature is doing its best to cover up the ugliness, but as we approach Brimscombe we're about to leave the old mills behind and enter Stroud's present day industrial zone.





Apple and Pear Harvest gathered



Photo Sharon Spruce

This year we took the pressing and bottling equipment to the trees, rather than dragging the fruit half way across the Parish. We visited two of our most prolific orchards and had the Parish Apple Day at the Farm Shop. Thanks to Hannah and co. there was a great attendance. *Bottles now available at the Farm Shop*

Progress on making Brownings Orchard Accessible

Meanwhile, a dedicated mid-week team has been building the safety path around the pond at Brownings Orchard. We have passed half-way



We did have two secret weapons, however. A volunteer team from Universal Closures (Meadow Mill) joined us for World Tidy-up Day.....

....They enjoyed it so much they came to assist our next secret weapon



Photo Michael Drutt



Seasonal Composting Tip

Pete thought I'd lost the plot, cutting the grass in mid-November, so I had to explain I was not mowing but harvesting for compost.

If you are fortunate enough to have a significant leaf fall, which you plan to use for compost, here's what I've learned:

Don't just rake it up, chomp it up

Some of the larger leaves are not very good at composting down, with the worst being Ash. They have a strong, leathery spine which takes many years to compost (if ever!) yet their individual leaflets make a great compost.

My tip is to use your lawnmower to chomp them up, which will yield a viable compost in a year or so.

Harvesting like this saves a lot of back- bending too, compared to raking!

FRAMPTON VILLAGE SOCIETY

A warm welcome is extended to everyone to come to our series of illustrated talks held in Frampton on Severn which we hope will be of interest to a variety of people; the talks cover both local topics of interest, more general subjects and sometimes a musical or other theme-based show.

The talks are normally on Friday evenings starting at 7.30pm in our Village Hall and are organised by Frampton on Severn Village Society, which raises funds for various village projects – please refer to the full programme and dates at the end of this article.

You do not need to be a member of the Society to attend talks. The cost is £4.00 per person, but entrance is cheaper for members and tea/coffee plus biscuits are provided for all! Should you be interested in becoming a member, please contact Kelvin Broad on 01452 740775 or kelvinsbroad@outlook.com

Following the Village Society A.G.M. the presentation of the 2023 Bill Wood award was made to Caroline Williams for her years of dedication to all things Frampton. Her Chairmanship of the Village Hall Committee for over 20 years had ensured that the facility has not only survived but had significantly improved. Her tenacity with meeting ever growing rules and regulations has been matched by her willingness to roll up her sleeves and 'get on with it'. In addition to her Village Hall work she was also recognised for her involvement in regenerating the Frampton Feast and organising numerous events for our senior citizens including organising tea dances and lunches linked to the many Royal occasions in recent years.



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PARISH MATTERS

I will begin with wishing all our residents a very Happy and healthy Christmas and New Year.

Some of you will probably notice the new bench at the top of Springhill has been removed. This is because the Parish Council should have applied for a licence, we asked to be able to do this retrospectively but as there had been a complaint from a resident this was not possible. We are hoping to re site the bench further down the hill but cannot do this until next spring.

We have been having meetings with GCC highways on several issues one of which is hedge cutting and have identified the hedge on the left-hand side leading from Victoria Drive is their responsibility and they will attend to it.

We have also been advised that the resurfacing of Victoria drive Cotswold Avenue and Broadfield Road is planned for the beginning of December this will be very dependent on the weather.

Please can we ask all householder's who have hedges next to pavements or roads/lanes keep them trimmed so they do not overhang footpaths or lanes /roads.

We have been having a lot of complaints about dog mess around the village please can I ask all dog owners to be responsible and pick up their dog's mess, also be aware you should also do this in fields as it can cause harm to livestock.

Stroud District Council has given their permission for us to plant trees on the green at Cotswold Avenue, this may already have been started when you get this newsletter.

We have been advised by our District Councillors of the delay to the local plan, we will be watching this closely as it could have an effect on future planning applications.

Muriel Bullock Chair of Eastington Parish Council

Contact muriel.bullock@eastington-pc.gov.uk or clerk@eastington-pc.gov.uk



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Strike a light – it's the Kings Head!

