

# The Bridge



Produced by Elmore Parish Council  
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## From the Editor

As I write this we await the inauguration of a new President to The White House while the world's richest man is trying to meddle in British politics. Meanwhile, we still have a terrible war in Europe, though the new President has vowed to stop it within 24 hours of taking power in Washington. We also have an equally terrible war in the Middle East. With this going on dare I wish you all a good 2025? But this is a bumper edition of **The Bridge** – I have had to save some contributions for the next issue – so I will waste no more space and let you read on.

Trevor Jones

## Treasure Island

The 2024 pantomime was Treasure Island written by Village Players. Freddie Taylor and Sean Jarrett. It was a nice change to get away from the traditional pantos like Aladdin, Mother Goose etc. Of course the plot was not even loosely based on the Robert Louis Stevenson classic novel but who cares? Being well into the C21st Long John Silver (no parrot, peg leg or crutch) played by Sarah Younger was referred to as 'she' throughout. The first half saw the recruitment of the crew – Long John and his henchmen and women who were planning to mutiny and snatch the treasure. The word 'mutiny' was misheard by the goodies as 'Hootenanny' (a bit of a stretch even in this fantasy land) who therefore thought they were going to a dance. Anyway, they all sail away to the island and the goodies eventually get the treasure so the celestial spheres continued to sing.

Talking of singing, if I have one criticism it is that there was too much dialogue and not enough singing and the usual pantomime

‘knockabout’ in the first half, a situation remedied somewhat after the interval.

The Principal Boy, Jim Hawkins was played by Sophie Gibson and his love interest by Emma Jarrett as Louisa Flint (the daughter of Captain Flint who later appeared as a ghost, played by Paul Tucker) – told it it didn’t follow the classic story. Long John Silver’s hapless assistants, ‘Line’ and ‘Sinker’ were played by Rachael Chamberlayne and Ruby Evans and added to the fun. The splendidly costumed Dame, Hysteria Hawkins (Jim’s Mum) was played by Freddie Taylor whilst Jack Houston (a Rupert Graves lookalike) played Captain Flounder. We even had a professor played by Joanne Fisher (who also played the lookout). Ben Gunn, who had been marooned on the island and was the current possessor of the dreaded black spot was played by Ashley Rowles who also played Mr Arrow (see below). Most remarkable was Dan Lovell who stepped in at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour to play Steven (the ‘Buttons’ character) as Sam Kirby was indisposed. You would not have known he had very little time to learn the part. I did wonder if the name ‘Steven’ was a nod to RSL.

Other parts were played by Ashley Rowles (My Arrow who becomes fish food early on), Alfie Spinner (Harbourmaster), Charlotte Hancock (the jailer), Rozie Mizen (Lord Ostrich), Alfie Evans (Captain Rat) and Isla Watts (1<sup>st</sup> mate rat). I must mention Paula Kemp who, in a splendid costume, played the lobster, Leonardo da Pinchi, who snipped the ropes to release the trussed up Goodies.

Several of the above were also among the ‘Chorus of Villagers and Pirates’ along with Sean Jarrett and Megan Toomey. There were two teams of children, the ‘Jolly Rogers’ and the ‘Black Pearls’, many with speaking parts. The involvement of these children is one of the big strengths of Elmore pantos and Joanne Fisher is to be congratulated as their coach; they all spoke well and could be heard clearly. In fact the whole cast spoke clearly and there was almost no need for the prompt.

I may be wrong and am happy to be contradicted, but I think this may be the largest panto cast ever, which shows the health of Village Players. How many man/woman/boy/girl hours went into this production for our entertainment and the support of two charities (the

RNLI and Wild Hogs Hedgehog Rescue) one can only guess but must have been considerable and certainly very worthwhile.

The costumes were, as usual, superb; the music and FX spot on. The ‘Oscar’ for original script goes jointly to Freddie Tayler and Sean Jarrett while the acting ‘Oscar’ goes to Dan Lovell

## **An Interesting Footnote**

Joshua Slocum, the first person to sail alone around the world, set out from Boston, USA, in the sloop ‘Spray’ in April 1895, returning there in June 1898. In the course of the voyage he visited Vailima, Robert Louis Stevenson’s house in Samoa. RLS had died of a stroke on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1894 but Slocum met his wife, the splendidly named Fanny van de Grift Stevenson, who still lived there. It’s also interesting to compare this more than 3 year circumnavigation with the current solo record of 42 days, 16 hours, 40 minutes and 35 seconds by Francois Gabart.

