



MARCH 2024

The Valley & Valence Parish Magazine for
 Winterborne St. Martin • Winterbourne Steepleton • Winterbourne Abbas • Compton Valence





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MARCH 2024

The Valley & Valence Parish Magazine for

Winterborne St. Martin
Winterbourne Steepleton
Winterbourne Abbas
Compton Valence



NEWS & ARTICLES FOR THE V&V PARISH MAGAZINE

It would be much appreciated if copy is supplied electronically as a text doc. (Microsoft Word etc.) with any accompanying images as JPEG files to the address BELOW.

ALL COPY MUST REACH ME BY 5pm on 15th (LATEST) OF THE PRECEDING MONTH
in order to be included in that issue.

ADVERTISING IN THE V&V PARISH MAGAZINE • Rates and Contact details

Current rates & specifications enquiries, and advertisement copy for each month's issue to:

Graham Herbert, 1 Cowleaze, Martinstown, DT2 9TD

Tel: **01305 889786** or email: **info@valleyandvalence.co.uk**





Allen has written another poem, without a hint of a copper,
 He's offering it for V & V, but would that be proper?
 It would go in the mag when we are in Lent,
 Would it be right to laugh when we should repent?

Dick CW, short for churchwarden, don't you know,
 Approves the verses; says they can be printed just below.

Nigel Power

The Vacancy

A fanciful poem about an imaginary village.

I wonder who the new Vicar will be
 Will he be a he or will she be a she
 The Rector was kind and said Dear friends I fear
 You may not get a Vicar till the end of next year.

So we thought we'd advise him so he can enquire
 As to who's best to lead us, and also inspire
 After all the poor Rector is busy and so
 He will need good advice from us folk, in the know!

Colonel Blenkinsop said to us firmly, 'Now look
 We need to go back to the dear old Prayer Book.
 I really don't hold with much that is new
 I'd prefer us to stick with 1662'

Mrs. Pumphrey who lives at The Manor was clear
 When she took me aside and said 'Frankly my dear
 I really don't mind who we get as long as (s)he's free
 To visit on Wednesdays when we ladies take tea!

In our parish we make it an absolute rule
 To consult with the children of our Sunday School
 Susan said 'I like Vicars that give us some treats.'
 Then Tommy said! Yeah! But not books - we want sweets.'

The local Headmistress is Kate Blenkinsop.
 Energetic and young. She is not one to moan

But when she was asked she was really quite clear.
 'I want one who will help but will not interfere.'

Mrs. Clackett's expecting her fifth, the poor dear
 But we chuckled and gave her a clap and a cheer
 When she said 'I'm an Anglican, Choose who you will.
 I used to be Catholic but I'm now on the pill.'

We asked most of the people and got interesting views
 And an offer from one chap to buy all the pews...
 The Tower Captain wanted a Priest who could ring
 Whilst the Organist pleaded for one who could sing

The Squire said 'One who will shoot fish and hunt.'
 Whilst the Newsagent said 'I'll be quite blunt
 I don't care who you get just as long as you see
 Your Vicar buys all his provisions from me!'

Now we worked very hard but we have to concede
 There is no-one alive who can meet every need
 The reality is just as clear as can be
 The one that we seek, well, they nailed to a tree.

So Rector the profile we send you today
 Is short, for we ask and we hope and we pray
 That you send us the person our vacancy fits
 That's simply a Vicar that will love us to bits.

Allen Knott





The Parishes of the Winterbournes & Compton Valence

Team Rector – Rev'd Keith Magee (07766 645135)

The Winterbournes and Compton Valence Ministry Team

Team Vicar – Vacancy (please contact one of the Church Wardens for all parish matters)

Associate Priest – Rev'd Jo Lacy-Smith (01305 889476)

Licensed Lay Minister – Allen Knott (01305 267217)

Permission to Officiate – Peter Wilkinson (01305 889077)

Organists

Nigel Power – Martinstown (01305 889910)

Peter Wilkinson – Winterbourne Steepleton (01305 889077)

Laurie Reading – for music at Winterbourne Abbas (01305 889693)

For Compton Valence please contact the Church Wardens

The Parish of the Winterbournes

There is a single Parochial Church Council for Martinstown, Steepleton and Abbas but each parish church retains its own local church committee.