Stephen Mills

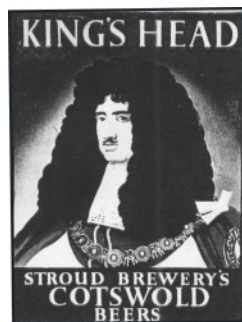
Readers will recall that in the last edition of the ECN, we looked briefly at the background of the former village pubs. Coincidentally, one of the surviving two (The Kings Head) is about to set off on a new journey. Many of us will be aware that it has been purchased by the owners of Eastington Park, now the main local venue for weddings and other celebrations. They are in the process of renovating and updating the pub into a seven-bedroom bed & breakfast venue, complete with a coffee house on the ground floor that will open in December.



The Kings Head, probably around 1900

This is yet another change for the building that was originally built around 1818 as a family home. Since then, it's been a run as a pub by a succession of owners and tenants, with doubtless many of them trying to come up with ideas to publicise their business. Understandably, this has included advertisements in a variety of publications ranging from trade directories and travel guides to local newspapers.

However, at least one enterprising landlord came up with a novel idea to advertise – this took the form of boxes of matches sporting the location of the Kings Head, along with the address and phone number. Exactly who it was and when remains a bit of a mystery – perhaps someone in the village remembers these? The manufacturer of the boxes of matches is also obscure. A lot of internet searching has thrown up very little about the enigmatic 'UPEC Matches' apart from the fact that they seem to have been based in Cambridgeshire and the matches themselves were produced in West Germany.



The Kings Head matchbox, with what appears to be the head of King Charles II, clearly based on the pub sign of the time shown on the right

UPEC Matches produced a bewildering assortment of similar items for small businesses across much of the UK. This included a number of other local ones that included The Adam & Eve pub in Cheltenham, and Gordons automotive engineering business in Stonehouse. No doubt boxes of matches were given to customers, hopefully to spread the name of the business and what they did. Such must have been the case with the Kings Head.



With Morelands massive match factory operating from 1867 only a few miles away in Gloucester, it seems slightly odd that the matchboxes and their contents came from a company based in Cambridgeshire, circulating matches made in Germany. At one time there were literally hundreds of companies in the UK producing matches, and Morelands was the biggest manufacturer in the Gloucester area.

By the way – a person who collects matchboxes is known as a phillumenist – I didn't know that...



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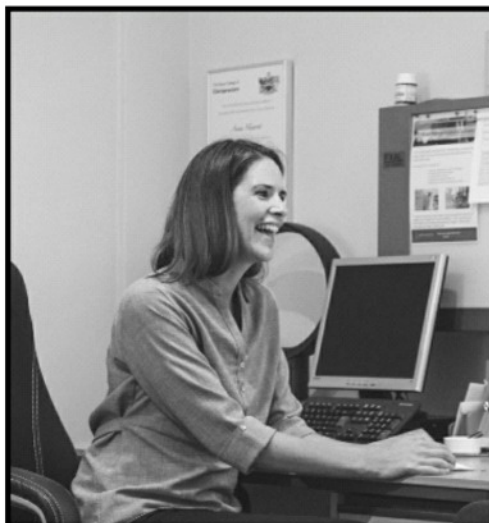
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Sunlight exposure is an easy way to obtain vitamin D, but the weak UK sun from late September to early April often leaves people deficient or insufficient. A quick way to test if the sun is strong enough is to look at your shadow; if your shadow is longer than you are, the sun is too far away and weak, so you won't be able to make much vitamin D. If your shadow is shorter than you, you will be absorbing the most you can!

Dietary sources and supplements can help in winter, with a recommended daily intake of 4000 IU for optimal function. Choosing a high-quality supplement with the correct dosage is essential, and some supplements include vitamin K2, aiding calcium absorption for better heart health.

If you take blood thinning medication, you should not have a supplement with the vitamin K2 added. Individuals with high blood calcium, chronic kidney disease, or heart issues should consult their GP before taking vitamin D to avoid potential harm.

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District Councillor Report – December 2023

Cllr Stephen Davies

May I take this opportunity to wish you and your family a happy Christmas and all the best for 2024.

The Holiday Activities and Food Programme is returning this winter for four days during the school holidays to help keep children in Gloucestershire happy, healthy, and entertained with free activities. Families who are eligible for free school meals can register now for the winter Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) funded by the Department for Education.