## **The Village Paper Boy in the Early 70s**

I apologise in advance if in name dropping throughout this piece, I miss people out, but these are the people I remember and I’m sure some of the older residents will remember them too. Newer villagers may have heard stories about them or maybe you now live in one of the houses mentioned. For each family I’ve bracketed the children I grew up with at that time.

I took over the round from Joe Birt who lived next to the school and whose Grandmother ran the village post office from her front room. Joe was in the Air Cadets and went on to join the RAF, where he was lucky enough to get posted onto the Royal Flight. Graham Birt, his dad was a bus driver on the local buses run by Silvey’s based at Epney, opposite The Anchor. They later became Ladbrokes until late 70’s when the route was taken over by Swanbrookes from Quedgeley.

But I digress.

My paper round was from the school, southward through the village, ending at the bungalow after the church. The northern half was done

by Janice Buckley whose family lived along Weir Lane. Her round went from the school, to the cottage opposite Graham Taylor's yard, a pig farm at the time but originally an Army camp with a dark secret - now that's a story for another time.

The papers would arrive by local bus around 5pm at Weir Lane junction to where I would cycle and help Janice divide them into the two amounts we needed. Most of the time the exact amount was dropped off but now and again they would be short of one or two and we would take it in turns to run with the shortage. I was lucky in that my Grandmother lived next door so we could share if there was only one missing.

I knew just about everyone in the village, many of us were related in some way, others were connected through the school. It was a time when everyone knew everyone else.

First drop after Joe's house was Barhouse Farm which was home to the Prout families, later moving to the farm at Stonebench (Jane, Jackie, Margaret)

The coach house on the right, was an actual coach house then and part of the Dower House. It was a very grand building with three large arched entrances. An impressive structure. Unfortunately I don't think any photographs exist today but I may be wrong; perhaps Colin Ellis would know?

At the Dower House lived Janet & Ivor Phillips (Nicholas). Mrs Phillips was the school dinner lady. The milk and meals would arrive in the back of a green Austin council van in aluminium containers and she would be there to dish them all out. I remember a particularly snowy day back in the 60s when the van couldn't get through, she mustered up meals for us all from her home and our milk was sent up fresh from the cows at Barhouse.

Now down the pitch to the house on the right, Fernhay, where Mr & Mrs Duirs lived.

Across the road to Mrs Reynolds, the old black and white cottage with its hipped roof and gable end. A feature that at the time fascinated me.

No deliveries up Velthouse Lane but for the record in Keepers Cottage lived Fred, Bert, Walt and Bessie Gabb. She was an old Scottish lady who my father would often fetch shopping for and when I was with him, would never let me go without some cake or sweets.

Round the hairpin bend we had, on the right, the Smiths (Joe, Heather) at the Dahlias, Mr Hignell, a retired engineer at the start of Penny Lane and then Derek Smith the upholsterer at Talygarn (Karen, Andrew).

Opposite was Duncan's Cottage where the McPhersons (John, Margaret, Jamie, Alison) lived. Back then it was a picturesque thatched cottage and had very low ceilings as I recall.

On the right, in Partridge Houses were, in No.2 Doug & Barb Clacke (Graham Nigel, Mike & David) and in No1 Walt & Ruth Base (Mike, Francis, Margaret). Doug was a lorry driver and Walt the local roadman who worked on the council and had managed to get posted on the local roads, which meant they were always kept up together with any pothole filled as soon as it showed.

In the small brick house immediately after that were the Walkers. Australian I think if their accent was anything to go by.

On the corner before Farleigh's end lived Brigadier Hewitt and his daughter Sarah. She was a professional photographer and kept horses in the field next to me.

Frank & Ida Littleton were at Farleys End farm.

Down towards Elmore Back to Mrs French on the right and Mr Meek on the left and that was as far as I went in that direction.

Back up to Farleys End junction lived Mary Camm in the bungalow. Norman and Doris Prosser in a tiny B&W cottage on the right where Ali's newer and much larger house now stands.