Churchwardens – **Dick Corbett-Winder** (889410), **Ellie Sturrock** (07980 089470),
David & Joy Parsons (889611)

PCC Hon. Secretary – **John Crawford** (01305 889377)

PCC Hon. Treasurer – **Tom Webb** (01305 889097)

The Parish of Saint Thomas of Canterbury, Compton Valence

Churchwarden & Treasurer – **Jeremy Russell** (01308 482227)

Churchwarden & Secretary – **Peter Steel** (01308 482782)

Dorchester and The Winterbournes Team Website: www.dorchesteranglican.info

Any of the above can be approached in the first instance for Baptism, Marriage, Home Communion or just a visit and they would welcome being told when anybody has been bereaved or is ill. They have answerphones for you to leave a message.

If you want us to remember anything or anyone in the public prayer of the Church, we would be glad to do this as long as permission of the person involved is assured.

Meditation @ Steepleton Church

*Beginners welcome
Practiced meditators
welcome
The curious welcome*



7pm till 8.30 pm
weekly on Wednesdays
889476 or 07841776759
untill Easter please ring
JoLacy-Smith to check the venue

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Join us at Messy Church

St. Mary's Church
Winterbourne Abbas

First Tuesday
of the month.
5th March
3- 5pm



messy activities
games
songs stories
and supper

Free

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CHURCH SERVICES during...

MARCH 2024

SUNDAY 3RD • LENT 3

10.00	Holy Communion – Winterbourne Abbas
11.00	Holy Communion – Martinstown

SUNDAY 10TH • LENT 4 / MOTHERING SUNDAY

8.00	Holy Communion (BCP) – Martinstown
9.30	Holy Communion – Compton Valence
11.00	Holy Communion – Winterbourne Steepleton

SUNDAY 17TH • LENT 5

10.00	Worship Together – Winterbourne Abbas
11.00	Holy Communion – Martinstown
5.00	Church@5

SUNDAY 24TH • PALM SUNDAY

11.00	Worship Together – Martinstown
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MONDAY 25TH

7.00	Reconciliation Service – Winterbourne Abbas
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WEDNESDAY 27TH

7.00	Reflection service with Taizé - Winterbourne Steepleton
------	---

THURSDAY 28TH • MAUNDY THURSDAY

7.00	Holy Communion – Martinstown
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FRIDAY 29TH • GOOD FRIDAY

11.00	Holy Communion – Martinstown
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SATURDAY 30TH

7.00	Benefice Service – Winterbourne Steepleton
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SUNDAY 31ST • EASTER DAY

11.00	Holy Communion – Martinstown
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Find us on Facebook

Did you know that the 3 churches in the Winterbournes Parish are now on Facebook?
You can 'like' and 'follow' for news and photos from St Michael's, St Mary's and St Martin's.





Ladies who lunch & Julia's House



During the past ten years or so a group have met monthly for lunch in Martinstown. The present venue is the Brewers Arms on the last Thursday of the month.

During the lunch a raffle is held in aid of the Dorset & Wiltshire Children's Hospice charity Julia's House. The proceeds are sent

to the charity about once a year and recently Amanda Gillett their Community Fundraiser, wrote to the group to thank us for our donation and continued support for Julia's House. Amanda informed us that over the years the lunch group had raised over £800 and expressed a wish to meet with us all.

On February 15th we all enjoyed afternoon tea with Amanda kindly hosted by Christine Gibson. Before we all tucked into the delicious cakes Amanda introduced us to the work of Julia's House which in Dorset is based at Corfe Mullen.

The charity provides daytime support for the children their parents and siblings in many ways. These include regular organised activities, outings, one to one support for siblings where the parents have to spend most of their time with the affected child and giving breaks to parents providing regular care for the child.

There is some provision for residential end of life care but this is the only part of their work supported by the government. The rest of the work has to be funded out of charitable donations and the support of their many volunteers and local volunteer groups. Amanda's presentation was well received and her enthusiasm for the charity and her role was very apparent.