The HAF programme is funded by National Government, organised by County Council and delivered by local organisations including the District Council. This Christmas it will run for four days from 2 January to 5 January 2024.

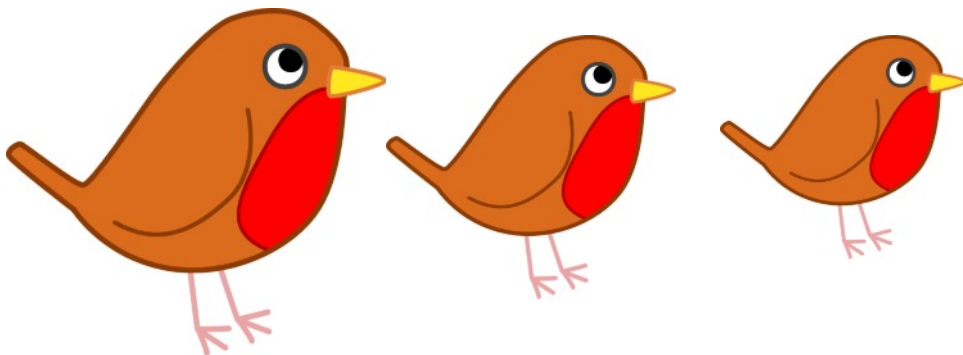
There will be lots of great options to choose from including festive parties, drama and science workshops, sports and games, art and crafts, as well as the ever-popular ticketed attractions. More information about the programme is available at: www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/haf.

HAF is growing in popularity each year, and this means that some activities can get booked up quickly when the booking window opens. This winter Activity booking will open at midday on Monday 4 December.

As ever if there is anything else I can help you with you can email me at cllr.stephen.davies@stroud.gov.uk or call me on 07802 595 307.

Merry Christmas

Stephen....



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Christingle Service

Christmas Eve

24th December 2023 at 6pm

At

St Michael and All Angels Eastington



We extend a warm welcome to you, your friends and family to join us at our candlelight Christingle celebration – a perfect way to start the Christmas celebrations!

All proceeds will go to The Children's Society, a national charity which helps vulnerable children.

If you would like to attend the service and receive a Christingle, collecting boxes will be available in the school or at the back of the Church two weeks before Christmas or contact Jacky Naylor 01453 828682.



Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

St Michael all Angels Church

Eastington

Sunday 10th December 2023 at 11.15



A traditional service to provide an escape from the pressures of Christmas preparations and celebrate the birth of Christ.



Followed by Mulled Wine and Minced Pies!





A Christmas Message from our Team Rector

As the familiar story of Christ's birth is told once again in our schools and churches, portrayed on Christmas cards, and sung in carols and songs, my mind is very much drawn back to the text in the Bible.

It is not a twinkly, soft focused scene that we find. It is one of a couple expecting their first child away from their home, with nowhere to stay. Later, they have to flee to Egypt because of the order to kill all children under the age of two by the paranoid ruler who saw Jesus' birth as a threat to his power.

And as I sit here and write this, my heart is drawn to the awful situation in that land today, where thousands have lost their lives in violence, in the land where Jesus lived and died. God made flesh – Jesus – was born into a world of fear and violence, his family knew what it was like to be fearful, to have to flee hardship and Jesus himself died a violent death at the hands of an occupying force.

Yet Christmas is a 'wonderful time of year' as the song goes. It is a wonderful time of year because Jesus is the light of the world, the one who stepped down into darkness out of love for humanity. To bring light and hope into those darkest of situations – to be with us in the mess that human beings create.

So as we celebrate Christmas this year, with all its traditions and sparkle let's be thankful for what we have, commit ourselves afresh to looking out for our neighbours, and striving to bring peace wherever we are.

May you know light and peace this Christmas, and may the hopes and fears of all the years and the whole world, once more be met in Christ.

Rev Liz

Team Rector

Church Services

We will be having our Service of Nine Lessons and Nine Carols on 10th December and the Christingle Service at the usual time of 6pm on Christmas Eve 24th December 2023. Hopefully we will have a packed church again for this delightful candlelit service in aid of the Childrens Society charity.



Services are otherwise unaffected in the New Year – 2nd and 4th Sundays at 11.15am

Food Bank Collection Point

The harvest festival services of both St Michael & All Angels and Eastington Primary School produced an exceptionally generous contribution of essential pantry staples which we were very glad to deliver to the food bank warehouse in Stroud.

