



# New deal for old school



Behind-the-scenes talks on the Old School Project are set to mean a better deal for parishioners.

The downturn in property prices has led the parish council to re-open negotiations on the original £450,000 selling price.

'These negotiations have been somewhat protracted,' said Sherston Parish Council chairman John Matthews. 'But they did result in a meeting early last month which, we hope, will lead soon to a final agreement and to the project going ahead.'

The Old School Project involves the parish council buying the Grade II listed High Street building, empty for some four years, and transferring it to a non-profit-making company run by residents for retail, commercial and community use.

In a surprise move last summer, donations of £340,000 from the national Eleanor Barton Trust and the local Sam Thompson Fund gave the project a substantial boost.

Now the list of prospective tenants includes the Post Office Stores, Sherston Wine and the new Wiltshire Council. This last hopes to bring the council to the people with what it calls 'a rural services hub'.

Since the residents' survey in the summer, which overwhelmingly supported the project, the parish council's project group has been working on outstanding issues.

It has appointed a legal team and secured further grants towards the costs.

'Most importantly, negotiations on the price have been taking place with the owners of the site, the Diocese of Bristol,' said Mr Matthews.

'In view of the downturn in the economy and in property prices in particular, the parish council obtained an independent valuation of the old school and based its offer on that.'

As soon as an agreement has been reached, parishioners will be informed through Cliffhanger and the parish council's website [www.sherston.org.uk](http://www.sherston.org.uk).

## Youth award honours benefactor

A new award has been set up to honour the late Sherston philanthropist Sam Thompson.

Born at the end of the First World War, Mr Thompson took over the bakehouse after his father Frank retired.

When he died, he left a great of what he had in trust to help the village.

Now the Sam Thompson Fund, administered by trustees Joyce Glead and Richard Creed, has awarded £3,000 for camping equipment for the Cubs, Scouts, Explorer Scouts and Brownies.

'This will last them for many years,' said Eric Thacker, leader of the First Sherston John Rattlebone Scout Group.

'The group really appreciates this generous gift.'

'In memory of his support during and after his life to the youth of this village, the group's leaders have agreed to inaugurate the Sam Thompson Challenge Cup to be awarded annually.'

Leaders and other help are still needed. Training will be given.

Contact Eric Thacker on 841344 or 0778 996 0888

## A big thank you

The editorial team thanks all those businesses that have supported Cliffhanger in its infancy by placing advertisements.

In return, we ask parishioners to consider supporting them wherever possible.

Cliffhanger is published by Sherston Parish Council and paid from the precept ie the part of residents' council tax paid to the parish council.

At present, the magazine costs about £140 monthly or 17.5p a copy. However, the editorial team wishes to make it as self-sufficient as possible and already advertising revenue seems likely to meet half our costs.

We hope that, as the publication develops, we will be able to meet the entire cost from advertising revenue although we do not wish to have more than 25 per cent advertising per edition.

New advertisers are therefore welcome. Details of how to advertise are elsewhere on this page.

Finally, the Cliffhanger team wishes our readers and advertisers a happy and prosperous new year.

The size and content of the Cliffhanger depends entirely on the amount of copy we receive from individuals and groups. So, if you feel you have something of interest, please doesn't hesitate to tell us.

**Top tip:** if you're telling us of an event coming up, write a short piece about it rather than just supply basic details or a poster. You will then get a short article published to help boost interest as well as a mention in our What's On section. Don't forget to tell us how your event went, with a photo if possible.

**Copy deadline:** 10<sup>th</sup> of the previous month. Send to [editorial@sherstoncliffhanger.co.uk](mailto:editorial@sherstoncliffhanger.co.uk) or hard copy to Sherston Post Office Stores.

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Please remember the Cliffhanger is delivered free to every home and business in the parish – more than 750 copies. This and all previous editions are also available online at [www.sherston.org.uk](http://www.sherston.org.uk)

## Honour for ex-pupil

Sherston School's seventh classroom opens officially this month.

And the ceremony will be performed by former pupil Kathleen Hillier.

'We thought it would be fitting for a person with real village roots to cut the ribbon for us,' said head teacher Nick Bowditch.

'We're delighted that Miss Hillier will be joining us for the afternoon.'

Miss Hillier, who recently retired as parish church organist, was a pupil of the school when it was in the High Street.

The ceremony will take place on Thursday 22 January.

## Use it or lose it

Remember to cash in your Sherston 1016 Christmas vouchers by 31 January. Those eligible - ie aged 65 or more or widows or widowers - who did not receive a £10 voucher in December, can still claim one. If you wish to do so, telephone Eric Thacker on 841344 as soon as possible.

## Footpaths group

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 21 January at 7.30pm in the village hall. All are welcome to attend. The main topics will be the intended publication of a new walks booklet for the parish and setting up a working party to undertake basic maintenance and repair.

## Christmas lights

Thanks are due to Noel Banks and Paul Moody for decorating the High Street with the new energy-efficient lights. Thanks are also due to those residents and businesses happy to have the lights on their properties. Additional lights may be obtained for Christmas 2009 as we were unable to meet all the requests from High Street residents this year.



Story telling time for toddlers of all ages will be on **Thursday 29th January 2009!** This wonderful session with story teller, Sue Brentnall, will be from 10.30am – 11.15am and is bookable in advance (£2 per child) in the shop. Places are limited so book early!

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# The kindness of strangers

Driver Helen Mickish has discovered at first hand the kindness of strangers.

At 7.30pm on 2 December, Helen was driving past the Easton Grey turning when she stopped quickly to avoid a fox.

'I can't help it,' she said. 'I'm an animal lover.'

Her steering wheel locked and sent her into a spin across the road and into the ditch.

'Had I been driving a 4x4, it wouldn't have been so bad but, as I was in a Mini, I felt very shaken up,' said Helen.

The fox however popped back over the wall from where it came.

In shock, Helen put on her hand brake. 'As if the Mini was going to go anywhere. I was in a ditch,' she said.

She then tried unsuccessfully to raise help from nearby houses.

'Had it not been for the kind Sherston people who stopped and offered me their phone, for the gentleman who stayed with me and for the gentleman who helped get me out of the ditch I would still be there,' said Helen.

'So a huge thank you to everyone.'

'I'm sorry I can't remember any names from that night except for Mr Sutcliffe, aka Buttons, who appeared in local 'am dram' and was heading off to a skittles match. I'm sorry he was late.'

Helen added it had been reported on the BBC news that week that there were few close communities left and that people were no longer interested in living in such a community.

'That can't be farther from the truth in Sherston,' she said.

'I'm so glad I've moved to the area and have witnessed first-hand how kind and generous the people here are.'

# Hedgelaying training courses



The Cotswold Conservation Board is running courses for beginners over the next couple of months.

The course teaches the Midland style and includes the basics of clearing, trimming, cutting and laying the pleacher, staking and binding.

Each course lasts two days from 9am until 4pm and costs £55. The courses are at Ebrington on 17 and 18 January and Calmsden on 7 and 8 February.

Places are limited to 12 for each course.

You will need strong footwear, warm clothes and a packed lunch. Hand tools are provided.

To book or for further information contact Mark Connelly on 01454 862006 email [mark.connelly@cotswoldsaoib.org.uk](mailto:mark.connelly@cotswoldsaoib.org.uk)

*Photos: Noel Banks*

## Next parish council meeting

This will be on Thursday 8 January at 7.30pm in the village hall. All are welcome to attend and there are opportunities to raise questions and pass comments. If you cannot make the meeting but have something to raise, please contact our clerk Mrs Sarah Wood on 01666 840351 or email [clerk@sherston.org.uk](mailto:clerk@sherston.org.uk). You can also contact the parish council via the response form on our website [www.sherston.org.uk](http://www.sherston.org.uk) which also has minutes of meetings.

## Donations

The parish council has recently given £42 to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal and £50 to Macmillan Cancer Support.

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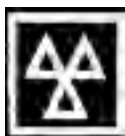
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# Big plans for 'small potatoes'

*This month sees the inaugural meeting of Sherston Allotments and Gardens Association. Allotment holder Richard Maslen fills in the background. Photos: Frederic Nicolas*

Allotment gardening in England goes back more than 1,000 years to when the Saxons would clear woodland for a field to be held in common.

Allotments in Sherston, a Saxon settlement, could be as old as the village itself.

After the Norman Conquest, common land began to be appropriated and fenced. As enclosures rapidly increased in number over hundreds of years, 'allotments' of land were sometimes attached to cottages to help provide for families. This is how the modern allotments movement came into being.

Sherston used to be big on allotments. An independent-minded and hard-working population not only looked after its own needs but cultivated enough garden ground by hand to supply a thriving local trade.

The reputation of Sherston vegetables was high but intensive cropping of new and unfamiliar varieties produced problems and a common slander which touched a tender spot. Not so long ago, to call a Sherstonian 'small potatoes' was to invite a harsh reply or even a bloody nose.

Potatoes have been grown in Sherston allotments for years. A story connects Sir Walter Raleigh with a local girl and he might have brought her a potato. Perhaps it's only a story but the crop is certainly an old one here.



However, its progress faltered when its health and nurture had to be learned by trial and error. Learning the ways of alien vegetables is difficult. Sherston pride must have been blighted as much as potato disease blighted the allotments.

Our potatoes are now normal size but blight is still an allotment problem and we can still be touchy about it.

Plots at the corner of Green Lane and Knockdown Road are remnants of more extensive provision. The number has fallen since the harshest days of rural poverty and the greatest days of Dig for Victory but a wide variety of local growers is involved.



The allotments are owned by Wiltshire County Council and leased to Sherston Parish Council which is obliged to provide plots if there is a call for them. There is a waiting list.

The value of productively-used open and green community space is widely appreciated. As a result of the considerable opposition to a proposal to sell the field to help fund the Old School Project, the idea of an allotment holders' association was born. This will co-operate with the parish council to foster and improve the scheme.

The aim is for a united voice and non-confrontational liaison between landlord and tenants, social contact and maybe technical and commercial benefits for association members. Provision of more allotments is a priority.

There has been interest from allotment holders, gardeners in general and nongardening village supporters. If an association is formed, interested parties will have a voice and a constitution will be decided.

An inaugural meeting for a possible Sherston Allotments and Gardens Association will take place in the village hall at 7pm on Tuesday 27 January. All allotment tenants, gardeners and supporters are welcome.

Further details: Richard Maslen, 2 Woods Close, 840387, [maslens@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:maslens@tiscali.co.uk) or Sid Young, 21 Manor Close, 840629. Offers of help will be welcome.

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## Traffic crack-down starts

The pilot area board for Malmesbury, which will be fully operational once the new Wiltshire Council is in place in the spring, has begun tackling traffic speeds and large goods vehicles on the B4040 and surrounding minor roads. These were identified as problems by local residents.

The police have already started monitoring areas where speeding has been reported including Sherston. If the monitoring confirms a high level of speeding, they will take enforcement action.

The problem of large goods vehicles (LGVs) using local roads has continued for many years. While the majority of LGVs is essential to the local economy, some are using the area as a through route.

For example, two or three car transporters drive through the village every few months.

This type of vehicle needs to be reported to county council officers who can take the matter up with the owners. The B4040 is not a designated freight route.

If you see a vehicle you suspect is on a through journey, please note the time, date, location, registration number and details of apparent ownership. Give this information to the parish clerk Sarah Wood on 840351 or email [clerk@sherston.org.uk](mailto:clerk@sherston.org.uk) and she will pass it to County Hall for investigation.

## New pair of eyes on lookout for crime

A new Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator has stepped forward after a plea in last month's Cliffhanger.

Eric Thacker, of Carpenters Close, has volunteered to take over from retiring co-ordinator Chris Bowyer and the handover will take place during the next couple of months.

In the meantime, Chris and Eric will work together.

The group hopes shortly to fill a couple of warden vacancies and to replace or repair some of the Neighbourhood Watch signs which are beginning to show their age.

Sherston thanks Chris for his hard work over the years and Eric for volunteering.

Inquiries about the scheme should now be addressed to Eric on 841344 or email [eric.thacker@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:eric.thacker@yahoo.co.uk)



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## Sherston Arts Festival

This year's festival will take place from 9 until 18 October.

The programme will include concerts, exhibitions, competitions and a scarecrow trail. The organisers will begin planning meetings in January so, if you would like to assist or make suggestions, please get in touch with Heather Martin (840375), Julia Leyden (840195) or Gill Ashley (840993).

In particular, they are looking for help fundraising and organising the young people's concert but all offers of assistance will be accepted.

## Rattlebone boules league

The boules league prize-giving and buffet will be on Wednesday 14 January, starting at 7.00pm. All who took part last year are welcome. Anybody who wishes to join in 2009 is also welcome, if only to check out the varied group of people who spend one evening a week in the summer drinking wine and not taking the game of boules too seriously.

'The accounts for 2008 are quite simple,' said organiser Tony Towle. 'The income was derived from 32 teams paying £15 each which equals £480. As the expenses were £230 for the prizes, that left £250 for the buffet.'

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## A glimpse of Christmas past

The bad news is there are fewer High Street businesses now than in our grandfathers' time.

The good news is that, as a result, today's Christmas lights bill is easy on tax payers' pockets.

For at least 20 years, the parish council has hung Christmas lights on High Street business premises.

But, says local historian Cilla Liddington, they could not have afforded it in her father's time. There would have been too many businesses.

From the 1920s onwards, there were no fewer than five public houses: The Rattlebone, The Foresters Arms, The Bell, The Swan commercial hotel and The Angel hotel.

There were two bake houses where Frank Thompson and Mr W J Vining baked bread, cakes, pastries and even the family Christmas cakes.

Then there were: greengrocer and fishmonger Billy Thompson; Ye Olde Balconee guest house; grocers Billy Camm and Tom Dore; tailor Herbert Smith (Lord Cork); haberdasher Miss Dicks; grocer and ironmonger George Platt; chemist and veterinary surgeon Duncan Neale; bootmaker Simeon Mills; blacksmith Arthur Merchant; barber Jack Sheppard; and even an office to record parish births, deaths and marriages.

'The cost of putting Christmas lights on all these buildings would have been too much,' said Cilla. 'But it's good to dream of how dazzlingly bright the street would have looked then.'

'How things have changed.'

## Dorothy House hospice

Last year there was a successful garden party in Sherston for Dorothy House hospice and another will be held on 4 July at Bybrook, Bustlers Hill.

The hospice is based at Winsley near Bath. It is a beautiful old mansion which has been converted and fitted with the most up-to-date equipment and is staffed by caring and efficient people who look after the terminally ill.

Every year, many events raise money to support what seems like a bottomless pit. Nobody is turned away from Dorothy House and a lot of money is raised locally by various means.

It has now been decided to set up a local group for the hospice. This is based in Malmesbury and is being run by people from Malmesbury and the villages.

There have been two meetings where interested people have gathered and offered their help.

The next meeting is to be held at 7pm on 7th January at the Kings Arms, Malmesbury. Anybody interested will be welcome. More information can be obtained from Beryl Clampton on 841201 who can put you in contact with the people in the Malmesbury group.

If you wish to know more about the hospice, information can be obtained from The Dorothy House Hospice, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire. BA15 2LE

Tel: 01225 722988 [www.dorothyhouse.co.uk](http://www.dorothyhouse.co.uk)

## Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2008

House-to-house collections	£691.46
Shops and businesses	£556.90

Remembrance Day church collections:

Sherston Parish Church	£419.50
Luckington Parish Church	£142.05

Donations:

Sherston Branch Royal British Legion	£100.00
Sherston Parish Council	£ 42.00
Sherston Congregational Church	£25.00

Wreaths	£ 54.00
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Total: £2,030.91

A big thank you to -

Poppy collectors: Mrs K Evans, Mr M Hillier, Mr M Poole, Mr L Price, Mr M Sparrow, Mr G Stephens, Mr E Thacker and Mr J Waite

Businesses: Carpenters Arms, Post Office Stores, Rattlebone, Sherston School, Sunday Papers, Tolsey Surgery and Tucks and a special thank you to Kath Evans who helped us check and certify the money collected

from John and Gill Sparrow - honorary organisers.

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## Newcomers boost music scene

Sherston will this month benefit for the second time from the arrival of the Amberley Chamber Choir conductor.

The choir's founder and conductor Harry Lyall moved to Sherston with his wife Ann last year. Ann is music director of the Bath branch of the Society of Recorder Players.

Since the Amberley Chamber Choir's inception in 1983, it has given most of its more than 100 concerts in Gloucestershire.

But this year, for the second time, it will perform in Sherston Parish Church.

The music will range from a piece by Tallis, born about 1505, to works by Parry and Stanford who composed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. On the way, it will take in continental greats including Lassus, Handel and Bruckner and one of England's greatest, Purcell.

The programme can be seen as a brief survey of European sacred music up to, but not including, the moderns.

'Those who attended the last concert will certainly want to come again,' said supporter Heather Martin. 'Don't miss an evening of beautiful music, excellently performed.'

The concert will take place on Saturday 24 January at 7.30pm and the choir will be joined by a consort of recorders led by Debbie Nicholas.

Tickets, which include a glass of mulled wine, are £6 will be on sale in the post office and on the door. Proceeds will benefit the church.

## Jacks and Jills needed for boules

Sherston clubs could suffer if more volunteers don't step forward for Boules Week.

Planning for this year's event must start now, said boules committee chairman Tony Weedon.

But, he added: 'Despite earlier pleas we're still short of new committee members.'

'If we don't get them, the week's events will be extremely difficult to organise and village clubs and other organisations could lose their annual injection of funds.'

The first meeting for 2009 will be on Thursday 22 January at 8pm in the Rattlebone.

'It really isn't too onerous a task,' said Tony. 'We meet once a month up to July always in one of the local pubs.'

'Please come along; your help will be much appreciated.'

For further information, contact Tony on 841377.



Clay modelling, papier mâché, glass painting, embroidery, fabric painting and appliqué are all on offer to Sherston youngsters.

For ten years, the nine-year-olds and over have been meeting in the village hall on Monday nights to make craft items and gifts with leaders Heather Martin and Gloria Pugh. They really enjoy learning new skills and taking home their hand-crafted items.

If you are interested in joining, please contact Sue Ormiston on 840694.

*The Cliffhanger would like to feature a different club, organisation or society each month, so if you are able to supply some text and images describing what you do, please send them to [editorial@sherstoncliffhanger.co.uk](mailto:editorial@sherstoncliffhanger.co.uk) or drop hard copy into the Post Office.*

## Village hall 200+ club

There is still time for new members to return their application forms to the post office where extra copies are available.

Six pounds ensures entry in every monthly prize draw for 2009 and support for the village hall.

Existing members will be contacted about renewals during January.

November winners

1 Martin Ward (no. 120)	£10	5 Pat Crombie (no. 205)	£6
2 P.Verard (no. 209)	£9	6 Sally Stratton (no. 226)	£5
3 Jean Poole (no. 44)	£8	7 Avice Kress (no. 118)	£4
4 Nick Holland (no. 78)	£7		

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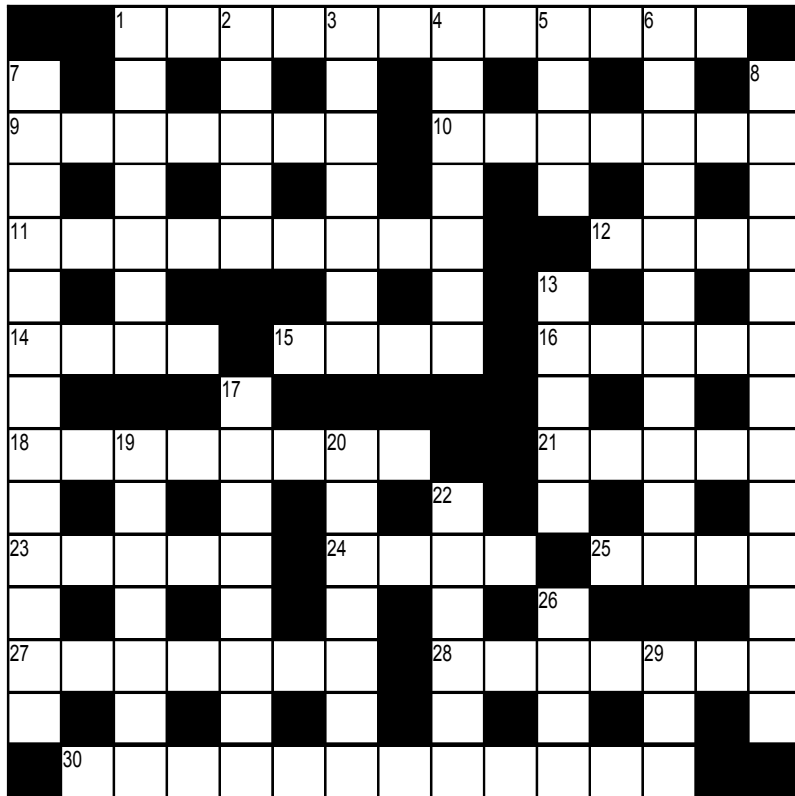
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# Cliffhanger Crossword No 3



## Clues down

2. French friend? No – a type of acid! (5)
3. Trade name of what you may hand to someone when blessing them? (7)
4. Name in France lit up the French (7)
5. Lear changed into a nobleman? (4)
6. In Sherston, Roscoe's equivalent of what was named after Tim Henman at Wimbledon? (7,4)
7. Is Chelsea v Real arranged without Arsenal's leader? At the Rattlebone, this team play a very different game! (3,10)
8. 2008 boules tournament named after one whose ashes are spread on the Great Mangold Field (6,7)
13. Is Lee upset by Mrs Harvey, Boules Committee secretary? (5)
17. Like the Rattlebone's crumble, for example, designed indoors? (4,4)
19. Before plate, type or magnetics (for example), vote for upwardly mobile gold? (7)
20. After 10, when John saw off Canute? (7)
22. Unit of astronomical distance gets into a bad scrape! (6)
26.  $20 \times 2 - 32$ ? That equals nought! (4)
29. 28, for example. Not 13 or 23! (3)

## Christmas Crossword answers

First of all, apologies are due for the number of small errors that appeared in the clues to the Christmas Jumbo and were entirely the fault of the compiler! 16 ac should have read 4,6 rather than 4,7; 1 down should have referred to what was sent rather than brought; Tom Lamb is of course not an anagram of 'tombola' (oops!) and Bell was the pen-name of the Brontes, not the other way round. Hopefully none of these errors made the puzzle impossible!

## Clues across:

1. Easton Grey producers of fine mustards follow the French chaps to the outskirts of Tours (12)
9. Have a good look at old African dictator in river (7)
10. Great Lakes city where the Lone Ranger's assistant swallowed some gold? (7)
11. In France, a little farmyard creature that 7 will aim at (9)
12. Slobodan Milosevic, for example, or Radovan Karodic – leaders of Southern European Revolutionary Brigade? (4)
14. Flat – or how the snow was on The Feast of Stephen? (4)
15. Bar supporting wheels that upset Alex (4)
16. Failure, or what you'll be if you're always a long way from the 11! (5)
18. What the Rattlebone, for example, may have been called in days of yore (8)
21. Wilts, for example, or a river in Malawi? (5)
23. I, a Frenchman? Certainly not! I'm Mrs Johnston of Sherston! (5)
24. Holiday enjoyed by ten Roman mothers? (4)
25. Part of snowflake used to counter attack from the air? (4)
27. Hectic routine people come to Sherston to escape, perhaps? (3,4)
28. Nicholas – provider of the bear necessities (7)
30. Type of wine with a five pound coin provided by pub in Brokenborough (4,3,5)

The answers in full were as follows:

**Clues across:** 1. Page and monarch forth they went; 14. Parsons; 15. Rest; 16. Last eleven; 17. Teeth; 18. Inn; 19. Rattlebone; 23. Apres ski; 24. Inept; 24. Shear Class; 26. Wisest; 29. Gathers; 30. Urge; 33. Arak; 34. Squire; 35. Xmas eve; 36. Shortridge; 39. Grip; 40. Reseek; 41. Carpenters; 42. French hens; 44 & 60dn. Very God; 46. Ted; 48. Boomerang; 50. Relish; 51. Anna; 53. Nine ladies; 55. Sale; 56. Rabbi; 57. Sheep; 59 & 49dn. Chefs Table; 61. Gent; 62. Issue; 63. Trouble House; 66. Seven swans; 68. Topless; 72. Ion; 74. Morris Dance; 78. Reading; 79. Moron; 80. Urn; 81. Joyless; 83. Picaroons; 84. Tombola; 85. Tutti; 86. To ride in a one horse open sleigh.

**Clues down:** 1. Partridges; 2. Greenest; 3. Amphitheatre; 4. Darkness; 5. Odour; 6. Asset; 7. Carol; 8. Out for a duck; 9. Tolley surgery; 10. Tosca; 11. Eyebrow; 12. Elvis; 13. Ten sixteen; 20. Adhere; 21. Tricklements; 22. Encashes; 27. I saw three ships; 28. Eleven pipers; 31. RER; 32. Expect; 33. Aggrieve; 37. Our; 38. Intro; 41. Cat and Custard Pot; 42. Friar; 44. Vine; 45. Shoppers; 47. Dancer; 48. Bells; 51. Alight; 52. Fifteen eleven; 54. Diet; 58. Goughs; 61. Gestapo; 64. Badminton; 65. Semiarid; 67. Amoretti; 69. Prancer; 70. Signori; 71. Triumph; 73. Nausea; 75. Indoor; 76. Amstel; 77. On high; 81. Jade; 82. Yarp.

And finally...the compiler is fast running out of ideas for locally-oriented crosswords, so if anybody else would like to have a go at devising a puzzle, ideally with some of the answers related to the local community, please feel free to drop your idea to us at [editorial@sherstoncliffhanger.co.uk](mailto:editorial@sherstoncliffhanger.co.uk) or to the post office.



# Ex-pat news



Many Sherston residents may remember the McGuigans. Chris was an enthusiastic member of 1016. Chris, Suzie and their children Kieran (12) and Saskia (9) emigrated to Canada in October 2007.

They live on Bowen Island just over the water from Vancouver. Chris is currently a data analyst at UBC (University of British Columbia).

Paul Ormiston, who is in regular contact with the McGuigans, posed these questions to them.

## How long have you lived in Canada now?

We've lived in Canada for just over a year now. Although we had a brief three-month spell in Switzerland before coming here. So I was already prepared for driving on the 'wrong' side of the road.

## Have the McGuigans picked up the local accent yet?

Saskia's accent started changing as soon as she started school but she can switch in and out at will.

Kieran took longer, partly because he got a lot of attention from the girls in his class because of his cute accent.

In the last couple of months, I've noticed he goes totally native when talking to his friends.

Suzie hasn't lost her accent at all and mine is holding fairly firm but we are both beginning to change the T sound to Ds now, like Budder instead of Butter.

There are only so many times you can take people saying, 'Pardon me'.

The kids correct us on things like trousers/pants crisp/chips.

## Kieran and Saskia, how does school compare with England?

The school here is great. It has a huge gym hall and there is a forest behind the school that we play in.

We both really like it here. We catch a big yellow bus to school so that's different. Most things are the same but the school is bigger.

Kieran doesn't go to high school until September 2009 so that's another difference. He would have started in 2007 in England.

## Chris, describe your journey to work?

Bowen Island is a smallish island a couple of miles off the coast of North Vancouver.

My commute consists of a five-minute drive into Snug Cove where I park the car, go into the Snug Cafe, get a hot foaming latte and walk down to the dock to wait for the 7am water taxi to Granville Island in the heart of Vancouver.

It takes about 25 minutes on a small 12-seater boat; see [www.giwt.ca](http://www.giwt.ca) for a picture of the boat. It is sometimes quite rough but I'm rapidly developing my sea legs. On most days it's good though. You round Atkinson Point where there's a lighthouse and then you see the cityscape lit up in front of you and reflected in the water. On clear days, you

see the sun rising over the city with Mount Baker looming in the background.

Once we dock at Granville, a short walk and a 20-minute bus ride gets me to the university. Beats driving on the M4 to Aztec West everyday!

**Suzie, you now live on an island. Is there a good sense of community and what sort of events do you and the family get involved in? Is there a boules competition?**

There are lots of community events. Canada Day was a special one and the Bowfest is similar to Sherston's carnival week. There's a lantern parade for lighting the Christmas lights



and Hallowe'en is a huge deal here. People go to great lengths to turn their gardens into graveyards or make their houses into haunted houses.

Saskia took to the stage at this year's Bowfest. Check out <http://www.flickr.com/photos/28578602@N06/sets/72157606912891148/> for some pictures.

Although there're about 3,500 people on the island, there is a very strong community spirit. No boules yet but maybe we can introduce that next year?

## What do you each miss or prefer from the UK?

For me, it's beer and bacon; neither are quite the same here. Architecture here is lacking to say the least.

For Suzie, it's chocolate and Indian curries. We can get Curly Wurlys from the English Shop along with things like Heinz Baked Beans but they cost a small fortune. And while there really are lots of restaurants and from every culture imaginable here, curry houses are quite hard to find.

And of course, we all miss our friends from Sherston.

## What do you each like most about living in Canada?

In Canada, I like the multi-cultural aspect. You hear so many languages and all sorts of stories about how people got here. The scenery is breath-taking: mountains, oceans, islands. And the wildlife is so close: eagles, deer, woodpeckers, dolphins.

Suzie loves the feeling of security you get from the island which means she feels safer letting the children do more on their own. Most people leave their doors unlocked here still.

The most surprising aspect I've found is that I am having to 'translate' quite a lot. There are so many English words and phrases that are common to us but never used here. Simple things like a 'fringe' is not a term understood here; they call them 'bangs'.

## Any messages to anyone in Sherston?

We hope you are all well and, if you decide to pop by this way, give us a call and we'll get the kettle on.

We heartily recommend BC, Vancouver or Bowen Island for holidays.

All in all, we feel very at home here.

*Cliffhanger hopes this article will encourage other ex-pats from Sherston to write of their experiences living abroad. If you are in contact with any, feel free to submit some text and images to [editorial@sherstoncliffhager.co.uk](mailto:editorial@sherstoncliffhager.co.uk) or leave hard copy at the post office. Don't forget The Cliffhanger is available worldwide at [www.sherston.org.uk](http://www.sherston.org.uk)*

## Winter safety

With the darker colder nights approaching fast, the time for turning up the heating has arrived. Many of us in Wiltshire have open fires and woodburners as a source of heating.

### Chimney fires can be prevented

#### Keep it clean

Your chimney must be kept clean to prevent fires and structural damage to your property. Clean chimneys also help the environment by assisting the complete combustion of the fuel, reducing emissions in the atmosphere. Regular cleaning of your chimney or flues eliminates the build-up of soot and clears obstructions such as bird and animal nests, leaves and debris.

Using a vacuum cleaner alone is not sufficient to clean the chimney properly. Ensure your chimney flue is inspected at regular intervals to prevent fire breaking out of the chimney. Fireguards can prevent serious injury or death. Spark guards can prevent a serious fire in your property.

#### Chimneys using:

- smokeless fuels should be swept at least once a year.
- bituminous coal should be swept at least once a year.
- wood, every 3 months when in use.
- oil, once a year.
- gas, once a year.

Make sure you are not at risk from carbon monoxide poisoning by having appliances installed and serviced by competent engineers. Fit a carbon monoxide detector and never block air bricks, vents or flues.

### Ensure you have working smoke alarms

If you run or organise a group and would like a member of Wiltshire Fire and Rescue to come and talk about keeping safe in the home, please contact Melanie Jezzard community safety advisor on 01380 731188.

Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service – winter safety

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 Francis on 01666 840538  
 (Sherston) for more  
 information.  
 Reference available on  
 request.

### Do you want to know YOUR FAMILY HISTORY

Skeletons in the cupboard,  
 convicts, statesmen, rich  
 man, poor man,  
 beggar man, thief?  
 We all have them and they  
 are hiding there waiting to  
 be found.

Let me find them for you.

#### Beryl Clampton

Call anytime: 01666 841201  
 or 07850 623517  
 e-mail: beryl@clampton.com

## Thespians wanted

The drama group is on the look-out for lapsed or wannabe theatre types. Actors, directors, producers, set and scenery makers and make-up, hair and costume artists are all needed for the spring production.

Play scripts for the production are already being considered and cast and the resulting play will be presented during the week beginning 13 April.

Further details will be in the next Cliffhanger.

Meanwhile, the group's annual general meeting will be in the British Schoolroom in Cliff Road at 8pm on Thursday 22 January.

For general details, contact the chairman Richard Skeffington on 840092 or secretary Suzanne Price on 840041.

## Busy Hands pre-school

Quiz night raffle and auction prizes  
 Sat 17 Jan 8pm village hall  
 £12 for team of 4

#### raffle prizes

- Tucks - hamper/voucher
- The Rattlebone - bottle of Rioja
- Tracklements - hamper
- Apples and Pears - £25 voucher
- Village shop - gift for raffle
- Westonbirt Arboretum - 2 x family day pass
- Briony's Brownies - 6 bottles of Codrington beer
- Tracklements - hamper
- Clobber - £10 voucher
- Shear Class - gift pack
- Cotswold Wildlife Park - ticket for 1 adult and 1 child
- Colour Me Beautiful - voucher for a make-up consultation
- Playspace Bristol - 2 family passes
- Lucy Tom - tablecloth
- Real Boar Company - packet of salami

#### auction prizes

- Whatley Manor Aquarius Spa - weekday evening spa x 2
- The Vine Tree - dinner for 2
- Coco Bay - £75 voucher
- Signed Bath rugby ball
- Signed Worcester rugby ball
- Duchy Home Farm large organic box

## The Rattlebone

January special offers - prix fixe menu on Mondays  
 2 courses £10.95 and 3 courses for £13.95  
 12-2pm 6-8.30pm

Tuesday evenings 2 main course meals for the price  
 of 1 from the a la carte menu  
 (cheapest meal free) 6 - 9.30pm

Wednesdays are steak nights - 2 10oz sirloins and  
 bottle of Paso del Sol Merlot for £25  
 6 - 9.30pm

Further details contact 840871 or  
[www.therattlebone.co.uk](http://www.therattlebone.co.uk)

# Regular events in Sherston

## Holy Cross church

The Coffee Shop -

Fair Trade tea and coffee with homemade cakes

Thursday mornings from November until April

Pause for prayer

Church of the Holy Cross is now open from 7.30am until 8am every Wednesday for silent prayer or quiet reflection.

All are welcome for all or some of the time.

For further details see the *Parish Life*

## Congregational church

Communion service

Sun 4 Jan 11am

'The Christian Birth' DVD by Charles Middleton

Sun 11 Jan 11am

Service taken by Charles Middleton

Sun 18 Jan 11am

Informal praise followed by coffee

Sun 25 Jan 11am

For further details see the *Parish Life*

## Sherston Methodist Church

Services every Sunday at 10.30am apart from 3rd Sunday in the month when service is held at Luckington

For further details contact Cyril Hoskins on 841143 or see the *Parish Life*

## Village hall 200+ club

Monthly draw prizes ranging from £10 to £4 for a £6 annual stake. If any new members of the village would like to join, contact either Mary Goulding on 840794, Joyce Gleed 840744 or Gwen Mason 840660.

## Whist drive

A whist drive is held in the village hall on the second Friday in the month (9th January) at 7.30pm for 7.45pm. Admission £1.50. All profits help maintain the village hall.

## Ladies' swimming club

The club is open to ladies from Sherston and the surrounding area. It is sociable, friendly and non-competitive. We swim in the new pool at Westonbirt School on Wednesdays between 8pm and 9.30 p.m. The cost is £35 for 15 weeks. To join, phone Annabel Clifton on 840592 or Heather Martin on 840375.

## Sherston Young Craft Group

For children aged 9 and over. We meet on Monday evenings in Sherston Village Hall 6.45 to 8.15. The cost, inclusive of all materials, is £2.50 per evening payable in advance each half term. To join, please contact Sue Ormiston on 840694.

## Sherston Senior Club

Meet every other Tuesday starting 13th January in the British School Room at 2.00pm

For further details contact Cyril Hoskins on 841143

*If you run a club, society or organisation in Sherston that holds regular events such as the above and wishes to be listed, please supply your details and we will add them to the Regular events list. If you have a particular event then please write a short piece about it and we can include it as an article and put the details in the What's On list for that month.*

# WHAT'S ON

## Sherston

### The Rattlebone

#### Boule League prizegiving

The boules league prize-giving and buffet will be on Wednesday 14 January, starting at 7.00pm. All who took part last year are welcome.

Further details 840871 or [www.therattlebone.co.uk](http://www.therattlebone.co.uk)

### The Carpenter's Arms

#### Race night Sat 17 Jan 9pm

#### Karaoke night Sat 24 Jan 9pm

#### Alison Dawn singing live

Sat 31 Jan 8.45pm

'Rod Stewart' will perform this January - check board outside for dates

Further details 840665

### Concert by the Amberley Chamber Choir in the parish church

Sat 24 Jan 7.30pm £6 incl a glass of mulled wine on sale at the door or in advance from the post office

### Busy Hands pre-school Annual quiz night

Sat 17 Jan 8pm at the village hall £12 for team of 4  
Tickets from the Post Office

Further details contact 840232

### Sherston Arts Festival

Anyone interested in getting involved with the organisation of the 2009 Sherston Arts Festival 9 - 18 Oct please come forward. Planning meetings will be held in spring

Further details contact Heather Martin 840375

Julia Leyden 840195 Gill Ashley 840993

### Sherston Drama Group AGM at the British School Room

We are on the lookout for new or lapsed actors/directors/producers/set and scenery makers/make-up, hair and costume artists Thurs 22 Jan 8pm

Further details contact Richard Skeffington 840092 or Suzanne price 840041

## Westonbirt

### The Arboretum

Summer concerts: 2 more still to be announced.

Tickets now on sale for:

McFly Fri 19 Jun £26.50 + booking fee Vanessa Mae

Sat 18 July £29.50 Ticket hotline 01842 814612

Weddings at Westonbirt - plan the whole day in one shot

Sat 31 Jan Contact Maureen Gobbett 0117 956 4769

or maureen.gobbett@btinternet.com

Further details contact 880220 or [www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk)

### Westonbirt School

Spring lecture: Conquering the desert of death

Charles Blackmore Fri 30 Jan 7.30pm A first-hand account by the leader of a remarkable Anglo-Chinese joint trek of 1,000 miles across the highly dangerous Taklamakan Desert by camel - the first ever to cross it from east to west. (Retiring collection in aid of the victims of the 2008 Chinese earthquake)

Further details 880333 or [www.westonbirt.gloucs.sch.uk](http://www.westonbirt.gloucs.sch.uk)

## Grittleton

### Rural Arts Wiltshire

Proteus Theatre Company: The Snow Queen

Fri 30 Jan 6.30pm

Further details contact 01249 782798 or

[www.ruralartswiltshire.org.uk](http://www.ruralartswiltshire.org.uk)

## Cirencester

### Sundial Theatre at Cirencester College

Theatre: The King Of Spain's Daughter

Wed 21 Jan 8pm £12

Film: Brick Lane

Wed 28 Jan 7.30pm £5

Concert: Young-Choon Park (piano)

Sat 31 Jan 3pm £11

Further details 01285 654228 or

[www.cirencester.ac.uk/sundial](http://www.cirencester.ac.uk/sundial)

## Easton Grey

### Whatley Manor

Jazz Sunday lunch with the Solent City Jazzmen

Sun 18 Jan 12 - 3.30pm

£37 including 3 course lunch in Le Mazot

Further details contact 834026 or [www.whatleymanor.com](http://www.whatleymanor.com)

## Corsham

### The Pound, Corsham

INU folk concert

Sat 17 Jan 7.30pm £10

Orion IV string quartet

Wed 21 Jan 1.30pm £6

Film: Mamma Mia!

Thurs 22 Jan 11am & 7.30pm £5

Further details from box office 01249 701628 or

[www.poundarts.org.uk](http://www.poundarts.org.uk)

## Uley

### Prema rural arts centre

Evening classes for adults including Strictly Ballroom, yoga, pilates, life drawing, pottery, knitting, drawing for beginners classes for young people include Prema dance company and animating the page

see website for course details

Exhibition - Bristol artist Janny Crowe

10 Jan - 21 Feb 10am - 5pm

Concert - country music with Hank Wangford

Sat 31 Jan 8pm £12

Further details contact 01453 860703 or [www.prema.demon.co.uk](http://www.prema.demon.co.uk)

## Bath

### Theatre Royal

Jack and The Beanstalk

Thurs 18 Dec - Sun 25 Jan 2009 7.30pm / 8pm £7-22

Moscow City Ballet: Swan Lake

Mon 26 - Thurs 29 Jan 7.30pm

matinee 2.30 on 28 & 29 Jan £17.50 - £36

Moscow City Ballet: Sleeping Beauty

Fri 30 - Sat 31 Jan 7.30pm

matinee 2.30 on 28 & 29 Jan £17.50 - £36

Future shows to book ahead for: God of Carnage,

Lloyd George Knew My Father, Life & Beth, Duet for

One, Waiting for Godot

For further details contact 01225 448844 or

[www.theatreroyal.org.uk](http://www.theatreroyal.org.uk)

## Charlton Park

### WOMAD - Early Bird tickets go on sale

Fri 24th - Sun 27th July 2009

Early Bird three-day tickets £110 on sale till Dec 16.

Teenage ticket £60 (14-17 accompanied by an adult) and SN16 residents' tickets £75 (max six tickets per SN16 household)

Further details 0870 759 96623 or [www.womad.org](http://www.womad.org)

## Cheltenham

### Cheltenham Folk Festival - tickets on sale now

13-15 Feb 2009

Further details contact 01242 775893. or

[www.cheltenhamtownhall.org.uk](http://www.cheltenhamtownhall.org.uk)

[/folkfestival-geninfo.asp](http://folkfestival-geninfo.asp)

## Stroud

### The Cotswold Playhouse

The Secret Garden

(musical)

14-17 & 21-24 Jan

7.30pm £11

Further details contact box

office at Stroud Tourist

Information Centre

01453 760960 or

[www.cotswoldplayhouse.co.uk](http://www.cotswoldplayhouse.co.uk)