Thank you to all the cake makers and watch out for a future afternoon tea event in aid of Julia's House! Finally a big thank you to Amanda for coming to Martinstown to meet us and introducing us to the work of Julia's house.

Eileen Fisher
on behalf of *"the ladies who lunch"*



Dorset & Wiltshire Children's Hospices



In the heart of your community





VALLEY CLUB

Valley Club News

Coming up on the **18th March** we're delighted to have joining us once more photographer Colin Varndell, who'll be sharing his images and thoughts about **The Natural Beauty of Dorset**.

His presentation is based on of the book of the same name and will take us on a tour of Dorset's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, covering geology and the landscape with a series of breathtaking views punctuated by inspirational images and stories along the way.

As usual, complimentary tea, coffee and biscuits will be served and you can purchase a selection of drinks at the bar.

Guests are welcome, with an entry fee of £5.

Then on **April 8th** we're at **Poundbury Garden Centre** for tea, a talk and shopping with the Valley Club members' special 25% discount.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Chris Evans • Secretary

Local Author Book Signing in Village Hall

The photo shows Nigel Power signing a copy of his latest book of short stories at the 'Meet the Author' event in Martinstown Village Hall.

The book 'Survivors of War and other stories' is now available for purchase in the Merchant of St Martin shop, via the Internet or directly from Nigel (01305 889910).



LENT LUNCHES

On Fridays 8 and 22 March Lent lunches, consisting of homemade soup and bread followed by a cup of tea or coffee, will be held in the Village Hall at 12.30pm. The cost will again be £5.00 and the proceeds, after the deduction of expenses, will be donated to the Weymouth Food Bank.

This is an opportunity for members of our community to come together jointly to offer support to those less fortunate than ourselves. While we share a frugal lunch on one day we can provide the means for families who may otherwise go hungry to have access to food that may keep them away from starvation.

Everyone is welcome and there is no need to book. However, if you intend to join us as a large party we would welcome being informed.

Contact Cathie (889244) or Nigel (889910)





Dorchester Transport Action Group (DTAG)

I am writing as a member of the Dorchester Transport Action Group (DTAG), the role of which covers all forms of personal movement be that trains, buses, cars, cycling or walking. We have for some time been trying to do something about the lack of a bus service in Martinstown, but sadly so far without success.

First Bus recently had a major management reorganisation and we hope the new team will take a different view to that taken in the past. Along with two other Transport Action Groups, we are in the process of arranging to meet with Peter McNaughton, Operations Manager, Somerset & Dorset, First Wessex, sometime in March 2024 when we hope to persuade him to reinstate the X51 back through Winterbourne Steepleton and Martinstown on a trial basis, ideally during the Summer of 2024, to see if the level of use would justify the diversion being permanent ... but we need your help!

We are asking companies, organisations and individuals to write to Peter McNaughton, either by email or letter, supporting the aforementioned trial, explaining how the lack of public transport has affected you, your family, friends and neighbours and pointing out how having a bus service would:

- (a) Assist both you and others you know.**
- (b) Provide access to Dorchester, Bridport and beyond.**

- (c) Reduce parking problems and traffic congestion in towns.**
- (d) Provide access for shopping, socializing, etc.**
- (e) Provide access for medical appointments.**
- (f) Reduce car usage.**
- (g) Reduce pollution and carbon emissions.**

Peter McNaughton's contact details are:

Job title:
Operations Manager, Somerset & Dorset.
 Address:
First Wessex, Bus Depot, Edward Street, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 7DP
 Email: **Peter.McNaughton@firstbus.co.uk**

Separate communications from each person living at the same address would be helpful and please forward this on to anyone you know, residents or visitors, who would be willing to support this attempt to get our bus service reinstated.

So we at DTAG can gauge the amount of correspondence sent to Peter McNaughton, please either let me know you have contacted him or simply copy me in with your email: my email address is below.

Thanking you in anticipation of your assistance.

