FEBRUARY 2012

SEMINGTON

PARISH

MAGAZINE

Vicar
Revd. Stephen Ball
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Churchwardens:
David Wildsmith
Bob Norton
Tel. 01380 871424

Semington Diary

FEBRUARY 2012

1	Kids Club	6- 7 pm	St. George's School
3	Library Van	9.50 am	Village Hall
8	Kids Club	6 - 7 pm	St. George's School
	Bible Study	7.45 pm	31 Pound Close
	Vinyl Night	8 pm	Village Hall
9	WI Meeting	7.30 pm	Village Hall
11	Book & Bacon Sale	10 am - 12 pm	Village Hall
12	Quiz Night	7.30 pm	Village Hall
17	Library Van	9.50 am	Village Hall
22	Kids Club	6 - 7 pm	St. George's School
	Parish Council Meeting	8 pm	Village Hall
23	Kids Praise	3.30 pm	St. George's Church
25	Food Night	7.30 pm	Village Hall
29	Kids Club	6 - 7 pm	St. George's School
	Lent Course Begins	7.45 pm	14 Somerset Way

POST OFFICE IN THE VILLAGE HALL
Monday and Thursday
9.30 - 12.30

EVERY WEEK IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Mon.	Bingo	7.30 pm
Tues.	Bridge Club	9.15-1 pm
	Just Jhoom	6.30-7.30 pm
Weds.	Baby Sensory	afternoon
Thurs.	Coffee Morning	10-12 Noon
Fri.	Bridge Club	9.15 am-1 pm

See page 19 for Skittles Matches

MAGAZINE DEADLINES

Details of village events and any subsequent changes by the 13th of the preceding month to Carole Kemp-Potter, The Old Manor House, High Street. Tel. 871728; or email kemppotter@btinternet.com. Information will also go to Village website. Next **deadline is 15th February for March** issue.

The Church at Christmas.

A big thank you to all who decorated the church so magnificently for the Christmas period which was enjoyed by more than 180 people at the three main services, along with all those that popped into the church for a few minutes of quiet reflection.

Thanks also to all who took part in the services, both young and old(er) that made the services so special. Bob Norton, Church Warden

Carol Singing

Thank you to all involved in our recent Carol Singing around the village. The marvellous sum of £122 has been forwarded to the Alabare Christian Care Centre in Trowbridge supporting the homeless. Thank you again to all carollers, those providing seasonal refreshments during and after our singing, and of course those who contributed to this excellent total. Eric Clifford

Church Cleaning Rota

St. George's Church has a cleaning rota and we are always on the look-out for extra volunteers! There are currently thirteen ladies (but men can also apply!) and each one has a month allocated in which to clean the church (August has two volunteers). This can be once per week or however often it can be achieved during that month. It can take around 1 hour for a general clean and vacuum.

If you think you may have a few spare hours during the year, and wouldn't mind going on a reserve list, or sharing a month with another volunteer, then please contact Pam Wildsmith on 870030 or email prim01@tiscali.co.uk

Lent Course

This year's course, 'Jesus the Wounded Healer', begins on February 29th, at 14 Somerset Way, and is each week for 5 weeks. Each evening starts at 7.45pm, and ends by 9.15pm. Everyone welcome - we're all learning together! More information, Jack Woodward, 870784.

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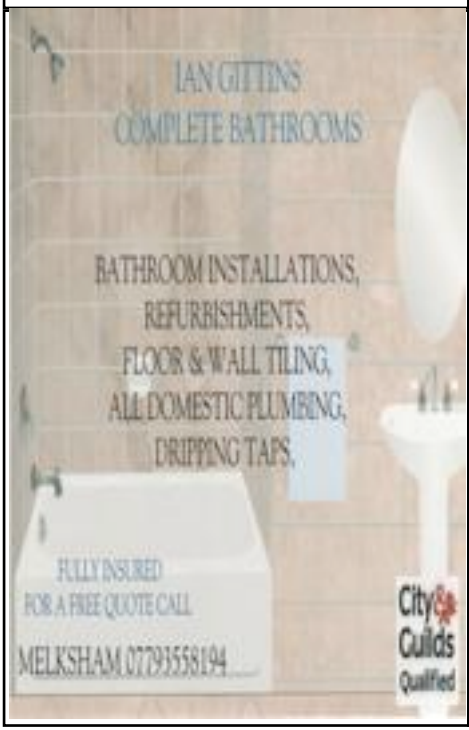

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What is it?
Where is it?
When is it?