We are unable to store fresh produce in the church and it is the basic essentials of both tinned food, hygiene and cleaning products which are continually needed. However, as December arrives, some deviation into cheering Christmas festive non-perishable goods would be most welcome. For the time being please avoid donations of pasta, cereal and tea as these items are still overwhelming the Warehouse.

Please use the plastic container for biscuits and non-tinned items which the church mouse might otherwise enjoy!

Visit <https://strouddistrict.foodbank.org.uk> for further information on the work of our local food bank.

Borrowing Library

At the beginning of November, we were able to introduce a larger than usual list with 59 fresh titles now on the designated bookcase. We welcome good paperback novels and biographies which you may have enjoyed lately, and please put these in the "returned books" basket for collation towards the next fresh list in the new year. A few at a time please, not carrier bags full!

Essentially a borrowing library for everyone to enjoy, with a modest suggested donation of 25p towards church funds for each book borrowed, it is disappointing that on a number of occasions a sizeable number of books and paid-for subscription magazines have been taken from the church in one hit and have not been returned.

The library is not a recycling centre for clearing out bookshelves of unwanted books at home. By prior appointment, books in greater number are accepted by the Canal Trust in Brimscombe (01453-703717).

Ukraine

Although we hosted a collection of goods for new mothers and their babies we are continuing to maintain a collection point in the Church for specific items for Ukraine. The list is as follows: Boots and new socks, baby food and hygiene items, tinned food, chocolate, torches, batteries, medicines, medical equipment, adult hygiene, clean new underwear, and working android tablets. All items collected are taken to the Polish Association and Ukrainian Church in Gloucester who then transport the goods overland to the areas in Ukraine where the need is greatest.

Information

For further information on forthcoming events taking place in Eastington and across the Stroudwater Team you can ask to receive the weekly pew sheet by emailing: officestroudwater@gmail.com.

If you would like more information or simply to be in touch, please contact one of the Team clergy:

Rev Liz Palin: tv1stroudwater@gmail.com

Rev Dave Bishop: tv2stroudwater@gmail.com or:

Churchwarden: Mike Naylor mike@mikenaylorsurveyors.co.uk



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SUNDAY

PILATES 9:00-10:00am at Eastington Village Hall

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Church of Christ the King Eastington

Christmas - For Everyone and Every One

So, what's so special about Christmas? Why do we make such a big fuss about it at Church?

It's because it's all about God's rescue plan, for EVERYONE (ALL), and EVERY ONE (EACH). Jesus came for everyone. The rich and the poor. The old and the young. Those who have power and those who have none. Those who are good, but especially those who know they're not. Those who are aware they are far from God and that feel He will never accept them.

Jesus came as "God with us". To reach out to those who felt far from God, and show them that He loved them and longed for them to come close to Him.

God wants no one to have to live life without Him. Without knowing His unfathomable love. In His constant presence. In this life and having a confidence that we will be safely with Him forever, in the next.

So why not come along this Christmas and hear about that rescue plan, which is there even for YOU!

We will be holding Carols at the Café on Sunday 10th December at 11am and this is suitable for all ages. Free drinks and cakes will be provided. There will be more carols at the following Sunday service on the 17th followed by mince pies.



On Christmas Day we have a celebration service suitable for all ages at 10:30am and all are very welcome.

There is a warm welcome waiting for you at the Church of Christ the King Eastington if you would care to come along. Services start at 11am and the church meets in the former Eastington Methodist Hall opposite Broomhalls (GL10 3AA). Most services are followed by tea & coffee.

Seeking a Pastor or Minister

We are in the process of advertising for a Pastor or Minister to help lead and grow the church and have started to meet potential applicants. There are more details available via the church home webpage.

Eastington Baby and Toddler Group

The Baby and Toddler Group meetings have been suspended for the remainder of the year due to a combination of low numbers and Beck needing to be available to look after Ken who is ill. The situation will be reviewed in the New Year. Beck can be contacted on 07511197265 rebecca.burgin@pikelock.com

Youth Club Update:

Youth Club continues to meet on Friday evenings at 7pm and, given the limited availability of leaders, we are not taking on new members. There is a waiting list for those interested in joining if others drop out or new additional leaders are found. Youth Club is not expected to be running on 22nd and 29th December.

