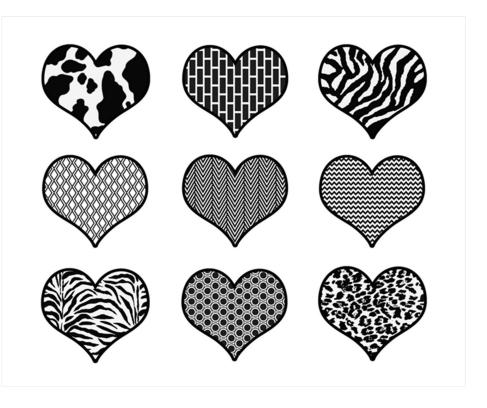
## **CRATFIELD NEWS**

## February 2024



#### **APOLOGIES**

Our apologies to any who received a somewhat speckled or slightly stripey copy of last month's Cratfield News. Our printer was finally running out of steam, if not ink. We have now purchased a new machine, so hopefully we shall have pristine copies for the foreseeable future.

Don't forget we are always on the look out for items of interest for the magazine, fact or fiction, or even a bit of both(!) would be gratefully received. Sue (Ed.)

#### January Quiz at the Village Hall

A very big thank you to everyone who came to test their wits on a dark and cold evening. The quiz was run in aid of The Banyan Tree and raised the excellent sum of £100 for the charity. Although not a huge amount by UK standards this achieves a lot in India, for example it will pay six weeks' salary for one of our teachers. <a href="https://thebanyantree.org.uk/index.php/cdsa/cdsa-education/">https://thebanyantree.org.uk/index.php/cdsa/cdsa-education/</a>

Special thanks to the quiz master, Ian, and of course Margaret, who was behind the scenes organising and promoting the event. Thanks too for the luxury raffle prize, a bottle of Laphroaig whisky, donated by one of our supporters. All very much appreciated.

Several people were unable to attend because of illness or family commitments but it is planned to make the quizzes a regular event and hopefully they will be able to join us in the future.

Peter & Sue

#### Thank You

What with magazine deadlines this is the first occasion we have had to publicly thank everyone who got involved in preparing the Church for Christmas, Reading, lessons or serving the mince pies and mulled wine at the carol service. Thank you, your efforts are much appreciated by us and our visitors – rarely a month goes by when there isn't a comment in the visitors book commenting on how well kept the church building is.

Cratfield Parochial Church Council

#### **CRATFIELD QUIZ NIGHT**

#### **VILLAGE HALL**

#### FRIDAY 16TH FEBRUARY 7.30PM

Teams of 4 - £2.50 per person

## Light refreshments included Bring your own tipple

#### Raffle

#### All proceeds to the Banyan Tree

#### Correlations 1 by Liebre

Put into groups of four, words that have a connection and name that connection.

Mother	Queue	Elephant	Upstage
Line	Exit	Tail	Miniscule
Row	Section	Queen	Ticket
Board	File	Prompt	Noise

#### Answers on page 9

Answers to Last month's Cryptic Crossword also compiled by Liebre whose name was unfortunately omitted.

Across	11 Exe	19 Sky	Down	6 Tempest	17 Blanket
1 Seesaw	12 Biomass	20 At sea	1 Snowman	7 Hale	19 Sofa
4 Coat	14 Nib	23 Frozen sti	ff 2 Ethel	9 Toboggan	21 Sofia
8 Hypothermi	a 16 But	24 Dark	3 Alphabet	13 Assaying	22 Deer
10 Melba	18 Outages	25 Aghast	5 Over	15 Boyhood	

#### Interesting/useless information (as it's February)

Gilbert White (1720-1793) "parson-naturalist", a pioneering English naturalist, ecologist and ornithologist, Best known for his *Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne* was the first person to use **X** as a kiss in 1763.

## History Corner



#### WWII EVACUEES IN LAXFIELD

In the early days of the Second World War it was thought beneficial to send children away from the big cities which were more vulnerable to bombing. The destination was the countryside with all the culture shocks that that entailed. Here are extracts from first-hand accounts by Laxfield evacuees.

John Maclanaghan from Dagenham, Essex: 'At the time I was evacuated I was eight yeas old and went with my two brothers. Victor, who was twelve and Ronald who was ten...I had a ticket pinned on me with my name and address and I was carrying my gas mask... We were then put on a coach and given a bar of chocolate. We then went on a train and eventually ended up in Laxfield Village Hall. 'I can clearly remember us all sitting in a line and people walking up and down looking at us to see who they would take home... 'We went to school the next day and couldn't believe how small it was... 'I don't ever remember hearing of an evacuee being badly treated. They all seemed happy and looked on their guardians as if they were their parents. We were certainly very lucky to be living at the Mill [Goram's]... The Ministry of Food paid us to collect rose hips for making syrup. They also gave us a penny for every magpie egg we found as they ate the farmers' crops. Also a penny for a mouse tail and sixpence for a rat's tail. 'I have wonderful memories of riding the Suffolk Punch horses in the harvesting and haymaking season.' John was a happy evacuee. Not everyone felt the same way about the experiences of being uprooted from their home and family. Pauline Teesdale: 'I'm afraid my memories are not very happy ones. I was almost nine years old and my younger brother, Gordon, just six when we were billeted. That was the first upset as my mother expected Keith, my older brother, to be with us and look after us. We hardly ever saw him and I was left to be mother to Gordon. I never really settled and I was always hoping to go home the next day... [Our quardians] were good and kind to us and treated us just the same way as their own children...although I didn't appreciate it way back in 1939. We corresponded until she died... I never did get over the horror of the outside loos.'

One account describes the dangers of war even in the countryside, especially for fearless, curious children. **Robin (Spider) Webber** from Hammersmith, London: 'I used to visit Horham, one of the airbases, with friends...I do not remember any tight security. We'd cycle right on to the airfield... There was live cannon ammunition everywhere. We'd collect the shells and take them back and hide them in the outbuildings... First we'd

remove the shells and collect all the explosives in the form of a cartridge. This was piled into a heap with a small trail across the cart shed floor, touch the end with a match and watch the firing snake shoot across the floor... I'll never know how we avoided injury.'

One boy was not so lucky: 'Occasionally bombs would be dropped. We understood these were German planes, who were dumping their load to return home as quickly as possible. We'd bike to the crater to look for shrapnel... Occasionally dozens of incendiary bombs would be dropped in the fields... Some of the older lads would collect the unexploded incendiaries and try and remove the explosive. Peter was tragically blinded doing this.' The countryside offered some less perilous pursuits too. **Keith Parker** from Dagenham, Essex: 'Spring and summer were better times for getting about and we roamed the countryside. I remember cycling to Halesworth to see Walter Smith, who was stationed there with the army. We went to the woods at Ubbeston and I marvelled at the masses of primroses. We had never seen anything like it and with permission we uprooted some plants, put them in a shoebox and sent them home to Dagenham for planting in our own garden. 'I returned home in the summer of 1940 when I reached the age of fourteen. Ironically, I started work in London at the height of the blitz but that, as they say, is another story!'

Finally from a letter to a newspaper in 1990, someone who really appreciated his time in Laxfield. **James Orr**, Essex: 'I and my older brother were delivered to the back door of an ancient timber framed farmhouse late at night after travelling from the village of Laxfield, Suffolk – my first ride in a car. 'The night was dark, there were farm cats, wind in the trees, no electric light, only candles. An old lady in a funny shaped wide but low door, a brick floor. I was seven years old. The old lady had a shawl over her head which she held on one side. This very kind old lady I stayed with for three years. She must have been so hurt as that first night, over the noise, I was screaming that I wouldn't live with a witch. We have laughed about it since. I soon learned to be a farm boy and feel privileged and stronger to know the ways of old

Hope to see you at the Laxfield & District Museum next season starting on Good Friday. Opening times are 2-5 every Saturday & Sunday & Bank Holiday.

Additional opening from 9.30-12.30 on Community Market days.

#### MICHAEL OLIVER

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Cllr Richard Chivers Tel: 07900 187350 - Silverleys Green collection





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#### Down a Blind Alley at Suez or Who Dares, Wins

In October 1984, Nottingham sailed in company with HMS Battleaxe (commanded by a good friend of mine, Paul) to take on the duties of the Armilla Patrol for six months. This was a permanent RN presence in the Gulf to protect tankers and commercial shipping during the lengthy Iraq/Iran war, in which both air and mining attacks had been made on neutral commercial ships. Of course, I was looking forward to my fourth deployment to the Gulf, some 14 years after the last, when Paul and I had both commanded minesweepers.

For this task we were fitted with two Phalanxes - a high rate of fire AA gun, temporary radar absorbent cladding to reduce our visibility to radars, and an early prototype laser gun which was supposed to be shone in the eyes of the pilot of an approaching aircraft. It was very rudimentary and unreliable, and I didn't trust or like it. The first two were very useful, but I wasted little time exercising the laser gun. The passage via Gibraltar to Port Said and the Suez Canal was straightforward. Traditionally, warships always lead Suez convoys, with British or French warships first because the Suez Canal Company was originally Franco-British owned. In those days, the southbound convoy set off from Port Said around midnight, carrying an Egyptian canal pilot solely to advise, and anchored soon after dawn two thirds of the way down in the Great Bitter Lake, to allow the northbound convoy to pass. We duly sailed at midnight, Battleaxe leading.

Around 2am a thick fog suddenly descended. We couldn't even see the canal bank, a mere 50 yards away nor Battleaxe ahead of us. In these circumstances it was common for ships to tie up to the canal bank, known as "garing up" and wait for things to improve; the merchant ship immediately behind us had already done so, effectively blocking the canal in both directions. Our pilot was volubly and loudly unhappy when I explained how we could, and would, keep going, arguing vehemently that we too should gare up. However, after a radio chat with Paul, we decided to continue, using a combination of Infra-red binoculars, radars which in those days gave us relatively limited information, and the "Mark 1 Eyeball." We trusted each other, and were confident that we could safely continue and anchor "blind" in our allocated anchorage in the Bitter Lake – valuable navigational training and a reasonable risk we thought. Moreover, RN Captains are not allowed to give pilots control of their ships and always remain wholly responsible for their ship's safe navigation. Besides, we were not quite sure how to gare up, although we didn't feel we had to tell the pilots that! At this point our pilot "threw a wobbly," declined to help any further and stormed off to bed. This immediately and greatly improved the atmosphere and allowed us to get on with things. We crept silently through the fog, and anchored with some relief, tired but content at

about 7am, a couple of cables<sup>5</sup> apart in exactly the right place, without having seen each other all night. Point made.

As the day warmed up, the fog cleared and in due course we saw the remainder of the convoy entering the Lake and anchoring. Our pilot was due for relief and left us without even saying goodbye, hopefully to recover his temper and his bonhomie! A rather more relaxed pilot joined us for the last, very straightforward, part of the transit, after the northbound convoy had passed us, while Paul and I met on board Battleaxe for a rather sleepy lunch together and congratulated ourselves that we had made time for a bit of socialising, and of course for some crucial operational planning!

The second part of the transit started in early afternoon, so some of the merchant ships behind us had little chance to anchor for a break. At around 1330 we weighed anchor and entered the last section of the canal, finally emerging at dusk in the port of Suez, at the top of the Red Sea, heading south for Aden and, in the case of Paul and I, a very welcome early night.

If you look at the Suez Canal on Google maps you will get a better idea of these events, although the canal in those days was narrower than today and had only two places where convoys could pass each other.

#### Jeremy Blackham

- 1. Prime Minister Disraeli bought 44% of the shares in 1875 because the canal was crucial for the Raj. We remained part owners until the canal was nationalised by Colonel Nasser in 1956.
- 2. The canal has been further widened since 1984 to allow very large commercial ships through.
- 3. Naval slang for the very valuable and greatly under-rated human eye.
- 4. With one exception. In the Panama Canal, pilots have full control because of the complex lock system.
- 5. A cable is 200 yards, or a tenth of a nautical mile.

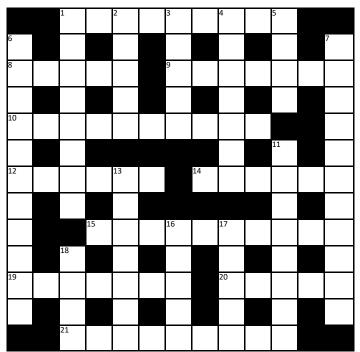
#### **Answers to Correlations**

**Mo**ther, **Min**iscule, **Tick**et, **Sec**tion – words that start with small amounts of time

Elephant, Queen, Board, Noise – can be preceded by white Row, Queue, File, Tail – synonyms for queue Lines, Prompt, Upstage, Exit – theatre items

#### Winter Quick Crossword by Liebre

## Answers next month



- 1. Ice-like crystals over plants and trees (9) 8. Part of title of book by Elizabeth Gaskell
- 9. In a perfect world (7)
- 10. Sometimes mobile window (10)
- 12. Pair with (6)
- 14. Stiffening plant food (5)
- 15. Survive the season (10)
- 19. Be engaged again (7)
- 20. Bug you don't want (1,4) 21. Balm for kissers (9) 18. French stylishness (4)

#### Down

- 1. Diatribe (8)
- 2. Desirable object of some competition
- 3. Tuck, for instance (5)
- 4. Stuff, stuff, stuff (7)
- 5. Might be a fairy, for example (4)
  6. A type of mountain kit? (4,7)
- 7. Subnormal temperature (11)
- 11. Elaborate open design in wood (8)
- 13. Greek café (7)
- 16. What you might need to take sometimes (5)
- 17. Ancient East Anglians (5)

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Tuesdays

Silverleys Green 14.15 - 14.35 and The Poacher 14.45 - 14.55 **January 23<sup>rd</sup>**, February 20<sup>th</sup>, March 19<sup>th</sup>, April 16<sup>th</sup>, May 14<sup>th</sup>, June 11<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, August 6<sup>th</sup>, September 3<sup>rd</sup>, October 1<sup>st</sup>, October 29<sup>th</sup>, November 26<sup>th</sup>, December 24<sup>th</sup>.

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Chris Kitchen tel. no. 01986 798 764, email: chrissie.kitchen@yahoo.com or write to Bell Green Cottage, Cratfield, Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 0BI

#### VILLAGE HALL UPDATE – FEBRUARY

A big thank you to Mark & Tracey Aryaeenia for donating (and installing!) the very smart posts along the end of the Village Hall. Last year, the exterior of the hall was damaged when someone with a tow bar reversed into it and these lovely solid oak posts will help prevent that happening again.

## POP UP PUB - FRIDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY / 1<sup>st</sup> MARCH - DOORS OPEN 6PM

Many thanks to Charlie & Susanne along with Helen, Natalie and Jo who covered the shifts at the January Pop Up Pub. Apologies again for the card machine not working, we have now moved away from that particular payment device and app and are pleased to announce we have a new solution going forward!

Doors open 6pm, with food by Craffield Kitchen – keep an eye on the village Facebook page for the menu – usually announced the Monday before.

## <u>PIE & PUD - SATURDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 6.30 FOR 7PM - BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!</u>

A range of hearty and delicious pies with generous portions followed by a hot pudding with lashings of custard! Bar open for wine & beer / cider by the bottle or can – or bring your own.

Booking is essential as places are limited – e mail <a href="mailto:craffieldvillagehall@gmail.com">craffieldvillagehall@gmail.com</a> with your order – payment is on the night of £15 per person

One Main per person – (all come with peas, carrots & dauphinoise potatoes)
Steak & Mushroom Pie / Chicken, Leek & Bacon Pie / Vegetable Cottage pie (a mix of vegetables and lentils)

One Pudding per person – (please note amendment!)

Sticky Toffee Sponge or Apple Crumble (with lashings and lashings of Custard)

#### **CRATFIELD VILLAGE HALL 100 CLUB - FEBRUARY**

1st prize (£15) - number 46, Sue Seabon / 2nd prize (£10) - number 104, Candy Blackham / 3rd prize (£5) - number 17, Carole Loades. Draw by D Britton. Congratulations to the winners!

#### INDOOR BOWLS - ALTERNATE TUESDAYS

The dates for 2024 are.... Feb 6 & 20 / Mar 5 & 19 / Apr 2 & 16 & 30/ May 28 / June 11 & 25 / July 23 / Aug 6 & 20 / Sept 3 & 17 / Oct 1 & 15 & 29 / Nov 26 / Dec 10

Do come along and have a go – no experience required – all good fun! Tea & Coffee available and there is a suggested donation of £2 to play. Any queries please contact Nigel 07445351861 or Elliott 07963676207.

#### VILLAGE HALL TALKS - DATES TO BE CONFIRMED

We are firming up dates for our next two talks, the first will be 'FROM LONDON TO KATHMANDU ON A DOUBLE DECKER BUS' by Richard Turberville – a journey made in the 1980's during the Golden Temple Riots. A talk featuring maps, photos and many tall tales (including bribing Afghani

tribesmen with cassettes of western music to be allowed to pass on their way...!)

#### CRATFIELD DOG SHOW - SUNDAY 12TH MAY

Watch out for the schedule coming out soon. A fun day out for everyone, even if you do not have a four legged friend (or two!) come along as a spectator and watch classes such as 'best sausage catcher' and 'waggiest tail along with 'Prettiest eyes'. If you have friends or family with a dog – invite them along too!

#### TABLE TOP & CAR BOOT SALE - SATURDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> JUNE

Having a good spring clean in 2024? Fed up falling over things you no longer need in your shed / garage or loft? We are looking at holding a 'Table Top & Car Boot Sale on Saturday 22nd June (with Richard's big Breakfast bap's again) Places will be limited to 10 tables inside and 10 car pitches outside and are £10 each. Register your interest / reserve a place now via cratfieldvillagehall@gmail.com

## CRATFIELD PHOTOGRAPHIC – FRIDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> – SUNDAY 13<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER The categories for 2024 are....

<u>Cratfield Hobbies</u> – what do you do to relax and enjoy as a hobby? Do you bake, write, sew, garden, read, play video games, walk or dance? (my own personal hobby is shopping....!) Think about how you could capture this activity as a photo – the tools or equipment you use as you use it, or resting ready for the next time you return to your hobby or the view as you carry out your hobby. It could be an insight into what the hobby entails, what it means to you or a hobby/project part way through or completed.

**Suffolk Street Scenes** - either deserted or busy, look all around you next time you are in a bustling town or our own quiet village. It could be a classic car parked up outside a terrace of cottages, a busy town on market day or a night time shot of a high street with all the shops shut waiting for the morning.

**All Suffolk Creatures Great & Small** – any Suffolk creatures count! Whether a household pet snoozing in an armchair or in front of a fire, birds on fence / birdfeeder or cattle grazing in a field.

#### **VILLAGE HALL FOR HIRE**

Don't forget our hall is available for hire for a very reasonable price – with a discounted rate for villagers. For enquiries, please contact us on <a href="mailto:cratfieldvillagehall@gmail.com">cratfieldvillagehall@gmail.com</a> or Robert King on 01986 798975

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## Exploring the Scottish Islands – with a collapsible bike! The Outer Hebrides: Welcome to a Different World!



Having written about the Western Isles collectively known as the Inner Hebrides, we're now heading way out west to the Outer Hebrides. Their formation, believe it or not, began with a chunk of landmass moving North that had only just reached the latitude of today's South Africa, 800 million years ago! (It crossed the equator 350 million years ago!) The Outer Hebridean chain can appear as one island (some still

refer to it as 'The Long Island') and, in distant times, it actually was – but, as the landmass settled, the sea made further encroaches, splitting the chain roughly in half with a channel - the Sound of Harris. To the North is situated Harris and Lewis, to the South 'the Uists' – North Uist, Benbecula and South Uist (and a few other islands beneath). There are no fossils on the Uists, as the rocks were

formed before there was any recognisable life on Earth!

When you arrive here, you really feel like you've landed on another planet: the road signs are in Gaelic (the main language spoken here) with, if you're lucky, English in small print beneath. There are no trees, but the land especially in the Uists – is pockmarked with water: lots of it! Viewed from the single-track road, the houses seem randomly scattered in the distance, with not a single tree, hedge or boundary of any kind to separate them. These islands get the brunt of the Atlantic storms and act as a barrier, protecting the inner islands – and the west coast is almost an unbroken stretch of bright white sand. There is much crofting and fishing, the peat is harvested as fuel for the fires - and neighbours chat in a gentle, lilting Gaelic tongue, over a mug of tea or a dram. People are hardy - they make do and mend: some inhabitants on North Uist recently won many thousands of pounds in a lottery and one lucky winner (at 83 years old) said that he was going to splash out on a new wheelbarrow! What would he do with his old one, patched up over many years and with a large hole in it? "Sell it!" he proudly announced!

There is but one main road that takes you down the spine of the Uists – and it's single tracked, with passing places, at that. The road traverses causeways that link the main islands together. Providing these links (which started in 1942) has been seen as crucial towards helping the islands develop an internal economy, and stabilising the population, which is scattered in the south - and numbers 1,300 in North Uist, 1,200 in

Benbecula and 1,800 in South Uist. (Further below lies the island of Barra (965) and Vatersay (90).) In the north, Lewis and Harris – which is the largest offshore island of mainland Britain & Ireland – it's positively bustling with a population of 20,000. Here, the population is concentrated in Stornoway (at 12,000), the rest scattered amongst remote and ancient settlements. Even on this large landmass, the road system on the map looks threadbare, with very few roads venturing inland to link up the coastal settlements. As with many islands, there is evidence of abandoned crofts – and at Gearrannan on



Lewis, there is an entire blackhouse village that has been restored and preserved.

Driving in these islands, you become instantly aware that any vehicles coming towards you acknowledge you – every time! Whether it's a friendly wave, or a more nonchalant raised digit over the steering wheel, you quickly learn to return the favour to every vehicle you pass!

Shops are distinctly low key: I came across a Co-op which looked like a converted Nissen hut and the signage was so small, it was barely noticeable. On another occasion, I needed some butter for my ever-present sliced loaf and jam (which accompanied me for sustenance on all bike rides), so I asked a local man where I could buy some. "Oh, you want the butter shop!" he said, and pointed to a perfectly plain residential property that looked like all the other houses: no sign, no nothing! And sure enough, they sold butter, in greaseproof paper! Things are done very differently here: deliveries for customers are left in red telephone boxes, or in (empty!) dustbins outside homes, their lids strapped down against the wind.

More causeways have been built since I visited, adding to the linked network of islands that can be visited. These are the islands that American Margaret Fay Shaw fell in love with when on a cycling holiday as a teenager; she stayed on South Uist, learning the traditional songs and folklore, before marrying John Lorne Campbell and together they preserved the dying Gaelic culture. This is now a valuable collection of worldwide importance, held at Canna House, on Canna (Inner Hebrides), where the Campbells both lived.

Next month: North Uist, Benbecula & South Uist Andrew Weight

#### Cratfield Parish Council Meeting Dates 2023

Cratfield Village Hall

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 7.30pm Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 7.30pm Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 7.30pm

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 7.30pm

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 7.30pm Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 7.30pm

~ Planning meetings are arranged when required ~ All Parishioners Welcome!

The agenda is displayed 3 days before the meeting on the noticeboards & website. If you would like to add anything to the agenda please contact the Clerk 7 days before the meeting.

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#### Letter from the Vicar

It is hard to believe that it's February already and we are almost at that important point in the Christian year, Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent. It is unfortunate that it falls on February 14<sup>th</sup> this year, so those well-meant and loving chocolates may have to be put away for a while, for those of us who are observant of the season. On the upside, that is just more lovely chocolate for us to enjoy on Easter Day. I hope I am not beginning to sound too much like the Vicar of Dibley here, talking about chocolate!

On a more serious note, this in the past was a hungrier time of the year, when stored food was beginning to run low, and the land was not yet producing the coming year's bounty. The church used this time to fast, to think about Jesus and the sacrifice he made for us all. Christians still observe this as a season of self-denial whether of food or something else tempting. However, in generations past, not having the food to be tempted by, must have made things a lot easier! Now, we have sadly become used to food being something we can waste even, unthinkable in days gone by.

We have lost our dependence on seasons, and even our own farmers to a degree, with food being flown in or shipped in year round. Maybe, with the way the world is and the ever- developing climate emergency, we may be forced back to becoming if not completely self-sustaining, at least more reliant on food from countries nearer to us.

Christians believe that our planet and its resources are God given, and that we are appointed as stewards to care for it. Even if you do not count yourself as a person of faith, but still one of integrity, this may be an important season to tune into what is going on around us all. Together we can think about our food production, and the value of our farming community; to be appreciative of what we do have, and try not to waste it, especially as there are people in our communities who are actually going hungry. Even if we only commit to more careful planning of our own food use, we can make a difference to our planet. Then perhaps we will all have enough left over to give to our foodbanks and to our neighbours who have less than us. I do wish you a happy and joyful Valentine's Day with much love and plenty of chocolate! More than this though, may this be a time of thinking about a better future for us, our neighbours, and an appreciation of all that we have been given. God bless you.

Revd Enid

**WEDNESDAY 14TH - ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE LAXFIELD 7.00PM**For Benefice Services this month please see Church Noticeboard

#### **February Church Services**

Sunday 11th	Sunday 25th
2 Kings2:2-12	Gen 17:1-7,15-16
2 Corinth 4:3-6	Romans 4:13-end
Mark 9:2-9	Mark 8:31-end
6.00pm	9.00am
Evening Prayer	Holy Communion
EP	EP
Reader TBA	Reader TBA
Sidesperson TBA	Sidesperson TBA

#### Keeping the Spirit of Christmas Alive.

It was wonderful that over one hundred people came along to either the carol service or the Christmas day service at Cratfield and I know there were others who would have liked to come along had circumstances allowed. Amongst all that Christmas has become in our secular culture there is something intangible that people recognise in the mystery of the Christmas story – Emmanuel, God with us, even if we can not always put our finger on it or verbalise it fully. But what to do with those feelings now that the decorations are down and we are in the long cold days of winter?

If you attended the Christmas day service you will have been invited to write a prayer in a Christmas card which we could offer up to God. All these prayers were collected up and kept safely, especially if the envelope had been sealed as we had agreed that these would remain private between you and God.

Every week I take the "bag of prayers" along to services across the benefice – and during the service we use the prayers in our worship. I have summarised the "open" prayers on a prayer sheet so far they have travelled as far as Worlingworth – we always remember the sealed prayers too by lighting a candle or even incense as a visible reminder of them.

By the time this note appears in the magazine I will be in Tanzania, and yes I will be taking a copy of your prayers with me but it would also be good to know that they are still being prayed back in Cratfield too so I have left some copies at the back of the church along with a prayer tree. Why not pop in and remember what drew you to church at Christmas. Perhaps pray one of the prayers, add your own prayer or take a prayer sheet.

Of course it would also be great to see you at one of our services on any occasion.

Yours

Clive

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Rev. Enid Pow revenid4rivers@gmail.com 01986 743093

The Vicarage, 15 Noyes Avenue Laxfield IP13 8EB

Assistant Curate Rev. Clive Mobbs 07340 838639

#### Parish Council:

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#### Cratfield News

Editor Sue Eade 01986 798725

suecratmag@aol.com

<u>Treasurer</u> Graham Nixey 07748 907099 <u>Production Manager</u> Peter Sparrow 01986 888505

peter-sparrow@outlook.com

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