It is an opportunity to do fun things (messy craft, play games, relax, encounter people from the Bible, chat & eat a meal) with the whole family.

It will take place in the Village School Hall Saturday 17th March, doors open 11am (until 1pm).

Organised by St George's Church, Semington

More info? Ring 871424, 870874 or Google "Messy Church"

Vinyl Night

Vinyl Night is now planned in for February the 8th at 8 p.m. which will keep it on its Wednesday slot. We are back in the main hall and I expect the numbers of people attending to continue to grow. Just dig out your records and share them with us, any musical style welcome Blues to Bach and Ballads to Beethoven.I have it from a good source that one or two people have been expanding their collection of 45 rpm records just for the occasion. Steve

BOOKS & BACON SALE

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Saturday, February 11th

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Semington Community Jubilee Trees

The License has now been granted and a small group of stalwart enthusiasts has started to clear the brambles from the site - it is already looking a lot better!

It is important that we have plenty of support when we come to plant our 420 trees in early March so that we can get the young trees in as quickly as possible. In particular it would be good to see as many residents as possible put their name on the spiral protector that will be used on each tree. There will be a wide range of wildlife friendly trees to be planted including some hedgerow Hawthorn and Blackthorn as well as a group of Hazel trees and a few larger trees such as Silver Birch, Rowan and Oak.

Anyone who wants to help will be made very welcome and should call Steve Rimmer on 870647 or e-mail sjr.srimmer@tiscali.co.uk .

Updates will be posted on the Forum.

MELKSHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

..needs men!

They are a community choir (about 70 strong), so no need to audition. It is helpful to be able to read music, but don't let that put you off! They have just started rehearsing their next performance - Handel's Messiah which is scheduled for 28th April. It's a very friendly group and you would be made very welcome. They rehearse in the Rachel Fowler Centre (Melksham town centre) on Thursdays 7:30pm to 9:15pm.

Semington WI January Meeting

Last Thursday we all met together in The Somerset Arms to celebrate the formation of our WI. Our birthday party was well attended, as it always is, and we were well looked after by the restaurant staff, and had a very nice meal, the food enjoyable and the company convivial. Our next meeting is on February 9th, it will be held in the village hall at 7.30 and guests are very welcome. The speaker will be Judy Coles who will be talking about the famous Bath Mineral Hospital.

In December we had a great evening at the village hall, with all the Christmas decorations adding to the atmosphere. We had booked the popular musical duo Ray Dance and Judith Sharp, and had invited thirty extra ladies from other WI groups in the area. Semington WI members provided a splendid buffet supper, which we enjoyed after our entertainment, and our visitors were very complimentary when they departed (some of them clutching raffle prizes.) All in all, a most satisfactory evening. My thanks to all our members for helping to make the evening a success, and Happy New Year greetings from me to all ladies in the Semington WI, long may it flourish.

Carole Ball President.

Chris Walker

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Learn Something New

Was your New Year's Resolution to take up a new hobby or learn something new? Below are a couple of suggestions:

The Piano

Linda Winstock has lived in Semington with her husband Michael for about eleven and a half years. Until 2009, she worked for Wiltshire County Council (as was) but took early retirement in June of that year. She studied for a number of years with the Open University and has a Diploma in Music together with a B.Sc(Hons)Open. "Music plays a big part in my life and I continue to study but feel that I would now like to encourage others to enjoy playing piano or keyboard as much as I do." Lessons would be half an hour sessions at her home and all ages are welcome. She has Public Liability Insurance and enhanced CRB clearance and can be contacted on 870804.

Bridge

Dave Latchem, who runs the Semington Bridge Club, is starting lessons for beginners and improvers at Bishopstrow Village Hall just outside Warminster on Wednesday mornings starting February 1st.

The Improver's Club will start at 9.15 am with a half hour lesson followed by play from 10 am - 1 pm.

The Beginner's Class will start at 9.45 am and finish at 1 pm. There will be a break at 11 am for coffee, tea, cake and biscuits.

Dave runs the Bridge Club in Semington and another in Taunton. he has taught Maths for 30 years. He is also a qualified teacher of bridge as well as a qualified club director and is on the National Executive Committee for the English Bridge Union. For further details visit www.bridgewebs.com/semingtonvillage

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Vandals have damaged the parapet of the Semington Brook bridge by pushing one of the coping stones into the brook. Please be vigilant and if you notice anything or anyone behaving oddly inform me or the police - 999, or 101 for something that happened earlier.

Do you know about putting ICE (In Case of Emergency) in your mobile phone along with a telephone number to be contacted?

Paul Bowyer 870512

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WILTSHIRE COUNCILLOR NEWS FROM JONATHON SEED

A New Year brings new opportunities for us all ad that includes those of us involved in local politics. This year the big challenge facing Wiltshire Council will be balancing the budget whilst at the same time making sure we have provided services to all those entitled to them. This is a complex tasked for a Council with a budget of over £800million. I am heavily involved in the scrutiny process as a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny panel which will go through the budget on a line by line basis and then ask searching questions of those who propose to spend our money. Wiltshire Council under the current administration manages its funds as if they were their own money. That is why we are consolidating our real estate and reducing our staff. . I have found this to be personally and particularly poignant when the Council recently had to decide to sell Urchfont Manor where I am Chairman of the Board of Management. The Manor has provided excellent adult education and small conference facilities for many years in a superb setting. However the service being provided within a site worth several million pounds on the open market is not statutory and therefore the Council has had to make efficiencies by stopping this service and putting the site on the market.

All is not gloomy as in Semington I was very pleased to welcome the Melksham Area Board for its meeting in the Village Hall shortly before Christmas and it was good to see local residents taking an interest. This was especially so as the Board was able to see the Village Hall roof first hand before considering a grant application at our next meeting!
Jonathon Seed

NATURE NOTES

It must have been August when we last walked to the old packhorse bridge over the Avon. English Heritage says the bridge was built in 1725, with a repair by the County Council in 1856. In summer, I remember struggling through waist-high burdock and thistle, but now it's just teasle and grass hummocks you have to avoid as you look for the path.

Before such routes were replaced by turnpikes and canals, this beautifully proportioned bridge would have been an important drover route connecting Waddon, Semington and Broughton Gifford. In his *Ballad of the Drover*, Philip Larkin reminds us that, when there were no such bridges to carry horse and human safely across fast rivers, travel could be perilous. This is how the poem ends …

Across the flooded lowlands
And slopes of sodden loam
The pack-horse struggles onward,
To take dumb tidings home.
And mud-stained, wet, and weary,
Through ranges dark goes he;
While hobble-chains and tinware
Are sounding eerily.

The floods are in the ocean,
The stream is clear again,
And now a verdant carpet
Is stretched across the plain.
But someone's eyes are saddened,
And someone's heart still bleeds
In sorrow for the drover

Funeral

Wednesday 21st December 2011
Nettie Prudence Hookins (1912-2011)

We pray that Nettie's family and friends will be comforted by the loving presence of God at this sad time.

NETTIE PRUDENCE HOOKINS (1912-2011)

Anne Barrett (Nettie's step-daughter) and her family would like to thank all the neighbours and friends who attended Nettie's funeral service at St George's Church on Wednesday 21st December 2011. Nettie had fond memories of her visits to The Good Companions lunch club and of her friends and neighbours during the time (1992-2008) she lived in Highfield Close.

BETTY NOAD

Betty Mortimer Noad, widow of Philip Noad, formerly of Littleton Leaze, Semington, died peacefully at Ilsom House Nursing Home, Tetbury, Glos, on 26th December 2011.

The funeral was held at the Melksham United Church (formerly Melksham Methodist), where both Philip and Betty were married and worshipped for many years, on 6th January 2012. The burial took place at St George's Churchyard, alongside Philip who was buried there in December 1993. Philip was a long-standing member and chairman of the Semington Parish Council

Donations in Betty's memory were made in favour of the British Heart Foundation, at her request.

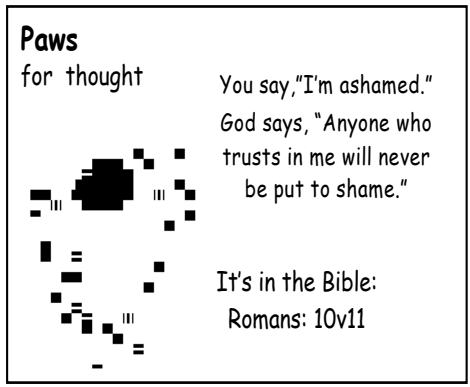
News from Florance Lear

Florance Lear wishes to let all her friends at Semington know that she is being well looked after at Athelstan House in Malmsbury.

She misses everyone very much and would like to thank everyone for their good wishes and prayers and all the cards she has received for Christmas and Birthday.

Sending my love to everyone. Miss you all

Love from Floss.



Phoenix Celebrations

Phoenix group celebrated their 21st birthday this year by having a meal at the Somerset Arms. During the evening there was a chance to look at the records of many of the events which have taken place over this time. There have been many Safari Suppers (always a favourite), guided walks, ghost walks and general strolls. Skittles evenings have featured regularly and in the olden days we had evenings about other countries - Brazil and Sri Lanka are two which spring to mind, when one member would speak about a chosen subject. Other interesting evenings included 'The History of Contraception' , a talk by the Author Pamela Belle and Literature based talks, plus many quizzes.

This year so far we have had a cheese and wine guessing/tasting evening and a trip to the Arc Theatre to see 'Housebound'. We shall have our Christmas meal in December and will hopefully plan a programme of events for the coming year.

If all goes well we shall have to be planning a celebration for a silver jubilee.

Pam Wildsmith

DIAMOND JUBILEE PLANS

Coordinated by the Parish Council, representatives of various organisations have met to discuss events to celebrate the Queen's 60th anniversary of the Queen's reign. There will be Bank Holidays on the 4th and 5th June.

The proposals currently are as follows:

Saturday 2nd June:	**Duck Race**
	Evening event in Village Hall (50's Theme)
Sunday: 3rd June:	**Church Service and Flower Festival**
	Sports Afternoon
Monday: 4th June:	**Fancy Dress /Pageant**
	Street Party, Go-Karts
	Evening Event-Somerset Arms

Further information will become available as plans are completed.
The Street Party requires that the High Street should be closed except for access and provision for the emergency services. There is no bus service on that day. Barriers and signs will be put up and Marshals used to control any traffic requiring access. The Parish Council will make the necessary application to Wiltshire Council in March.

Should anyone have any objections or concerns please contact Francis Dobbyn at Highfield House on 871662 by February 29th. Should anyone wish to help or contribute in any way please let Francis know on the above number.

Francis Dobbyn

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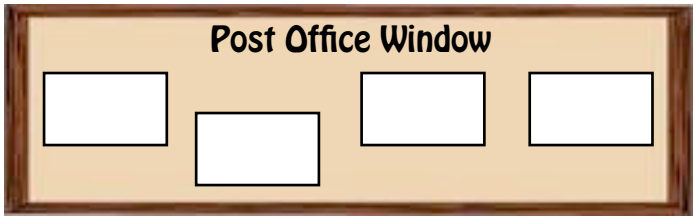

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Semington Weather 2011

Not a particularly hot summer, yet the average temperature for the year was the highest for over 20 years, with September - December all being well above average.

It was also another dry year, with 23.2 inches (590mm) of rain, following a dry 2010. That is why the reservoirs are low, and there is talk of water shortages in Southern England for this year. The wettest month was December, with March and April being exceptionally dry.

The hottest day of the year was 26th June, when it reached 29ºC, but you will remember it was unseasonally hot over the Easter weekend, reaching 26ºC on Easter Saturday.

Jack Woodward

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St. George's School: a place of learning, caring and sharing

Looking back, December seems a long time ago but was very busy with our Advent spiral, a Christmas art and crafts day, staff helping serve at the school Christmas Dinner, a wonderful Christmas Play performance, a church full for the Carol Service and the Friends Festive Fun Evening on the last day. Thank you everyone for all your hard work.

The new term has started very well for us at St. George's. There was a lot happening in just the first week of term.

The whole school went to Bath to see Dick Whittington at the Theatre Royal. Everyone enjoyed the pantomime and it was a bonus to visit such a beautiful theatre. Three of our pupils were invited by the theatre staff to go on the stage and bravely sang to the audience. We thank the 'Friends' for their donation that paid for the transport.

It was lovely to see that the children behaved very well and were a credit to our school.

The Wiltshire road safety team have visited this term to give lessons to years 1 to 4. This is a vital life skill and preparation for future independence.

WE are pleased to say that our new website has been launched. We are still adding information but we hope you like it! Let us know what you think!

www.st-georges-semington.wilts.sch.uk

The Friends of St. George's School are holding their Jumble Sale on Saturday 10th March here at school. Everyone is welcome.

Laura Hilliard
Headteacher

Anthony Lovatt

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Quiz Night

No less than 3 quizzes have been held at the Village Hall since I last wrote in these pages. It was great to see some newcomers to Quiz Night, as well as some old friends returning.

The Christmas Quiz was set by Tony and Linda, who had volunteered for the job! They set a pretty tough quiz so it was quite low-scoring There was no Marathon Round but there was a tie break question for a prize - "What was the closing price of gold on the previous Friday?" The closest was Lee's team. Octopussy Team also got a Special Prize but the winning team were the Hilperton Hobos with 41½ points, followed by the Christmas 6 on 39 and the Infamous 5 on 38.

Pete Vooght had volunteered to set the Quiz in the Lounge, as we met on the 28th December to try and revive our brain cells after all that turkey! There was an interesting round of Georges and also an original Pictures Round where you had to identify the people and then put them into pairs. The pairings could be based on comedy duos or where they are from or even a resemblance… So Jack Dee was paired with Tony Hancock as they are both known for looking miserable! Seven Dwarves team won, Help team came second and Don't Know Daisies were third.

January's Quiz was set by Steve Rimmer and Brian Smyth. They had both set a Marathon Round for the 5 teams present. One was a picture round featuring chefs, the other was matching up international footballers with their club team. Team 'My Gang' won both Marathons. Interestingly the Hilperton Hobos, who went on to win the main quiz, came last in the Chefs Marathon. They scored 70 points, with the Four Musketeers in second with 67 points and the Infamous Five came third with 61 points. **QUIZ DATES FOR 2012: 12 February, 11 March, 15 April, 13 May and 17 June.** Don't forget Somerset Arms Quiz every Monday night at 8 pm

February Skittles Matches

1	Angels Ladies	8 pm	17	Sem B Men	8 pm
3	Sem A Men	8 pm	21	Sem B Ladies	8.15 pm
7	Sem B Ladies	8 pm	24	Sem A Men	8 pm
14	Sem A Ladies	8.15 pm	28	Sem A Ladies	8.15 pm

FOOTBALL

Semington Magpies have not had a fixture since the middle of December. With no fixtures throughout January, their next game will be 4th February at home against Castle Combe, so no results to report from them.

Semington Rovers last fixture was home to Bug and Spider and another loss to report, going down 0 - 3. So at present, Rovers sit at the bottom on the Premier League. **So come on you boys**...next fixture is away to Biddestone on 22nd January. All fixtures can be found in the Wiltshire Times or online. For Magpies, it's Trowbridge and District League, for Rovers it's Chippenham and District Sunday League.

Kevin Lockwood

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25th JANUARY AT 8 PM HELD IN SEMINGTON VILLAGE HALL

Planning - The Clerk reported that the current status of the following planning applications was as shown:

W/11/02589/FUL	Dry Dock, Canal Bridge	Redevelopment of existing canal side dry dock and associated works	**Permission**
W/11/02597/FUL	551-552 Canal Bridge	Demolish existing timber shed and erect double garage and store	**Permission**
W/11/03156/FUL	21 St Georges Place	Construction of porch	**Permission**
W/11/03191/FUL	72C High Street	Demolition of existing building and erection of detached dwelling.	**Pending**

Cllr. Dobbyn reported on the proceedings of the Appeal Hearing in respect of planning application W/11/01206/FUL. He commented it appeared that one of the issues for the inspector to decide was whether the harm in allowing the site to remain was greater than the harm in requiring it to be removed. He added that the Inspector's decision is likely to be known seven weeks from the last date of the hearing – 5 January 2012. Cllr. Dobbyn stated that he would write a short report on the Appeal hearing for the Parish Council's records.

The Council examined the following planning applications that were received after 18 January 2012:

W/12/00091/TCA The Old Coach House Fell Sycamore Trees NEW

The Council **resolved** that it had no objections to this proposed development.

W/12/00093/FUL 6 Wessex Close Two-Storey Extension etc NEW

The Council **resolved** that it had no objections to this proposed development provided the existing boundary fence between 6 Wessex Close and 7 Wessex Close remained in place.

Highways/Environment - The Council noted the correspondence from Cllr. Seed regarding the extension of the Bus Clearway in the High Street and, following an inspection of the area by Cllrs. Rimmer and Lockwood **resolved** that the Bus Clearway should be extended by 12 metres in a southerly direction to abut the existing dropped kerbs, thereby ensuring that a 'clearway' of around 36 metres could be created.

Cllr. Lockwood stated that he had made enquiries regarding the creation of a skatepark in the area of the new playing field and that it was not a practical location.

Cllr. Vooght reported that parishioners had complained about vehicles speeding past St George's School. Councillors agreed that the NPT should be informed.

Sports and Social Facilities in Semington – St George's Fund.

Sports/Recreation Field - The development of this facility is continuing and Cllr. Lockwood stated that it should be fully completed in time for the next football season.

Village Hall Improvements - Cllr. Vooght reported that a new ceiling is to be fitted to the Village hall around Eastertime. He added that this work was being financed by the Village Hall Management Committee.

Jubilee Wood - Cllr. Rimmer presented the s96 Application for the Council to consider. This application, or licence - if granted by Wiltshire Council - would allow the Parish Council to establish the Jubilee Wood on the land owned by Wiltshire Council.

The Council **resolved** unanimously that this application is signed by the Clerk, on behalf of the Parish Council and sent to Wiltshire Council. Cllr. Rimmer stated that he had applied to the Woodland Trust for the trees and was hopeful that they would be provided free of charge. He cautioned, however, that it is possible that the Parish Council may have to meet the cost of the trees, estimated to be £420.

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebration 2012 - Cllr. Dobbyn gave details that he had received from Wiltshire Council that related to running 'Small Community Events' and he was pleased to note the lack of bureaucracy surrounding such occasions. He added that at a meeting that he had chaired recently a draft programme had been established for the celebration events for the Diamond Jubilee. (|Details on page 13 of this magazine)

The Parish Council selected the winning entry for the design for the Jubilee Mugs and Cllr. Wade stated that he would now place the order for the mugs. The Chairman commented that 'Semington' must be included in the wording on each mug.

Any Other Business - Cllr. Lockwood reported that the canal seat sponsored by the Parish Council was in a very poor condition. Cllr. Smyth agreed to inspect the seat and to establish a repair programme.

Cllr. Rimmer stated that the minutes and agenda for recent Parish Council meetings were missing from the website. He offered to ensure that they were posted on the website in future. He also reminded councillors of the existence of the 'Forum' on the website and he encouraged councillors to inform parishioners of its existence.

Cllr. Dobbyn reported that a teacher at the school wished to sponsor a 'Running Event'. Councillors suggested that she be invited to the next Parish Council meeting to provide further details.

The Chairman reported that he had attended a meeting of the Wiltshire Council Standards Committee and that it appeared that each Parish Council would be required, under the new rules, to be responsible for issuing its own 'dispensations'. He added that the sanctions for failing to obey the new code were feeble, except in the very serious cases when they may be referred to a Magistrates' Court.

In reply to Cllr. Bowyer, councillors confirmed that it was not intended to light a beacon in Semington as part of the Jubilee Celebrations.

Date of the next meeting.

Wednesday 22 February 2012 at 8.00pm.

St. George's Church

The church is usually open and available for quiet thought and prayer. You are always welcome to come and sit for a few minutes inside or enjoy the peace on the seats on the south side of the building. If lonely or in need of a friendly chat, the folk from the village offer a listening ear. Phone Bev. on 870784 or pop into the regular Thursday coffee mornings in the Village Hall.

Church Bookings - to be made through JPCC Secretary, Maureen Norton at 10 Pound Lane or telephone 871424. If you require the heating to be put on, please ask at time of booking.

Kid's Praise - Thursday February 23rd, 3.30pm, or straight after school, come to Church for a drink, biscuit and chat, followed by songs, story, prayers and fun. All ages welcome, but especially under 8's and their families. It will finish by 4pm, in time to collect older children from after school clubs. More information from Bev Woodward, 870784. *(This replaces Toddler Praise.)*

Kids' Klub - will meet at school on February 1st, 8th, 22nd and 29th, all 6-7pm. You are welcome if you are in school years 3-6, cost 30p. We play games, have stories, make things, generally have fun! More information from Bev Woodward, 870784 Maureen Norton, 871424.

31 Club - for you if you're at senior school. It's a Christian club, we'll have fun together, finding out about God and what he thinks of things that matter to us. Bev & Jack Woodward, 870784.

St George's Church
Bible Study Group

The Semington Bible Study Group meets on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. We continue a study of John's gospel. We have coffee and start with some sung worship.. We are a very informal group which simply seeks to learn more about God in our lives; different members of the group lead the sessions, using materials from various sources. Everyone is welcome, whatever their knowledge of the Bible. Please see the Semington Diary Dates for dates and venues, as they change each time, as we meet in various homes in the village.

For more information join us in church at a Sunday Service or 'phone Bev 870784

Christians In Semington

This group meets on the first Wednesday of the month.
All are welcome, as we pray for the needs of people in our village and community. For further information ring Julia Wade, tel. 870137 or Bev or Jack Woodward on 870784

The Canalside Benefice

St. Michael and All Angels, Hilperton with St. Mary the Virgin, Whaddon;
St. George's, Semington;
St. Paul's, Staverton with St. Mary Magdalen, Hilperton Marsh;
near the Kennet and Avon Canal, within the Diocese of Salisbury

First of all, an explanation of who I am. I have the privilege of serving in the United Area of the Methodist and URC churches as Chairman and Superintendent. I also have pastoral responsibility for Hilperton, Holt and The United Church, Trowbridge. I have been here since September. Already, we are enjoying getting to know people, and we are looking forward to working with the Church in the area.

Do you like pancakes? If you do, what do you like to put on them? Like Christmas, pancake day is a day that many celebrate whether they are Christian or not. It's also known as Shrove Tuesday, and as Mardi gras (Fat Tuesday). In some parts of the world there will be colourful processions and celebrations. Shrove Tuesday had dual purpose. Firstly to use up all the food left in store not permitted during Lent, ready for the beginning of the time of fasting beginning the next day, Ash Wednesday. Secondly, it was the day of confession in preparation for Lent.

We are generally good at celebrating. But the other part; fasting or giving something up, refection and confession, does not come so easily. A study was done recently that discovered that people have a far greater sense of wellbeing when there are times of inactivity to allow the mind to reflect. They could have saved themselves some money by asking a Christian who would have freely given the information about that which we have known since Jesus. At the momentous occasion of His baptism when He was confirmed in the belief of His Sonship of God, He took the decision to go into the wilderness for forty days. Often in His ministry, He went off on His own to pray. At the critical night of his arrest, He spent the hours before in prayer. He had the ability to be still in order to reflect, to ask God for direction and to pour out His heart to His Father. The church has followed this pattern and Lent has become the time of seeking God, pouring our hearts out to Him and reflecting upon our lives, bringing repentance (changing direction). It has also been a time of preparation for baptism and ordination. Six weeks have been given over to this practise which culminates in placing all the baggage of the past at the foot of the cross on Good Friday and the embracing of new life and new beginnings at Easter.

Lent isn't only about giving something up, but looking to see what God is seeking for us to take on in this new resurrection life; perhaps being a different person, using our skills and resources in a different way, or doing life differently. I hope we all have the opportunity to take time out so we can reflect on how to live our lives in a different way

Rev David Ellis.

St.Michael's Hilperton with St. Mary's Whaddon:
St. Geprge's, Semington;
St. Mary Magdalen, Hilperton Marsh;
near the Kennet and Avon Canal, within the diocese of Salisbury
YOU ARE MOST WELCOME TO JOIN ANY OF THE SERVICES IN THE BENEFICE
There are pew sheets in the churches which give details of all events in the Benefice

Church Services FEBRUARY 2012	**St. George's Semington**	St Michael's Hilperton	St. Mary Magdalen's Horse Road Hilperton Marsh	St. Mary the Virgin Whaddon
Sunday 5th February 3rd before Lent	**9.15 am All Age Worship**	8 am Holy Communion 11 am All Age Worship	11 am Holy Communion	
Sunday 12th February 2nd before Lent	**9.15 am Morning Worship**	9.15 am Parish Communion 11 am Methodist Service		8 am Holy Communion (Trad)
Sunday 19th February Next before Lent	**6 pm Evening Worship**	9.15 am All Age Communion	11 am Parish Communion	
Ash Wednesday 22nd February		9.15 am Holy Communion with Ashing 4 pm Kid's Praise		
Sunday 26th February Lent 1	**9.15 am Parish Communion**	9.15 am Parish Communion 11 am Methodist Service	6 pm Evening Praise	