Church Main Activities (please check the website for details and variations or call us)		
Baby & Toddler Group – <u>currently suspended</u>		Thursdays 10:00 – 11:30am
Prayer Meetings using Zoom: (see webpage for link)		Usually Tuesdays & Fridays 8:30 – 9:00am
Lunchtime Bible Study including a light lunch:		1:00 – 2:30pm usually Tuesdays at Pike Lock House
Youth Club (11-18):		Fridays 7:00 – 9:00pm
Sundays at 11am:	Café Church (all ages together)	Sunday December 10th & January 14th
	Morning Services (refreshments afterwards)	The other Sundays

If you'd like to know more; or you'd just like someone to talk to, give us a call. Ken & Beck Burgin 01453 827414 or 07511197265 or email: info@CoCtKE.org.uk

www.CoCtKE.org.uk

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o	x	c	a	n	d	l	e	e	x
w	b	w	l	x	o	g	w	r	i
p	r	e	s	e	n	t	z	g	v
z	v	z	b	v	h	o	l	l	y

santa, cracker, angel, ivy, snow,
present, reindeer, candle, star, holly

Fun Facts

Mince pies used to contain real minced beef

The mince pies that we eat now have lots of fruit and spices in them, but 200 years ago they were made from real minced beef

Instead of turkey at Christmas, it used to be a pigs head and mustard

Imagine sitting down for your Christmas dinner and seeing a pig's head in the middle of the table. Turkey didn't appear on the Christmas menu until Henry VIII in the 1500s.

Robins are a popular symbol of Christmas because of the postmen

In Victorian times, those who delivered the mail were nicknamed "robins" and they went on to feature on lots of Christmas card designs!

The smallest Christmas card ever made is invisible to the human eye

Scientists at the University of Glasgow created an amazing Christmas card. It's so tiny that you have to use a microscope to see it.



Christmas Cracker Jokes

What goes 'Oh, Oh, Oh'? Santa walking backwards.

Why are Christmas trees bad knitters? They keep losing their needles.

What do you call a line of men waiting for a haircut? A barberqueue.

What do snowmen wear on their heads? Ice caps.

What did Cinderella say when her photos didn't arrive on time? One day my prints will come.

A man walks into a bar ...ouch!



Christmas Around the World

People in Japan eat fast-food chicken on Christmas day

In Japan, it is a tradition to eat fast-food chicken on Christmas day!

In Peru, they celebrate Christmas day on Christmas eve

La Noche Buena (the good night) is the main day of celebrations in Peru. After Church, they go home to enjoy a yummy feast, open their presents and stay up until midnight

In America, they play a game of 'hide the pickle'

An American tradition where a glass pickle is hidden somewhere in a Christmas tree and an extra present is given to the child who finds it on Christmas day.

In Sweden, they leave a coffee for Santa instead of cookies

Seeing as though Father Christmas gets to eat a lot of sweet things on his journey around the world on Christmas eve, Swedish children leave him some coffee to give him more energy (and to warm him up) on his travels.

Recycle your Christmas Tree with Longfield

Get organised and book your Christmas tree collection before you've even cooked the turkey.

For a voluntary donation, you'll get your tree whisked away by Longfield's team of volunteers and taken to recycling sites where it will be chipped into mulch, then scattered on pathways and car parks at Painswick Rococo Garden.

Last year, Longfield collected 3,000 trees from the Stroud, Cirencester and Gloucester districts in just three days, and raised nearly £50,000 for essential hospice care. This year, they're aiming to beat last year's record – costs of care are rising and they need every penny to provide free hospice care for dying people and their families, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Check whether Longfield can collect from your postcode and book your collection at www.just-helping.org.uk/register-tree.

Longfield couldn't run this scheme without the support of dozens of local businesses and volunteers who donate vans and drivers during the collection period.

If you can volunteer your time or a van, or both, for a day or more between 13th to 16th January, please contact Longfield at events@longfield.org.uk or 01453 886868

Also coming Up....

10th December, Minchinhampton – Light Up A Life memorial celebration

24th February, Stroud – Ale Amble four mile circular walk



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TwoCan Inclusive Theatre Company is preparing for its first-ever pop-up Christmas Fair on December 3rd at their venue in The Old Methodist Church from 1 pm - 4 pm. The charity is opening its doors for local stall holders and anyone who may be interested in seeing what the company is all about. As well as many festive and craft products on sale some of the company's Youth Theatre will be performing and staff and members will be at hand for anyone who wants to know more about TwoCan.