Kind regards,
Les Scarth • cliffden39@gmail.com



T H I S M O N T H ' S N E W S F R O M
Martinstown Women's Institute

At our meeting in February we were entertained by Christine Orange with her recitation of comic verse. She began with Stanley Holloway's "The Return of Albert" – sequel to "Albert and the Lion" - remember the stick with the "orses 'ead handle"! More recent poems from Roald Dahl, Michael Rosen and Pam Ayres followed to brighten up a dreary February afternoon.

Tickets for the village outing to Rosemoor on 20th June are selling well – contact Lesley Pemberton on 889643 lpemby@hotmail.co.uk to be sure of your place. If you are a RHS member entrance is free, you just pay £17 for the coach. Group entry to the gardens is £12.85. There are 65 acres of stunning gardens which should be at their best in June. This is a joint outing with the Valley Club, but anyone from the village is welcome. Leaving from the bus stop at 8.45 am and returning around 6.30 pm.

Next month on Wednesday 13th March we look forward to Line Dancing with Lynne at 2.30 pm in the Village Hall.

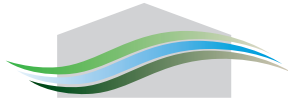
Angela Barrett - Secretary

**Celebration of Dorset
 Flower Festival**
 11th and 12th MAY
 Martinstown church and churchyard

**Get involved and join the team, flower arrangers and creative thinkers....all welcome.
 No experience necessary. Materials provided.**

Please contact
 Dawn Gepheart (07748547708) or Frances Clifford (07780441043)
 by 8th March if interested





MARTINSTOWN VILLAGE HALL Regular Group Meetings

MONDAY

Martinstown Playgroup	10 - 12 noon	Louisa Shephard - 07585622699
Beavers, Cubs & Scouts	5:30 - 7:30 pm	Sue Gower - 01305 889388
Monday Meeting	2:00 - 3:00 pm	Anne Tate - 01305 889506
WI Garden Club (1st Monday in month)	3:30 - 4:30 pm	Anne Tate - 01305 889506
Valley Club (3rd Monday in month)	7:45 - 10 pm	Ange Schulke - 07788858935

TUESDAY

Botanical Art (term times only)	9:30 - 12:30 pm	Pat Allen - 01308 862063
Sequence Dance Group	2:30 - 4:40 pm	Ann Matthews - 01305 889248
Badminton	7:30 - 9:30 pm	Juliet Rose - 07969292973

WEDNESDAY

Chair Based Exercise	10:30 - 11:30 am	Suzanne Fellows-Joyce - 01308 281882
W.I. (2nd Wednesday in month)	6:45 - 9:00 pm	Rosie Duke - 01305 889555
Beginners' Dance	8:00 - 10:00 pm	Ann Matthews - 01305 889248

THURSDAY

Poundbury Art Group	10:00 - 1:00 pm	Teresa Blades - 01305 889947
Sequence Dance Group	2:30 - 4:30 pm	Ann Matthews - 01305 889248
Yoga	6:00 - 7:30 pm	Gemma O'Beirne - 07821593314

FRIDAY

Keep Fit class	10:15 - 11:45 am	Suzanne Fellows-Joyce - 01308 281882
Bingo (every other Friday)	7:00 - 9:30 pm	Ann Matthews - 01305 889248

Chairperson - Jan Griffiths - 01305 889738
 Bookings - Ann Matthews - 01305 889248
 or email ronann.matthews@btinternet.com





Winterborne St Martin
PARISH COUNCIL

NEWS

MARCH 2024

It's been very much "Business as Usual" for the PC in the past months, with engagement on sewers, floods, planning and potholes, very much to the fore. We continue to engage regularly with our County Councillor (Cllr Tarr), MP and Wessex Water (WW) about sewage, and are party to a very good submission by Richard Crumbleholme from W.Steepleton and Abbas PC which challenges WW about their assurances about the size of sewers versus population served. In terms of Flooding, sadly our issues were much diluted by the impact on villages elsewhere in Dorset but we will be pursuing with Dorset Council their policies concerning surface water on roads – many other Highways Authorities have policies reflecting sections 137 and 149 of the Highways Act which makes it an offence to cause nuisance by allowing deposits, including flood water, to reach roads. However, we must also be mindful that we choose to live in a farming village in a valley with a "winterborne" and that climate conditions are changing. In recognition of this issue we will support an initiative by Cllr Tarr work with the authorities, neighbouring parishes and landowners to minimise the risks of future flooding. However, the floods were timely in one respect: they allowed a robust rebuttal of the suggestions that the proposed development West of Dukes Close would have little or no impact. The fact that the developer's own water reports suggested that a Flood Emergency Management Plan would be required for the site must surely carry some