Reg and Vera then later, Graham and Ann Littleton were in Pleasure farm.

Mr & Mrs Hill, then Danny Woodman and eventually Frank Littleton lived in the Black & White on the right.

Spring Lane No28 Jim & Joan Preece. (Trevor, Dianne). Joan is still in residence today and going strong despite a recent stroke.

Spring Lane No 1 that was, and still is me.

Frank Vaughan was opposite the church and could often be seen on his ladder shaping the yew tree out the front.

Bridgemacote, George & Beryl Workman (Jane and Alan)

And finally in the bungalow after the church was Mrs Browning who was in a wheelchair.

Rain or shine, light or dark the papers were delivered. Winter wasn't much fun because it was dark at 4:30 and I remember how pathetic bicycle lights were back then? They lit up a foot wide patch in yellow light, just ahead of your front wheel giving you no time to spot and dodge the puddles or anything else in the road!

Christmas made it all worthwhile however. Tips, chocs and other goodies lifted your spirits and spurred you on through the rest of the winter.

Oh Happy Days!

Tony Leach

## **A response to the Island Reading Group; Shuggie Bain**

*Avid readers of The Bridge will remember that the Island Reading Group gave this book a 'resounding thumbs down' but the editor has received another view which we print here. Is it worth reading?*

Definitely worth reading! This is not a 'feel-good' story but it is a reflection of the author's childhood; this young Glaswegian boy, struggling to survive in harsh conditions. I doubt the author, Douglas Stuart, is trying to provoke his readers; he is merely telling his story 'how it really was'. The story is about love, grief and loss and yes, the language is raw; that is how it was, but once drawn into this young boy's upbringing, losing a father at 4 and his mother at 16, whom he supported and cared for deeply, it compels the reader to find out what happens next. Does Shuggie come through such traumatic early-year experiences? I for one thought that this story, based on someone's true life story, was thought provoking, well written and I wanted to keep reading in the hope that Shuggie came out the other end. Could any of us persevere and be as strong and focused if subjected to such beginnings

Jennie Field

## **Book Review**

### **'World Without End' by Ken Follett**

This is a brilliant book. I read it recently for the second time and it didn't disappoint. It is the sequel by about 200 years to Ken Follett's other great medieval story, 'The Pillars of the Earth'. It is also set in the cathedral city of Kingsbridge and begins in 1327 when 4 children witness a shocking event in the forest outside the city. It is the same year that King Edward II was murdered in Berkeley Castle and this event reverberates through the book. The children are Ralph, a bully who turns out to be an increasingly repellant character; Merthin his clever elder brother, who grows up to be a genius builder and engineer; Caris is also clever and wants to be a doctor, though women were then not permitted to study medicine (or anything else and not for many centuries to come) and, lastly, Gwenda, who is made to be a thief by her awful father (he later sells her in return for a cow). Even as children, Merthin and Caris are fascinated with each other and grow up to fall in love. Their relationship is an on-going theme in the book.

We are well before Henry VIII so apart from the King, his nobles and lesser officials, power is still in the hands of the Monasteries. Kingsbridge does not have a Royal Charter but it does have a Monastery run by Prior Godwyn. Most of the monks and nuns are suitably devout but Godwyn and his sidekick, Philemon, are thoroughly nasty and indulge in most of the 7 deadly sins, much to the detriment of the population of the city

At the time medicine was not just primitive but was downright wrong. The 1320s were very significant medically. Only monks could study medicine whose practice involved bleeding to balance the 'humours' and the application of poultices made with animal dung to bring out the 'laudable pus'. Another 'cure' was to place the patient's bed so that he/she could see an altar. Caris, who is helping in the hospital, sees all this mumbo-jumbo for what it is and develops her own methods involving cleanliness, fresh air, the 14th

equivalent of PPE and herbal remedies. However, women such as Caris had to be very careful not to be accused of witchcraft.