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ROTARY in the SEVERN VALE

As the changeable weather sets in, we approach the Festive Season as well as the half-way mark of the Rotary year and I'm pleased to confirm our regular breakfasts and ongoing community activities and social events.

Our first speaker this Autumn was Tony Conder, talking about the history of the Gloucester-Sharpness Canal, Saul Junction and Gloucester Docks in a 25 minute time frame . . . a task which he managed well. Tony spoke about the problems financing the project - comparing it to the modern day HS2 - leading to the bankruptcy of the original company and the thirty years it took for completion . . . and four times over budget ! Various engineering stumbling blocks had to be overcome on the way - including solving the problem of the height differential of five feet between the canals at Saul Junction. The canal opened to traffic in 1827 and events are being planned to celebrate its bicentenary as it approaches.

At our next breakfast, we welcomed our speaker Delroy Ellis from Increase the Peace Gloucester. Founded in 2008, it supports children and young people specialising in working with those who are at risk of offending and raising awareness of the impacts and consequences of knife crime. This involves workshops at schools, a great deal of one to one meetings and pro-active communications in the community. There is a lot to do and resources are thinly spread, but they are making a difference. Delroy gave a very thought provoking talk about the challenges of reducing knife crime in Gloucestershire and what his organisation is doing to help.

Community Service and Fundraising continues for us together with volunteering support for local organisations, including some decorating at Wick Court Farms for City Children. Plans are near being finalised for our traditional Christmas Float and we look forward to welcoming you and entertaining local children as we travel through the villages playing Christmas music and raising funds for local causes. Planning is also in hand for other forthcoming events such as our annual collection of disused and unwanted computers along with FUNraising events for the new year. As, of course, are those for our social gatherings with family and friends. **Watch out for details of our ever popular Quiz and Curry evening planned for January which is open to members of the public.**

If you'd like to come along to one of our breakfast meetings on first and third Tuesday of the month at The Whitminster Inn at 07.15, are interested in attending one of our events or would like to volunteer with us for one of our chosen charities, please visit www.severnvalerotary.org.uk or contact keith.rog@hotmail.com

Meanwhile . . . **very best wishes for a MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR**

from the members of Severn Vale Rotary



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Citizens Advice Stroud and Cotswolds shares tips for how to save money on your energy bills

As people across Stroud and Cotswolds Districts face another winter of high energy bills, Citizens Advice shares how small changes can make a big difference when it comes to saving energy and lowering costs.

The charity has teamed up with the Energy Saving Trust to share advice on getting help if you are struggling with energy bills and tips on how to cut energy costs around the home.

People can make simple changes to save money on their energy bills and don't need to wait until the colder months to do so. These include:

- Washing clothes at 30°C could save around £15 per year - and reducing the number of wash cycles by one per week could save a further £15.
- Reducing shower time to four minutes could save a typical household as much as £75 a year.
- Swapping one bath a week for a four-minute shower could save an average of £17 a year.
- Avoiding overfilling the kettle could save around £12 a year on electricity.
- Draught-proofing windows and doors will help your home feel warmer and could save around £50 a year on bills.
- Turning appliances off at the wall/plug when you're not using them could save an average of £60 a year.
- Turning the thermostat down by 1°C could save around £115 a year.

Installing a Smart Meter can help people get better control of their energy use and budgets. Smart meters come with an In-home Display Unit (IHD) that shows how much you're using and its cost, almost as you use it – in real time. The government has instructed all energy suppliers to offer households a smart meter by 2025. You don't have to have one but may benefit from reduced tariffs with some suppliers. The government estimates that customers with smart meters save an average of £50 a year.

Check you're getting all the support you're entitled to...

Lifestyle changes won't be possible for everyone and may not be enough to cover the hole in household budgets caused by higher prices, so Citizens Advice is also urging people to check they're getting all the support they're entitled to. This could include:

- Checking what benefits you're entitled to by using a benefits calculator
- Warm Home Discount — a £150 annual discount if you get certain benefits
- Cold weather payments — payments if you get certain benefits and the weather is extremely cold
- Grants from your energy supplier — to help you pay off debts you may owe

For more information, visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk