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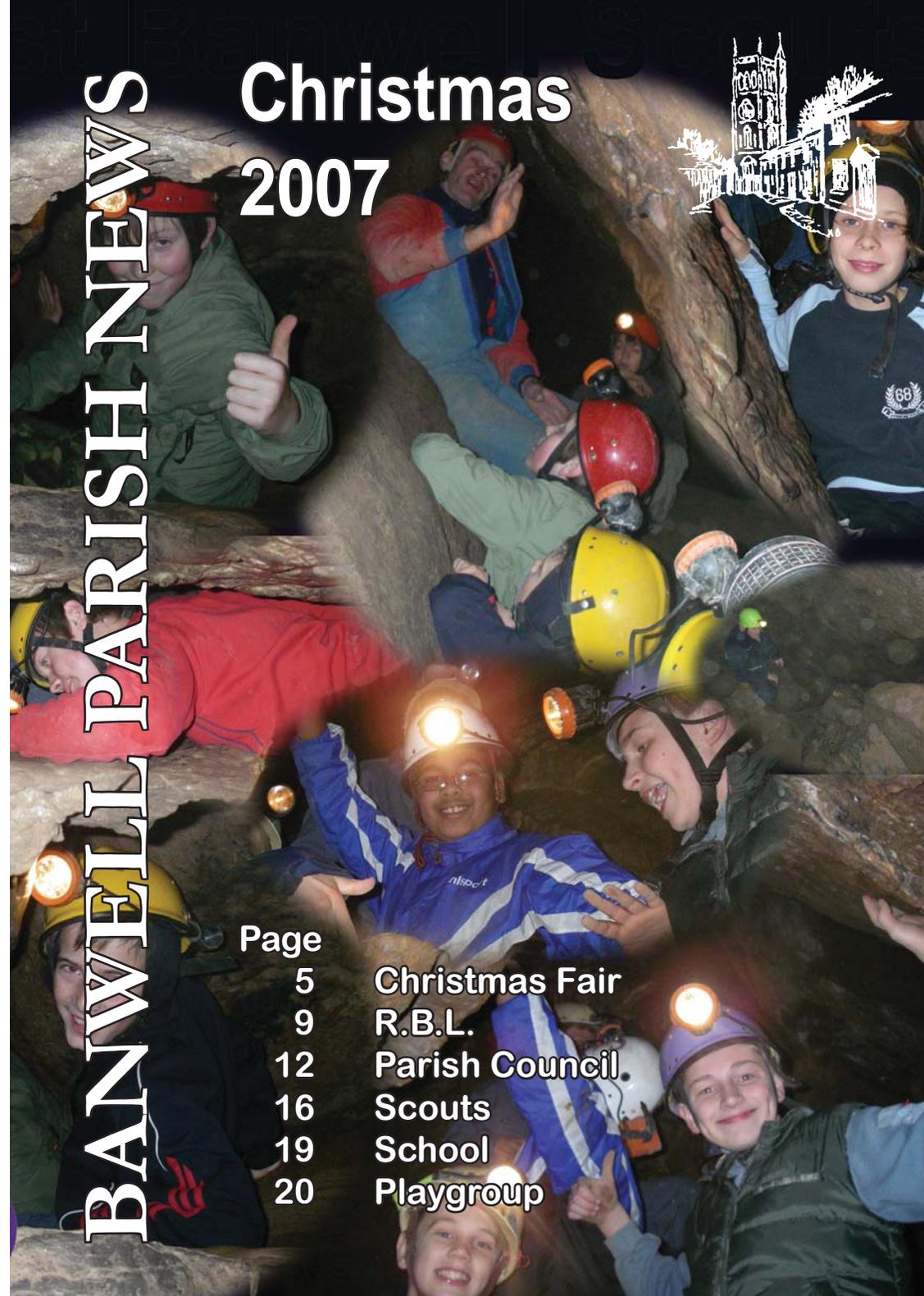
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BANWELL PARISH NEWS

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St Andrew's Church
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at the
Village Hall

on

Monday 10th December

and

Monday 14th January

from 12.30 – 1.30pm

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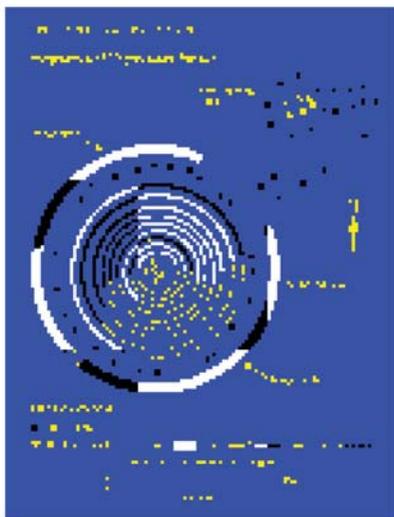
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BANWELL SOCIETY OF ARCHAEOLOGY

LOCAL HISTORY TALK



Stanton Drew Stone Circle

By Gordon Strong

11 January Banwell Village Hall 7.30

REFRESHMENTS

RAFFLE

VISITORS WELCOME

CONTACTS

Church of England.	The PCC Secretary, The Coach House, East Street, Banwell	Tel. 822320
Methodist.	Revd. Sam, Wesley Manse, Dinghurst Rd, Churchill	852314
Roman Catholic.	Revd. Fr. Tibor Szende, The Presbytery, Tweentown, Cheddar	742564

Christmas fair Success!

All those who helped to organise St Andrew's Christmas Fair were well rewarded for their efforts by raising over £1000.00 for St Andrew's. Many people came and bought Christmas gifts and enjoyed the lunches that were served. We look forward to next years event.



Prayer



The Church families of St. Andrew's and Banwell Methodist Church will be praying for the people in your area on the following Sundays.

December

- 16th Cooks lane
- 23rd Eastmead Lane
- 30th Emery Gate

January

- 6th Dark Lane
- 13th East Street

If you have any special prayers or concerns, whether for yourself, one of your family or for a neighbour (e.g. someone who is sick: getting married: seeking employment: going away to work or college: or in any kind of trouble or difficulty), please ring one of the following numbers either to have a chat, or leave a message, or make an appointment for one of us to visit you, or vice versa.

St Andrew's: Dinah Harrison 822344
 Methodist: The Revd. Sam 852314

1st Banwell Scout and Guide Group

ANNUAL BOXING DAY DUCK RACE

at the Brewers Arms, Banwell

starting at 2.30 pm

1st Prize £100

2nd prize Half a lamb, packed ready for your freezer donated by Pool Farm, Banwell

3rd prize Luxury Box of Chocolates

Ducks £1 each available from group members, Banwell News and before the race.

Services In Our Churches

ST. ANDREW'S

	8.00 am	Holy Communion
	10.00 am	Family Eucharist
	3.30 pm	Evensong
1st Sunday	3.30 pm	BCP Eucharist
	7.15 pm	Young at Heart
16th	6.30pm	Joint Carol Service at the Methodist Chapel
24th	5.00 pm	Christingle Service
	11.30 pm	Midnight Eucharist
25th	10.00 am	Christmas Day – Sung Eucharist



METHODIST

	10.30 am	Morning Service & Sunday School
	6.30 pm	Evening Service
16th	6.30 pm	Joint Carol Service
25th	10.00 am	Morning Service

ROMAN CATHOLIC Cheddar
 Sunday 9.00 am Mass

ALL WELCOME

Banwell Playgroup for rising 3s-5yr. olds meets Monday to Friday during term-time 9.00am - 11.30am. For more information please contact the Playgroup on 823404 or Wendy Lloyd 820605.

Baby/Toddler Group meets every Friday morning 9.30am -11.45am. at the Scout Hut. Contact Gareth Thomas 823177

Banwell Scout Group: Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. Peter Bradbury, Group Scout Leader 01934 822719

Banwell Fish Scheme: Chairman Mrs Dinah Harrison 822344. Lift Co-ordinator Mrs G Boddy 823621.

Village Hall Booking Secretary: Mr David Westlake 30 Knightcott Road, Banwell. Tel: 822433.

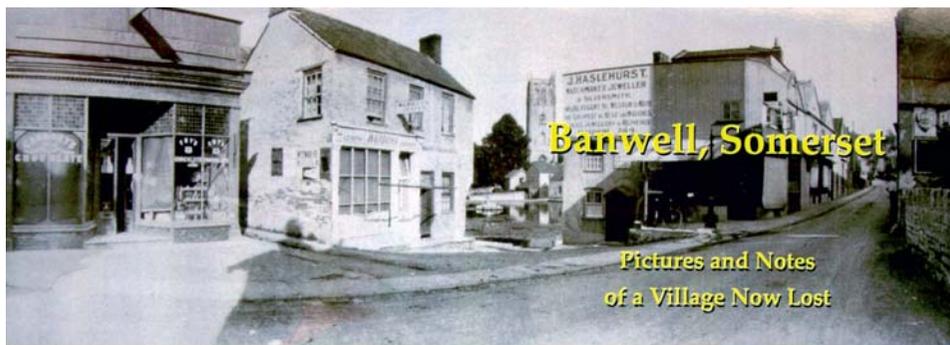
Youth & Community Centre Booking Secretary: Nicola Hooper (Parish Clerk) 812567, email clerk@banwell.org

Methodist School Room Hire Bookings Tel: 822873 or 822066

Banwell-Potigny Twinning Assoc. Contact Jeanne Evans 823878

Banwell Bridge Club Contact: Roger Boland Tel: 820615 or Meg Tillotson Tel: 823252





Well Done Roy!

As Roy admits, this book has been a long time coming, but it has been well worth the wait.

I think that the way people packed the Village hall to hear Roy talk about Banwell shows the interest that villagers, both new and old, have in the history of our village.

It seems strange that over a hundred years ago the people then considered Banwell had a traffic problem. I wonder what they would make of it today!

Roy we look forward to the next in the series.

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Copy for the next issue by the 23rd December

EDITOR: Dave Colbourne, The Gate House, East Street, Banwell. Tel.822902
 ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER: Mike Hebden, 1 Chestnut Close, Banwell. Tel.823517
 theeditor@banwellparishnews.org.uk

Banwell R.B.L.



The Banwell branch of the RBL would like to thank all those who supported and participated on and before Remembrance Sunday.

It was great to see the Church so full and our thanks to all those who turned out. It does seem that attendances for this service are increasing year by year, which we believe reflects the roles that our services are performing in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is a fact that our welfare case load in the RBL is increasing with many veterans in the lower age bracket.

Particular thanks to the Prebendary Derek Evans who helped us to plan the service and conducted the service.

Our Parade was very well supported by veterans, the Parish Council, the W.I., Mothers Union, and by the Scouts, Guides, Young Leaders, Cubs, Beavers, Brownies, & Rainbows and a particular commendation to the children who took part in the Church Service for playing their parts so ably. Our " RAFA " band led the processions and one of their number played the Last Post & Reveille in the Church and at the Memorial - our grateful thanks to Barry Taylor and his colleagues

for supporting us so well. Gareth Thomas performed his role very ably as RBL branch Standard Bearer, along with Alan Goodall who carried the RNA standard and William Griffin who carried the standard for the RAF Regiment Assn. in Somerset.

Thanks to Dennis Cruze for once again taking on the role of Parade Marshall. Thanks to Gordon Griffey and Cliff Hobbs for organizing the seating in the Church and acting as Ushers .

Thanks to Cliff Hobbs and David Westlake who organized and laid the cross in the churchyard. Grateful thanks to the ladies who organized and served the tea/coffee and biscuits after the Parade.

We must not forget the important role played by the bellringers whose professional expertise is so evident. In particular, Wally Rice who had the task of muffing the bells for the occasion - not an easy task. Wally also mounted our RBL flag on the church tower.

Before Remembrance Sunday, there was much work to be done with committee meetings and a rehearsal in the church. The War Memorial was cleaned, weeded and planted with fresh flowers (by Jack Jones who has carried out these tasks so faithfully for many years); the flowers watered regularly by Ann Shipton; the shrubbery trimmed and the area cleaned by Peter Shipton and Nigel Green; our very grateful thanks to them all.

Very grateful thanks to John Martyn of SP Press for providing the Service Sheets free of charge - as he has done for the last few years.

It is suprising how many people are involved and their dedication is much appreciated.

Barry Mather, President RBL Banwell.

All Club Secretaries

Please let me have your 2008 programmes as soon as possible during December for inclusion in the January issue of the Parish News. Thank you. Sonia Mitchell

34 Knightcott Gardens, Banwell, BS29 6HD.

Weighed Down

After the Christmas and New Year festivities, the wife gingerly crept onto her bathroom scales to weigh herself. She pulled a sad face. Her husband asked: "What's the matter? Are you overweight?"

"No, six inches to short."

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A Good Send Off

An employee asked her boss if he would advance her a few pounds of next month's wages, and gave the reason as follows: "You see our minister at church is leaving, and we are collecting money so that we can give him a little 'momentum'."

From the Registers

Wedding

November

24th Lorna Hebden to
Richard Adams

Funerals:

October

16th Dulcie Taylor
23rd Joan Lane
27th Joan Irene Brennan

December

1st Margaret Sennett

Mothers' Union

The theme of this month's meeting was Remembrance. Patricia read the bible reading from John Chapter 15 and Sonia read a prayer of remembrance.

On Sunday 11th November, many of us were at the Remembrance Day service in St Andrew's organised by the local branch of the Royal British Legion.

The first official Legion Poppy Day (inspired by the poem "In Flanders' Fields" written by John McCrae) was held in Britain at the 11th hour of 11th November 1921 (the date and time World War 1 ended in 1918). Since then it has become a key annual event in the nation's calendar. The poppy was the only thing that grew in the aftermath of the devastation that took place in the Flanders and Picardy regions of Belgium and Northern France. An American War secretary Moina Michael inspired by John McCrae's poem began selling poppies to friends to raise money for the ex-service community. From these beginnings in 1922, Major George Howson, a young Infantry officer who formed the disabled society to help ex-servicemen and women, suggested to the Legion that members of the disabled society could make poppies, designed so that workers with a disability could easily assemble them. This led to the founding of the Poppy factory in Richmond, Surrey by Earl Haig.

Every year the number of those who lived through both of the two World Wars diminishes, making the reason to remember more, rather than less, important. We only have to witness the continuing conflicts in many parts of the world to realise things haven't

changed as much as we might think. Remembrance Day recalls for us the price of peace, and how much we owe to those who fought, and those still fighting for the freedom of this country and others around the world. It purposely thrusts such things back into our consciousness, "Lest we Forget".

After the service, we welcomed Barry Mather who gallantly stepped in at the last minute as a substitute for Stan Rendell who is currently unwell. Barry's photo presentation on the Bishop's Palace in Wells, St Fagan's in Wales and some candid shots of animals were great, the musical accompaniment was superb and the animals caused a great deal of mirth, thank you Barry for an entertaining afternoon. Stan will be in all our prayers until he is well again and can come and give us an in depth talk on the Bishop's Palace.

Next month we will be attending our annual Christmas luncheon at Mooseheart and on 19th January Liz Green will be coming to talk to us about the Mothers' Union General Meeting in Liverpool - June 2007.

All Welcome

Gloria Boddy

Oops!

A young husband was in big trouble when he forgot his wedding anniversary. His wife told him, "Tomorrow there better be something in the driveway for me that goes from zero to 200 in two seconds flat".

The next morning the wife found a small package in the driveway. She opened it and found a set of brand new bathroom scales.

Her husband will be buried next Friday.

Banwell Parish Council Chairman

Welcome to our second insert in the Parish News. I hope the first edition gave you a small insight into what's happening on the Parish Council. This is a trial for us to see if the parishioners enjoy this format and if the information will help you understand how decisions are made at a local level.

Your feedback will be most appreciated.

You have the right to have your say at Parish Council meetings, as there is a section of the agenda where we open the "floor" for questions from the public. Let's work together to make Banwell a great place to live.

My final comment is to remind everyone about the Parish Plan meeting on 5th December. This is where your opinion could influence decision making for the next ten years. Please come and have your say.

As Christmas is fast approaching I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a great new year from all of Banwell Parish Councillors.

The unseen people on remembrance Sunday.

It was nice to see a hive of activity around the Village on the morning in preparation for that afternoon's march through the Village.

The first group of volunteers were hard at work removing over-grown ivy from the entrance to the school. With a final brush down around the bus stop area they had made a splendid job.

Then it was on to my task of the day to help trim the hedges either side of the memorial stone, then to brush down around the seating area and the main road.

I walked down to the church and a third party of volunteers were brushing up fallen leaves around the church yard.

The Parish Council would just like to thank all these un-named people who gave up their Sunday morning to make Banwell look that bit nicer on the day.

Village Pride Committee

Village Pride Committee is a small subcommittee of the Parish Council. We are mainly a "hands on" group who are trying to make a small difference in trying to keep the village tidy and to improve council controlled areas. We give our time and effort free of charge, because we are "Banwellians" and it's our way of putting something back into community life.

Earlier in the year we had Mr. Adrian Lenard the officer from North Somerset open spaces department, came to the Parish council meeting to discuss the standards and maintenance of the footpaths within the Village.

It was interesting to hear that most areas are only cut twice a year or when required so some of the smaller ones might get a single cut (the footpath between the football club and Eastermead lane). Also, the council are only responsible for eight inches of ground either side of the footpath. The hedges / walls are the responsibility of the landowner. A couple of the Village Pride committee

members have started a small programme of doing extra cuts to try and bring the standards up. We started by doing a clearance of the footpath between High Street and Littlefield's Road, where we removed eight green bags of vegetation. Our next path for a makeover will be the one between



Knightcott Road and The Paddocks.

Recreation field

After the vandalism of the swings John Keats, our village orderly, has done a great job removing the paint. The swings are now back in position.

Here is a general up-date on the recreation field development at present. A set of plans have been submitted and passed by North Somerset Council. There are a number of issues with some of the conditions that have been set by the planners and must be sorted out before the project can start.

The clerk has met some of the companies



who are providing quotes to do the work and she is formulating the findings for Councillor Steve Robinson to report back to the full council on the best way forward.

An introduction to the committees

Banwell Parish Council have seven sub committees which try to put Councillors with common interests together so they can deal with any issues in a more effective way.

Cemetery Committee

The Memorial Garden which is located in the corner of the cemetery, is making good progress. The paving slabs are now laid. We have moved on to replacing the guttering and erecting a trellis on the walls. The planting is going to be done in two sessions with some going in now and extra planting being done in the spring (with that lovely warm weather).



Banwell Flower Arranging Group

This year we have had two sessions of flower arranging courses with Jo Jacobs from Weston-super-Mare as our Tutor. The last session gave everyone ideas for Christmas i.e. door wreaths, alternative Christmas trees, table arrangements, etc. It was good fun and very informative.

Our main demonstration was given by Lindsey Ireland "East meets West", and on another evening Helen Eke showed us how to make corsages and buttonholes. We were shown how to do a large pedestal by Heather Lee of Burrington and were amazed by the number of flowers which were used in her wonderful creation.

Our garden visit was to Sherborne Gardens at Litton where the owners proudly showed us around their fantastic collection of trees and shrubs.

We are currently planning our 2008 programme but have decided to meet on the second Tuesday of the month to avoid clashing with Bank and half-term holidays.

As always we welcome new members at the Methodist Church Hall at 7.30pm.

(We do not meet during January, February or August). For further information please contact Sonia Mitchell 820460.

Every man's life lies within the present; for the past is spent and done with, and the future is uncertain.

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus



Subterranean Scouting!

It has long been a tradition in Scouting to invest new members into the troop in either an unusual situation or location. 1st Banwell Scouts certainly follows this tradition. Straight after the Remembrance Day Parade, the 1st Banwell troop was seen heading for the Mendip hills, to explore the depths of Goatchurch Cavern.

We climbed into the cave, past the old and now rusting remains of the Victorian walkways into what the cave leader described as "a slight drop into the first section". The "slight drop" appeared to the uninitiated as a dustbin lid sized hole which seemed to vanish vertically into a black void! However, this did not deter any of the troop members and down they went into the first part of the cave.

The cave leader stopped periodically to point out various rock formations and explained

how the caves were formed. Just as the troop was becoming accustomed to crawling along through ever smaller gaps the cave would open up. What an experience!

If there were any uncomfortable moments, then the Scouts showed a superb display of teamwork and encouragement and every single member of the troop that started, reached the objective which was no more than a small cavity, with 300ft of rock above us and not enough room to stand up. This was where we were to invest Danielle and Felix, the two newest members of 1st Banwell troop.

Felix has been a member of the Scout movement now for many years. He started as a Beaver Scout, progressed through the system into Cub Scouts and now has moved on again into the Scouts. Along the way he has gained many awards and has completed scores of activities and even though he is new to the troop, he brings with him a fair amount of experience.

Danielle however is brand new to Scouting. She is somewhat of a history maker though! The rules changed earlier in the year allowing girls into the Scout movement. So Danielle is the first girl ever to be invested into 1st Banwell and therefore, everything Danielle does makes history.



Congratulations to you both and welcome to the largest youth movement in the world.

1st Banwell Scout troop still has a few vacancies left though as the older ones move up into Explorer Scouts allowing us to accept some new recruits. If you are aged between 11 ½ and 14, and like to know more about Scouts, then give Jane Gomm a ring 0787 046 1327.

I'll Sing To That...

There was a church where the new minister and the organist were not getting along. As time went by this began to spill over into the worship service.

One week the minister preached on commitment and how we all should dedicate ourselves to the service of God. The organist played: 'We Shall not be Moved'.

The next week the minister preached on tithing and how we all should gladly give to the work of the Lord. The organist responded with: 'Jesus Paid it All'.

The third week the minister preached on gossiping and how we should all watch our tongues. The organist played all verses of: 'I Love to Tell the Story'.

By now the minister had become very discouraged with the situation, and the following Sunday told his congregation that he was considering resigning. The organist closed the service with: 'O Why Not Tonight?'

As it came to pass, the minister did indeed resign. The following Sunday he informed the church that it was Jesus who had led him there and it was Jesus who was taking him away. The organist then outdid himself with: 'What a Friend We Have in Jesus.'

The Mendip Society

The Society needs someone to take over from its long serving secretary who is retiring for health reasons.

The Mendip Society, which is entirely voluntarily, has nearly a thousand members with its principle object being "the conservation and enhancement of the beauty and character of Mendip and its surroundings"

Originally founded to curb the environmental excesses of the quarrying companies the Society is now moving into other vital and controversial topics such as the building of the Severn Barrage, the erection of wind turbines on the Hills and the rapid growth of Bristol International Airport. All of these could have a profound and probably permanent impact on the Mendip Hills.

The Mendip Society, which is consulted and listened to by government, semi governmental bodies and other opinion forming organizations, has an important advisory and educational role to play in future development.

A good secretary is vital to the Society. He or she would be very much involved in opinion forming as well as in administration. IT skills are a necessary part of the position.

Apply to The Chairman. Simon Whitmore. Rusling House, Butcombe, Lulsgate, North Somerset. BS40 7XQ or telephone 01275 474433

Today is someone's memory for tomorrow. Make it a good one.

Gardening Tips for December

Pruning care: when pruning out larger branches with a saw, first make a cut on the underside to prevent bark tearing back. Cloche celery: the tops of celery can be protected either using straw or by placing cloches along the ridge. Check bedding: look over spring bedding, remove any debris which may have lodged between the plants, and also any weeds before they take hold. Bulbs can still be planted. This is best whilst the ground is still warm. Protect legumes: early peas and beans from an autumn sowing will benefit from the protection of a little soil drawn up around them to make a windbreak.

Burns Night Cancelled

Unfortunately, due to lack of helpers the Village Hall will not be holding its annual Burns Night Supper this coming January. This event has proven to be one of the more popular events and always brightened an otherwise gloomy month. The team who usually organise the festivities are finding it increasingly difficult to find the time to plan and implement this fund-raiser.

If, however, there is a team willing to take on the challenge, the Village Hall is currently available on Saturday 26th January and we can recommend where to buy the haggis!

For all booking enquires contact David Westlake on Banwell 822433



Year 4's poems about Christmas

Christmas is...

Christmas is a time when nobody goes to school,
And you have a lovely time with your family.

Christmas is a time when you get toys and wonderful presents,
If you are lucky and if you are good.

Christmas is a time when you put up bright decorations,
And have lots of fun with your friends.

Christmas is a time when you play and share,
With your exciting new wonderful toys.

By Sophie, Jasper, Stevie and Nicole.

Christmas is nice and cold
Snow sometimes twinkles down from the sky
You might not see a bird fly by.

Christmas is exciting in the snow
Make snowmen and igloos while you can
Knock them down as fast as you can.

By Sophia, Katie, Alastair and Jamie

Christmas is
Very fun
No School
Christmas is cool.

Christmas is
A time to spend
With family and friends
And share the joy.

By Brandon B, Livvy,
Edward and Madeline

Christmas is fun and friendly
When father Christmas comes to visit us.

Christmas is when Father Christmas comes
Rushing down our chimney.

Christmas is a time when we put our
decorations up
And they sparkle in the moonlight.

By Caitlin, Tiffany, Alfie and Joshua.

Christmas is happy and fun
It is a time to remember
Jesus.

Christmas is a time to see
Your friends and relatives.

Christmas is warm inside
And cold outside.

By Harry, Samuel, Heather
and Chloe.

Alex Lovell

Banwell Playgroup and Out of School Club were officially re-opened by Television Presenter Alex Lovell. The BBC Points



West newsreader met the children from the Playgroup and School, as well as the organisers who have been working hard for the last seven years to raise the cash needed to design and build a new home.

Banwell Playgroup's original HQ was demolished after it was deemed old and rundown, and for the last 2 1/2 years they have lived in the Youth and Community Centre, but that all changed recently. Under the new name of 'Banwell Buddies', the new building was officially opened by both Alex Lovell and Beth Macleod. Beth is the creator of the new name and logo, after she won a competition held at Banwell Primary School on behalf of the Playgroup.

Vikki Fitzpatrick, the new committee Chair was quoted as saying: 'The opening of this new building is the culmination of years of hard work by many people. I would like to thank everybody who has been involved over the years for their determination and commitment to the project. I am delighted we are now able to provide such a wonderful environment for children to share new

experiences, learn and grow in.'

Banwell Buddies Committee and staff would also like to thank all those that have contributed to the fund raising including DEFRA, HSBC and the Parish Council, but the big thanks must go to Chris King, Jane Gomm and Wendy Lloyd, all of whom have sweat blood and tears to get the building up and running.

Christingle Service

5pm 24th December
St Andrew's Church

All Welcome

Though our feelings for (God) come and go, his love for us does not. It is not wearied by our sins, or our indifference; and, therefore, it is quite relentless in its determination that we shall be cured of those sins, at whatever cost to us, at whatever cost to him.

C S Lewis



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Organic Food

Can we trust the labels?

The large variety of 'organic' food on sale has led to some confusion. How does one know that it's really organic and worth a premium price?

Any organic product sold in the UK must by law display a certification symbol or number. If you see the symbol, you can be confident that the item complies with minimum government standards. Each certifying body has its own symbol, the best-known being that of the Soil Association., which appears on about 70 per cent of organic food produced in the UK.

Each EU country has its own organic certifying authority which conforms to EU-wide standards. Where the food comes from outside Europe, into the EU, it is still subject to rigorous checks. The country of origin must be recognised as applying equivalent standards and inspection procedures. If national standards do not exist, importers may ask for specific organic products to be certified by one of the EU-recognised certification bodies.

Taking the Soil Association as an example, each year its inspectors visit every farm and producer that it certifies. All farming and processing activities are checked. There are also spot checks, without notice.

Is it worth paying more for organic produce? Well, you spend your money and makes your choice - as the saying goes. It is interesting to note that, according to recent figures, the average family's weekly food spend has decreased to £40 while its leisure spend has risen to £59 per week.

The farmer and TV cook Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall says: "Everyone seems unable

to resist a bargain. And food seems an area where we're happy to save money, whereas it should be the most important thing. Some people will spend £30,000 on a car, then go and buy a bumper pack of mince!"

The Soil Association was founded in 1946 by a group of farmers, scientists and nutritionists, inspired by a book published in 1943: *The Living Soil*, by Lady Eve Balfour. The website is www.soilassociation.org

Together, We Eat Better!

Here's a New Year's Resolution that could affect your children for years to come: eat more family meals together in 2008.

Families who eat meals together are helping their adolescents grow into adults who eat more fruit and vegetables and drink fewer soft drinks, according to recent research.

A survey carried out by the University of Michigan found that youngsters who grow up eating with their parents tend to choose healthier foods when they become adults. It was therefore recommended that families should be encouraged "to share meals as often as practically possible."

Another recent survey found that in the UK, a quarter of parents admit to eating with their children only at the weekends.

Nothing is more powerful than hope.
One little nibble will keep a person fishing all day.

H V Prochnow

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Village Websites

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Contact: Dinah Harrison, email: pccsecretary@standrewsbanwell.org.uk

Banwell Village Website – www.banwell.info
Contact: Graham Found, email: graham@banwell.info Tel:822619

Banwell Parish Council Website – www.banwellparishcouncil.co.uk
Contact: Mrs Nicola Hooper – clerk@banwellparishcouncil.co.uk

The Friends of Banwell Primary School Website – www.banwell.info/friends

Westfield Residents Assoc - www.westfield.banwell.info
email: westfield@banwell.info

Banwell Bowling Club Website – www.geocities.com/johnnyamos2002

Banwell Royal British Legion Website – www.rbl.banwell.info

Banwell Baby and Toddler Group – www.geocities.com/banwellbabytoddlers

Life with Shire Horses

It was a year ago exactly when Mike Horler came to talk to us about his Life as a Wheelwright and Carriage Restorer. This was so well received that we immediately booked him again to give his complementary talk



about his Life with Shire Horses.

Mike had always been fascinated by the world of horses, carriages and driving, and at the age of nine years old he began work for the horse dealer A.C. Day, training hunters. In 1972 he attended the World Ploughing Championships at Taunton – and this was when he fell in love with heavy horses. He duly bought a cart and a mare – but found he had a lot to learn. She turned out to be a bit of a handful, and at the Gillingham and Shaftesbury Show she ran amok - but in spite of this they got a first!

His next step was to buy a gelding – much safer – and he started work for Gaymer's Old English Cider. At this time many of the big breweries still had their own stables with heavy horses and drays. So it wasn't long before Mike had built them a new dray

and they were competing at shows all over England.

By 1988 Mike had become a judge at the shows, and his son Colin had followed in his dad's footsteps and was driving and winning prizes himself.

Eventually Mike started his own company, and this led to some rather surprising offers. A brewery in Boston USA wanted a horse drawn omnibus, with a team of six heavy horses in order to take visitors round the company, as a sort of theme ride. His judging also led to work abroad. He attended a huge show in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania working with the Amish. This was an enormous event, with 29 classes and 23 acres - all under cover!

His interest moved on to developing working with bigger teams of up to eight horses. When driving a large team it is impossible to hold so many reins – so the driver controls them by means of a series of whistles – each horse responding to its own signal. He once drove a team of 16 round Warwick racecourse. They also entered a challenge for the largest team in the Guinness Book of Records. Mike drove a team of 20 – four abreast at the Bath and West Show – and set a world record!

Mike has been coachman to the Lord Mayor of Bristol for 15 years. His Radford Heavy Horse Team works all over the world, and he runs Courtyard Carriages – hiring out rigs for special occasions. He is also very active with the Wessex Heavy Horse Society, promoting heavy horses and carriage driving all over the country.

Next meeting of the Banwell Society of Archaeology is 11th January, at 7.30pm.

A talk by Gordon Strong "Stanton Drew Stone Circle". All Welcome

The Nativity At Night

Children often have a disarming simplicity in the things they do and say, which at first glance are funny, but somehow strike to the heart of the matter. This is true with children taking part in nativity plays.

There is the story of the little boy who was playing the part of a shepherd. As he entered the manger scene with his friends to present a gift to the new-born babe, he froze and forgot his lines. So he improvised, and looking into the manger, he turned to Mary and said, 'Eee, isn't he like his dad?'

Simplicity, humility and wisdom: they are all there in children's presentations of the Christmas story. And behind all those qualities is a wonder - a wonder that stirs hearts and minds and imaginations; a wonder that is deep inside, beyond the superficial glow of Christmas lights and presents; a wonder we can easily miss out on as we follow the world around and its celebration of the Christmas feast.

This month's painting focuses our attention on these qualities and truths of simplicity, wisdom, humility and wonder. It was painted by Little Gerard of the Brethren of Saint John, a Dutch artist who died at the early age of 28 soon after producing this painting towards the end of the 15th century. Only a dozen of his paintings survive, of which this is the most powerful because of the way it captures the great contrasts of light and darkness. The canvas is covered with an inky blackness to intensify the glow from the crib. Humans, angels and animals gaze down

in awe - all somehow drawn and mesmerised by the brilliance of this birth.

The babe lies flat on his back with no garments to protect him, despite the sense of chilly air in the stable. The reproduction in your magazine may be too black to spot all the characters,



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but there is Joseph at the top right shielding a candle with his hand, not daring to come forward; Mary leans towards her offspring, fingers pointed towards the radiance of the Christ-Child, lost in contemplation; and five angels on the left side with childlike faces and a sixth in the distance announcing news to the shepherds. I love the way in which the ox and the ass have nosed forward: they show no inhibition - they want to see what has happened to attract angels and humans to the scene.

The light of Bethlehem shining from the manger evokes wonder in all who look on, whether angels or animals, or Mary and Joseph. They tell us that there is something extraordinary here. In the stillness of the dark night everyone is attentive to this sign of new life. But notice how the cradle seems more like a coffin. Is this life new born to be given up? Is this light newly shed to burn itself out for us? Is Jesus laid out for a nativity or a burial?

At one level there is the littleness of immensity: a tiny babe who sheds light on all around in the darkness. At another level, this fragile life looks ahead to a sacrificial giving: for the child born in the manger at Christmas will be the saviour in the tomb at Easter awaiting a new birth into resurrection life.

Rev Michael Burgess

Little Gerard's picture is printed here by the kind permission of the National Gallery, London.

WHAT'S ON THIS MONTH

MONDAY

10th	7.15 pm	Royal British Legion	*	Brewers Arms
10th	12.30 - 1.30pm	Soup Lunch	*	V.H.
10th	7.30 pm	Parish Council	*	V.H.
Weekly	10.00 am	Keep Fit	*	V.H.
Weekly	5.30 – 6.30 pm	Beavers	*	Scout Hall
Weekly	6.00 - 8.45 pm	Beginners & Advanced Yoga	*	V.H.

TUESDAY

Weekly	10.00 am	Mendip Art Group (term time only)	*	V.H.
Weekly	1.00 - 3.30 pm	Playgroup	*	P. H.
Weekly	5.45 - 7.15 pm	Brownies	*	V.H.
Weekly	7.00 - 9.00 pm	Guides	*	Scout Hall

WEDNESDAY

5th & 19th	1.30 - 3.30 pm	Baby Clinic	*	V.H.
12th		Mothers' Union Christmas Lunch		
Weekly	7.30 pm	Bell Ringing Practice	*	St. Andrews
Weekly	8.00 pm	Banwell Sequence Dance Club	*	V.H.
Weekly	1.30 pm	Bridge Club	*	V.H.

THURSDAY

13th & 27th	10.00 am	Banwell Short Mat Bowling	*	V.H.
6th & 20th	7.30 pm	“ “ “ “	*	V.H.
13th	7.30 pm	W.I. Christmas Festivities	*	V.H.
Weekly	1.00 - 3.30pm	Playgroup	*	P.H.
Weekly	2.30 pm	Seniors' Club	*	V.H.
Weekly	7.30 – 10.00 pm	Youth Club (term time only)	*	Y.C.C.
Weekly	5.30 - 6.30 pm	Rainbows	*	Scout Hall

FRIDAY

14th	7.30 pm	Archaeology Society – Speaker: Margaret Flux “Christmas Past”	*	V.H.
Weekly	9.30 - 11.45 am	Baby/Toddler Group	*	Scout Hall
Weekly	6.30 – 7.45 pm	Cubs	*	Scout Hall
Weekly	7.45 – 9.30 pm	Scouts	*	Scout Hall

SATURDAY

1st	10.00 – 12.30pm	W.I. - Coffee, Cakes & Crafts	*	Bowling Club
8th	12.00 – 4.30pm	St. Andrew's Church Christmas Fayre	*	V.H.
15th	6.30pm	Carols Under the Tower	*	St. Andrews

SUNDAY

Weekly	11.00 am	Judo Club	*	Y.C.C.
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Abbreviations: * Visitors Welcome; **V.H.** Village Hall; **M.H.** Methodist Hall; **P.H.** Playgroup Hall; **Y.C.C.** Youth and Community Centre.

Get A Dog!

Owning a dog is very good for you. Dog owners tend to have lower cholesterol and blood pressure, fewer minor physical ailments, and are less likely to develop serious medical problems.

So says Dr Deborah Wells, a senior lecturer at the Canine Behaviour Centre of Queens University, Belfast. "It is possible that dogs can directly promote our wellbeing by buffering us from stress, one of the major risk factors associated with ill health."

She surveyed people who adopt cats and dogs from animal rescue shelters. They said that within a month of adopting their pet, they noticed a decrease in minor ailments, such as headaches, colds and dizziness. But only dog owners maintained the improvements 10 months later - cat owners did not.

"The ownership of a dog can also lead to increases in physical activity and facilitate the development of social contact, which may enhance both physiological and psychological human health in a more indirect manner."

Are You SAD?

Winter is the unhappiest and most stressful time of the year, according to sociologists. As one commentator says: "It is like living not so much as under a cloud as IN it."

In January we go to work in the dark and come home in the dark. The bills for Christmas are coming in, and our waistlines have expanded. There doesn't seem to be any light at the end of the tunnel.

And light is precisely what our bodies crave. About half a million people in Britain suffer from SAD (Seasonally Affective Disorder), which is mainly triggered by lack of sunlight. It is like an extreme form of depression, where people cannot sleep well, but still dread getting up in the morning. When they do struggle down to the kitchen, they then over-eat for comfort's sake.

Light therapy can help up to 85 per cent of affected people get through this time of year - and give the rest of us a real boost, too! Nowadays light boxes are VAT free and start at less than £100. A light box is about four times more powerful than summer sunlight, and with 10 times the intensity of domestic bulbs. A 20 minute session, it is claimed, can transform your day.

When a museum in London recently put on a light box display, they used light boxes supplied by the SAD Lightbox Company (www.sad.uk.com).

Christingle Service

*a good way to start
Christmas*

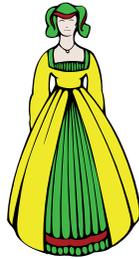
**5pm 24th December
St Andrew's Church**

All Welcome

A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.



Winter Draws On! (Yet Again)



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