Enough said. I am in danger of giving away some major plotlines. This is a wonderful read and with 1014 pages you won't have to look for something else to read for quite a time. It's exciting, fascinating, sexy, funny, brutal and shocking but very rewarding. Give it a go. I am happy to lend my copy to anyone in Elmore . I also have a copy of 'The Pillars of the Earth'.  
The Editor

## **Elmore War Memorial Dead Remembered**

Over the period of the Commemoration of WW1 (2014-2018) I wrote many stories about the lives of the men from Elmore who were killed during WW1 or WW2 as well as some who survived. We are now 10 years on from the start of the WW1 stories in **The Bridge** and there have been many personality changes in the village. I therefore, over the next few editions of *The Bridge*, offer abbreviated versions of those stories as well as the stories of some more of the men that fought for their country and survived the wars. These stories clearly associate the people involved with the houses in which they lived in Elmore.

John Field

*We print details of those who died in WW1 and WW2 in this issue. In the next we will print the stories of those who survived in these and earlier conflicts. Ed*

## **World War 1**

(4<sup>th</sup> August 1914 – 11<sup>th</sup> November 1918)

**Lieutenant Henry George Christopher Guise; 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Gloucestershire Regiment.**

Henry joined the Territorial Army in August 1914 and was commissioned as an officer in November of that year, His unit deployed to France on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1915. Henry died in a training accident on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May 1915, in Le Romarin in Belgium, aged 21. At the time of his death he was teaching a soldier of his unit in the art of using the improvised and very unstable 'Jam Tin' grenade.



**Private Wintour Edward Webb;** 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment. Wintour was killed in action at Chunuk Bair, during the disastrous Gallipoli Campaign on Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> August 1915, aged 20. Wintour had been working for Sir William Guise at Elmore Court prior to joining the Army. In 1911 Wintour was living in a cottage on Weir Lane Elmore with his widowed mother and four brothers.

**Private Alfred Spencer** 10<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment. Alfred was killed in the action at High Wood near Pozieres Ridge during the Battle of The Somme on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1916. he was aged 38. Prior to joining the army Alfred was a builder's labourer and lived in the only cottage on Chapel Lane, off Weir Lane, Elmore

*I remember the late Jim Camm telling me there were two cottages in Chapel Lane but one of them burnt down. Ed*

**Private William Joseph Merrett:** 1<sup>st</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment. William was badly wounded during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battle of Ypres (*also known as The Battle of Passchendaele*) in Belgium and after a long period in a Field Hospital, he died of his injuries on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1917, aged 26. He came from a family of blacksmiths who lived and worked at Penny Lane House, Elmore.

**Private Edward Martin Clarke;** 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Lancashire Fusiliers. Edward was killed in action at Polygon Wood near Broodseinde in Belgium, during the Third Battle of Ypres on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1917, at the age of 19. Edward's mother was Frances Annie Taylor who was born in Elmore and had been married in Elmore Church. His father's occupation was listed as Salmon Fisherman. By 1911 his family had moved to 5 Victoria Cottages, Rea Lane, which was then part of Elmore.

**Private James Gardner;** 1<sup>st</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Gloucestershire Regiment. James was killed in action near Auchonvilliers, in the Ancre Sector, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battle of The Somme during fighting on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1917, at the age of 32. James was born in Elmore and lived at Brookfield House, Elmore (*now Brookfield Kennels*) but by 1911 he had but moved to Wales to work on the railways. He returned to Elmore to join the Army in 1914 aged 29.

**Lance Corporal Arthur Moss Lovell;** 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment. Arthur was killed in action on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1918 during the advance on the French town of Arras, aged 23, just 3 months before the end of the War. He was born in Quedgeley when his father – Henry Lovell – was running Highliffe Farm (*now buried under Aldi's and a housing estate*) but by 1918 the family had moved to Severn Bank Farm in Elmore Back.

**Private Reginald William Ernest Mayo;** The 58<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Corps. Reginald joined the Army in June 1918, he married Lucy Hinder, the gamekeeper's daughter, in Elmore Church whilst on leave from France and then having spent a brief honeymoon at his in-law's house – Keepers Lodge, he returned to his unit in France and was killed in action 3 months later on 16<sup>th</sup> September 1918, just two months before the war ended, aged 20. His widow gave birth to their son, Reginald Liermont Ernest Mayo on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1919. With a name like 'Mayo' one would have expected William to have lived in Mayo Cottage on Weir Lane. However, his immediate family lived across the river in Westbury on Severn but in 1911 he was living with his grandfather, Edwin Ryder, at Hollow Farm so that he could attend Elmore School. However, Mayo Cottage was where Reginald's great uncle, William Mayo (b. 1848 – d. 1902) lived with his wife Sarah Ann Butler (b. 1849 – d. 1911). Their son, Mark Louis Mayo and his wife Eliza Ann Hyett were still living in Mayo Cottage in 1939.

## **World War 2**

(3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939 – 15<sup>th</sup> August 1945)

**Private Herbert Wallis Cresswell;** (1919-1940) 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment

Killed in action during the retreat to Dunkirk on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1940, aged 21. Herbert's family lived in Victoria Cottages, now part of Quedgeley. Interestingly Thomas' brother George, born in 1917, was christened with middle names of 'Douglas Verdun Haig'. Douglas Haig being the commander of the British Expeditionary Force during WW1 and Verdun was one of the major and most brutal battles in the WW1.

**Leading Seaman Albert Nathan Coe;** (1913-1940) Royal Navy. Albert was killed in action on board the French Ship “Medoc” on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1940 near the Eddystone Lighthouse having been struck by a torpedo dropped by a plane. He was aged 27. Albert lived for a while in a cottage adjacent to Elmore Farm – now The Gables, which used to be two terraced cottages. In 1925 he was awarded a scholarship to The Crypt School. By 1939 he was living in the Old Stonebench Inn where his widow, Ave Tibbits, continued to live until around 1949.

**Private Hubert Vaunton Leslie Wyatt;** (1920-1942) 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment. Hubert died during the Allies’ rapid retreat from Rangoon in Burma at the end of July 1942, he was aged 22. Prior to the war Hubert lived with his family at 18 Elmore which was probably one of the terrace cottages which were converted into The Gables.

## **News from St John the Baptist Elmore**

**Regular services** at Elmore Church are, 9.30am Holy Communion 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays each month (with choir), 4pm Evensong 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays. There is no service at Elmore on a 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday.

Thank you to all those who prepared the Harvest Supper, and to all who attended and contributed to the excellent total raised.

The priority for the Church in 2025 is locating and installing a suitable replacement pipe organ.

Do be in touch if I can help you in any way. God bless you.

Rev Richard Martin 01452 720015 vicar@hardwicke-elmores-longney.church

For the latest news please see our weekly newsletter posted on our website Elmore: St John the Baptist - A Church Near You

**Book recommendation:** Man’s Search For Meaning by Viktor E Frankl (Rider, 2004)

You may have come across this before; it’s a classic, written in 1945. But I have only just discovered it following an article in ‘Philosophy Now’ magazine, and have found it very helpful.

Frankl, an Austrian Jew, spent most of the war in concentration camps. The first part of the book describes his experiences, and aspects of life and death there that were new to me in their realism.

The second part is his reflection, which became his life's work, on what qualities were needed in people (the title says 'Man' but that's just a reflection of his time) to survive psychologically and emotionally intact. After the war he became a sought-after psychotherapist practicing a new way of treatment, neither following Freud or Jung, which he called 'logotherapy'.

He used this technique to help people who had suffered all kinds of trauma and tragedy, and I think it still offers profoundly helpful strategies.

You need to read the book to get a full picture of this but here are 3 extracts that for me summarise his therapeutic approach:-

On the dignity of choice, (p76) 'The way in which a man accepts his fate and all the suffering it entails, the way in which he takes up his cross, gives him ample opportunity - even under the most difficult circumstances - to add a deeper meaning to his life..... this decides whether he is worthy of his sufferings or not'.

On The Meaning of Life (p113) - 'The meaning of life differs from man to man, from day to day, from hour to hour. What matters therefore is not the meaning of life in general but rather the specific meaning of a person's life at a given moment ..... everyone's task is as unique as his specific responsibility to implement it'.

And on suffering, (p116) 'When we are no longer able to change a situation - just think of an incurable disease such as inoperable cancer - we are challenged to change ourselves'.

As a Christian I agree with his urging that we take responsibility for growing spiritually in times of difficulty. I wonder though to what extent we need the grace of God to help us do this, for, as he acknowledges, many people do not seem to have the inner resources to do so when it comes to the crunch.

I'd encourage anyone to read it and ponder it: it's only 150 pages.

Rev. Richard Martin

## Parish Council Update

Dear Residents,

I am pleased to announce we are back to a full complement of parish councillors, allowing us to continue to support you for the foreseeable future. I would first like to express our gratitude to Tony Leach, who has recently stepped down from the Parish Council. Tony's dedication and contributions, particularly his representations at the Severn Voice meetings, have been invaluable.

We are delighted to welcome our two new councillors, Alison Inwood and Zahra Sadry, to the Parish Council. Thank you, Alison and Zahra, for stepping up to fill the vacancies. Your willingness to serve our community is greatly appreciated, and we look forward to working together to continue making positive changes.

Our communication with the Highways Department remains excellent. Any issues or concerns (e.g. potholes, broken signs etc.) must be reported on FixMyStreet before we are able to escalate them. At the December meeting we approved the procurement of a bin for the layby at Velthouse turning. This initiative aims to keep our community clean and tidy.

Lastly, and on a separate note, I would like to highlight the increasing dangers that AI has brought to the community. It is crucial to stay vigilant and informed about these threats. Here is what AI has to say for itself:

*“AI-enabled scams, such as voice cloning and deepfakes, have become more sophisticated and can be particularly convincing. For example, scammers can use AI to mimic the voice of a loved one [MB Update: or celebs e.g. Martin Lewis who’s face and voice have been used in so many scams he has announced he does not do any ads or endorsements], making it sound like they are in urgent need of money. This type of scam, often targeting older individuals, can be emotionally manipulative and financially devastating.*

*In Gloucestershire, there has been an increase in various types of fraud, including online shopping scams and phone scams. Residents have reported receiving calls from numbers that appear to be local, but are actually from scammers trying to trick them into providing personal information or making payments.*

*To protect yourself and your loved ones, it's important to:*

- *Verify the identity of the caller, especially if they are asking for money or personal information. [MB Update: Always ask to hang up and call back with a reference ID on a number you know is legitimate. All legitimate callers will not mind as they are briefed to accept this].*
- *Use a family "safe word" that only your family members know, to confirm the identity of the caller.*
- *Be cautious of unsolicited messages or calls, and avoid clicking on links or providing information unless you are certain of the source."*

There should be no stigma in being a victim of one of these scams, they are increasingly proficient and even people trained are struggling to spot them all. There's support available if you suspect you may have been impacted.

Thank you for your continued support.

Best regards,

Matthew Brandon,

Chairman, Elmore Parish Council

## **Defibrillators – an Update**

Back in 2015 the Parish Council bought and installed two defibrillators. One of these was purchased through the donations of members of our community. Since then the Parish Council has maintained and monitored the defibrillators. Each defibrillator needs a battery replacement every 4 years (the latest one cost £357) and new pads (2 sets per defib– one in use and one spare) every 2 – 3 years (last set cost £77 – so £154 for 2 sets). This regular expenditure is met from the Parish Councils precept (part of your Council Tax)

One defibrillator is in the old phone box beside the Village Hall, the other is in the dairy at Elmore Back Farm (thanks to Sophie Round for this) The Elmore Back defibrillator is not visible from the road so **it is important that residents refamiliarise themselves with its location so as not to waste time in an emergency.**

It is important to know the code necessary to open the cabinets to access the defibrillators - (it is **C123X**). Some time ago the Parish Council supplied each household with a magnetic fridge sticker with this code so that you would be reminded of it continuously. As there have been a number of newcomers to the village some households may no longer have these stickers. The Parish Council is intending to get some more to fill these gaps **so it would be helpful if you could inform any Councillor (contact details on the back page) so that we can order enough.**

Although the Parish Council maintains and monitors the defibrillators it is up to each household to be prepared for emergencies. If one of your household has a heart attack:

**You need to phone 999**

**You need to administer CPR**

**You need to fetch the defibrillator**

Clearly someone will need to administer CPR while another goes for the defibrillator. If you are a couple or you live alone you will need neighbours to help. Some time ago **yellow cards** were distributed with **The Bridge** on which you could write your neighbours contact details. If you don't have one please make one of your own. It's better not to rely on your memory in an emergency situation

### **PLEASE PLAN AHEAD**

In the past the Parish Council has organised free First Aid sessions including how to use a defibrillator. It is several years since the last course so there could be another in the spring if there is enough demand. **If you would be interested in attending a course please let any councillor know.**