weight with the planning officer. Finally on running sores, potholes (and blocked drains), please don't ignore them but report them on the interactive map through the website www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/roads-highways-maintenance/report-a-problem-on-the-road-or-pavement

The Council is now down to 5 Councillors, and quite honestly this is not enough volunteers to cover all the bases that we wish to. You might be aware that there is an election on 2nd May so whilst Dorset Council seeks people who are passionate about their local community we would be really interested in anybody who thinks that can help us, or at least any of us who chose to put ourselves forward, out. If you are even vaguely interested in lending a hand please contact our Clerk for details of how you can help your Parish out .

As always we welcome feedback on the Council's activities so please feel free to speak to any of the Councillors or contact us officially through our Clerk – clerk@winterbornestmartin-pc.gov.uk. The majority of our documents are now published on our website www.winterbornestmartin-pc.gov.uk/community/winterborne-st-martin-parish-council-18643/home. And, if you are interested in what we are dealing with please visit the website and subscribe for updates.

Mark Pemberton • Chair

MARTINSTOWN VILLAGE HALL 100 CLUB DRAW

Compton Valence February Draw
£25. Alan and Elena Bashforth
£10. Alan and Elena Bashforth
£ 5. Robert Harvey

Martinstown February Draw
£25. Anne Robertson
£10. Christine Gibson
£5. Tom Webb

Winterbourne Abbas & Steepleton Parish Council

Following our January meeting, your Parish Council would like to share what we are focusing on in respect of our two villages.

Copyhold Lane, Winterbourne Abbas:

Dorset Council have now made the decision to change the Lane to a "restricted byway". This is very similar to the existing bridleway but horse drawn (not motorized) vehicles would be allowed to use it in addition to walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Dorset Council have based the decision on extensive historic research right back in the 1800's despite it having no local support. When the order is published, the Parish Council, along with other parties will make formal objections and the matter will be finally be decided at a public inquiry.

National Highways (A35):

We have had a further meeting with the A35 route manager to discuss road crossing safety, street lighting, drainage and pavement issues. Work to improve the highway ditch at the rear of the Steepleton Water houses will be starting in the near future. When the filling station fuel tank work is completed, the pavement along the forecourt is scheduled to be resurfaced. Highway drains have been cleared and further investigations are being carried out. An undertaking has been given to clear the leat through the village in the late autumn. Improvements are planned to the road markings and white lines after April as a precursor to the installation of average speed cameras in 2025 hopefully.

Wessex Water:

We continue to correspond with a director of Wessex Water regarding the main sewer that runs from Abbas via Steepleton to Martinstown. This system was installed in the early 1970's and has obviously not been

upgraded to cope with the increased loadings due to new developments and usage. Together with Martinstown parish council, we will be meeting with Wessex Water to discuss sewer capacity. All the parishes will assist Wessex Water in local publicity to try and prevent wet wipes etc getting into the system and causing blockages. Wessex water will continue to try and reduce surface water ingress.

Flooding:

Prolonged rainfall during January caused continuing flooding of roads and surcharging of drains in both parishes. In addition to Wessex Water above, we are planning to meet with landowners, farmers and other agencies in an effort to reduce run off from fields.

X51 Bus Trial:

We would urge everyone to contact First Wessex to support a trial reinstatement of the bus service through Winterbourne Steepleton and Martinstown in the summer. Details can be found in an article in this magazine or on our website.

Website/Facebook:

We update our noticeboards in the bus shelters and our website and facebook page on a regular basis. The website can be accessed via Dorsetforyou or by entering the web address www.winterbourneabbassteepleton-pc.gov.uk/home

Meetings:

We meet normally on the third Monday every two months starting at 7.00pm, in the rear room of the Coach House Inn, Winterbourne Abbas. Residents are very welcome to attend and raise any issues that the Parish Council should be made aware of or investigate.



The **MILEATERS** out and about...

...Melbury Park walk... revisted by Mike Beesley



2015



2024



On a fairly dull morning 14 Mileaters set off on a short walk around Melbury Park near Evershot.

Thankfully the rain held off for us. This was a walk that the group had previously done in 2015 and a number of members repeated the walk this time.

We undertook a pleasant circular walk of 4 miles, that included country paths and woodland (with some very muddy bits) and concluded with a walk through the lovely deer park. We did see a herd of deer grazing peacefully which was a nice bonus. This time we did not have any dogs with us so did not have to worry about them chasing after the deer.

We met for lunch at the lovely Fox and Hounds Pub in Cattistock, where we were very well looked after by a busy bar manager who was on her own, with us to cope with as well as her normal bar customers.

Another excellent Mileaters walk which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.





Web: greenmartinstown.org.uk

Email: greenmartinstown@gmail.com

Green Martinstown

invites you to a

Martinstown Village Meeting

Friday 22nd March 2024 - 6.30 pm

at

Martinstown Village Hall

Green Martinstown has an exciting opportunity to acquire the use of a sizeable area of land in the village

This will be for the benefit of the natural environment and the community

Please come to find out more, or to offer your ideas or support

This is a wonderful chance for our community!

If you cannot attend the meeting you are welcome to phone Deborah on 889433 or Whatsapp 077963 02684 (after 6.30pm) for more information or to offer your support

Alternatively there is a **box for questions, ideas or offers of support in the Merchant of Martinstown shop**

Simpler still, you are all welcome to the meeting!



Recycling, Rubbish & Garden Waste Collection Dates

FEBRUARY 2024*

For more information contact: www.dorsetforyou.com/recycle

7th (Thursday)	- recycling and food	14th (Thursday)	- rubbish and food
21st (Thursday)	- recycling and food	28th (Thursday)	- rubbish and food
13th (Weds)	- garden waste	27th (Weds)	- garden waste

* Correct at time of printing.

Winter Youth Cricket Softball training for Y3 & Y4

Sundays 4-5pm

7th January - 31st March

Martinstown Village Hall

Coach: Henry Lewis

Equipment provided!



BOOKING LINK IN THE COMMENTS!

Winter Youth Cricket Hardball sessions for U9s - U13s

Wednesdays

3rd January - 27th March

St Osmund's School, Dorchester

Coaches: Henry Lewis &

Stuart Dawson



DETAILS & BOOKING LINK IN THE COMMENTS!



VILLAGE OUTING to ROSEMOOR

Great Torrington, Devon
65 acres of stunning RHS gardens

Thursday, 20th June

Coach £17 Entrance to Gardens £12.85

RHS Members free

Pick up at bus stop by village hall at 8.45 am prompt
Leave Rosemoor at 4.15 pm, arriving back around 6.30 pm

Trip organised by Martinstown WI - All welcome

For tickets contact:

Lesley Pemberton 889643 lpemby@hotmail.co.uk

Angela Barrett 889628 angelabarrett@uwclub.net



COMMUNITY • LUNCH •

The Community Lunch

I'm writing this on February 2nd after another successful lunch. Usually we have the same team of amazing cooks, led by Dick, Rosie and Jan, but today it was one of our occasional teams, Eileen, Angela and Christine, who provided a very tasty chicken dish which had cider as a key ingredient. Of course, as well as cooks there's a wonderful group who lay up, serve, wash up and clear away. It's a great team and we're so lucky to have them.

It is always lovely to see people and we're so glad to be welcoming some of the village's newer residents as well as folk from further afield. However, could we make a big plea – please, please be sure to book with Ced (01305 889438) especially if you weren't at the previous lunch. While we can sometimes stretch the delicious food, from time to time we serve something that isn't so easy to stretch – for example, individual chicken breasts or salmon fillets, and then we could face a problem. We'd also appreciate it if you'd let us know if possible that you can't come after all. You can always check with either Ced or Jan (01305 889738) if you'd like to join us – either to eat or to cook!



...it's back! FRIDAY NIGHT **BINGO**

*NEW
TIME!*

Every fortnight
at the **Village Hall**
Eyes down **7.00pm**

ALL GOOD FOOD PRIZES TO BE WON!4



The Church clock was chiming 5 as Lisa took up her position at her bedroom window. The train was due in at 2.45 and mum had left early to avoid the traffic. No sign so far, perhaps the old dear had missed her connection. Surely there would have been a phone call.

Grandma had recently joined the 21st century and her mobile phone had become a thorn in the side for all at 17 Grove Rd.

Lisa sighed, she was not anticipating a pleasant annual visit. She rarely did, but this time was going to be different and it was at that moment the car drew up.

She watched as the old woman, leaning heavily on her stick made her way up the garden path having already shrugged off mum's helping hand.

"I can manage" Lisa pressed a protective hand upon the window as her mother, catching her eye, simply shrugged.

"Welcome grandma" she said, opening the front door. "I hope you had a good journey"

"The usual overcrowding! God knows why you all had to move so far away from Wolverhampton!"

Lisa, ignoring this winge, planted a kiss upon the wizen cheek.

"I'll bring in your luggage whilst you put the kettle on, Lisa" called mum as she set off down the path leaving grandma and daughter alone .

Lisa took a deep breath. This was it.

"Go into the sitting room and..." but before Lisa had time to disappear into the kitchen the old woman rounded on her.

"Well!" she hissed, "Where is it?"

Lisa bristled. "He's not an it, he's my son and he's beautiful".

"Not like it was in my day. In my day you would have been packed off to a Mother and Baby home and the bastard would have been adopted!"

Enough! Lisa pulled herself up to her full 5'2. "Why can't you accept that times have changed. Mum adores her first grandchild and so do the rest of us."

"What even your father? Let's face it, he walked out on his family leaving your mother to cope."

"That was a long time ago and to be fair he's always kept in touch."

"So what about those marriage vows all those years ago?"

"Well, relationships change."

"Well, in my day..."

"Yes in the days of the dinosaurs!" stated Lisa, her voice rising in exasperation.

"Don't you speak like that, madam. You should respect your elders and betters!"

"You have to earn respect you old bag." muttered Lisa.

"What? What was that?" demanded the old woman. "And while we're on the subject of fathers, where's the father of it?"

"It' is called Marcus and his father, John, has had to return to Australia to sort things out. He'll be back in a couple of months and then we'll start discussing things like weddings, you never know just you wait and see."

"A likely tale! You'll be lucky to see him again. I've heard about Australians, all beer and women - and what about that brother of yours, still galavanting around the world? Isn't it time he settled down?"

"He's fine, he's getting married to Simon next Spring."

"Married? ...indeed!"

"I'll go and make us a nice cup of tea, so you just sit down and relax!" She left before she said something that might have caused further damage. Getting to her feet, the old lady called, "I'm just off to the little girls room to powder my nose."

"Ok tea won't be long."

Lisa was just loading everything onto a tray when Mum reappeared.

"You took your time" stated Lisa as she picked up the tray. "Tea's ready, the old bag's gone upstairs."

"*The old bag's* here and you're right my great grandson is beautiful." said the old lady, with tears streaming down her face.

"Bloody hell, mum, I've never seen you cry before, not even when Dad died ."

"You don't know everything about your old mum. So where's that bloody tea? ...and that baby of yours needs his mum."

"Oh grandma, you are an old devil." exclaimed Lisa

"I know, my dear", came the reply. "I know - you see I often think of life as a series of crossroads and when you come to a junction you have to make a decision as to which way to go and sometimes I seem to take the wrong route, but to day, thanks to you and that beautiful child, I think I have chosen a right route."

"Hooray!" called Lisa as she headed upstairs.

"Hoo-bloody-ray"



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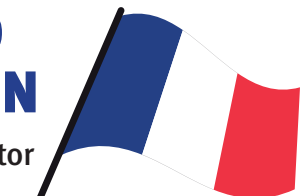
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