## **1st Elmore Brownies**

On return to Brownies after the autumn half term break we had banger and sparkler night where we had sparklers and enjoyed eating hot dogs. We also celebrated Diwali where we made clay candle holders to place our tea lights. We attended the Longney Church remembrance service with 1st Kingsway Brownies and 1st Elmore Guides. We also made yule logs which were very yummy! The Brownies also had a craft night where we made a Christmas wreath

using fabric. We enjoyed a joint roller skating party with 1st Elmore Guides at Roller Express in the Quays and also had a Christmas service hosted by Richard the vicar at Longney Church. Many Brownies were awarded badges at our last meeting, with some receiving their Bronze, Silver, and two Brownies achieving their Gold Award. Well done to all the Brownies for the badges they achieved last term.

At 1st Elmore Brownies this half term we will be focussing on our Take Action, Be Well and Know Myself Skills Builders and Unit Meeting Activities to enable the girls to achieve their Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards. We also have a guest speaker from Wild Hogs to give a presentation along with games and activities on the work they are doing to rescue and help hedgehogs. The girls will also be making friendship bracelets and cards to give to another local Brownie Unit as part of our World Thinking Day on 21st February

## **1st Elmore Guides**

The Guides have been working on their Innovate Stage 4 Skills Builder badge as part of their Express Myself Theme during the second part of the autumn half term. As part of the badge we did some baking, made friendship bracelets in binary code and made our own game of 'Operation'. We took part in the remembrance service at Longney Church with 1st Kingsway Brownies and 1st Elmore Brownies. We have also taken part in designing a lion as part of the Gloucestershire Hospitals Lions at Large trail coming to Gloucester and Cheltenham in summer 2025. For our Christmas activities we enjoyed a roller skating disco with 1st Elmore Brownies. For our last meeting we had a Christmas celebration service at Longney Church with 1st Elmore Brownies and all the Guides families; thank you to Richard and Colin for hosting the event. The Guides were presented with their badges they had achieved during the term at the service.

For the first part of this half term the Guides will be continuing to work on the Express Myself Theme. As part of this theme we will have a go at making bionic hands, practicing our aeroplane making



skills and trying a magic trick. We will also be working on our Fixing badge where we will learn how to change a light bulb, automobile mechanics and practising our sewing skills.

*If your daughter is interested in joining Brownies (7-10 years), Guides (10-14 years) or if you would like to volunteer as a Young Leader/ DofE Helper (14-18 years) or Adult Leader (18+) please contact [lstelmore@gmail.com](mailto:lstelmore@gmail.com).*

## **Elmore WI**

In December members enjoyed a hot meal prepared by the committee. Donations of food were brought for the Food Bank. We also held a raffle and £50 was sent to Sue Ryder.

We have a varied programme of talks planned for the new year starting in January with a film show by Kate Peake entitled Views of Gloucestershire and beyond.

February 11<sup>th</sup>. Healing powers of crystals by Susan McCann.

March 11<sup>th</sup> A career in the Royal Navy by Helen Simms.

April 8<sup>th</sup> Gloucester's Maritime Business by Tony Condor.

Visitors are always welcome to the Village Hall on 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in the month.

## **Village Players**

Village Players would like to thank everyone who watched our 2024 production of Treasure Island. Long John Silver was defeated and everyone lived happily ever after, which is quite the relief! We hope everyone enjoyed the show as much as we enjoyed putting the production together over the last few months. A big thank you to everyone who helped out in some capacity too. Our next show will be our 2024 spring production, the title of which is to be confirmed but will be 15h to 17th May.

Keep an eye on our facebook page (@VillagePlayersElmore). We're always welcoming of new members so if you would like to get involved for our spring production or annual pantomime, on or off stage, then please do get in touch.

## Severnside Singers

We enjoyed singing carols at carols at Highfield Christmas Market. New singers always welcome. We meet at Frampton Village Hall on Thursday evening at 7.30pm. For further information please ring Pam Greenfield 01452 740126.

## Village Hall News

The Hall activities have resumed and all user groups are up and running for the new year.

At the January meeting of EVH Committee most agenda items were deferred until our next meeting, due to non availability of several Committee members.

Our Christmas Lunch, held on Sunday 15th December was a great success. Over £2000 was raised in aid of Hall funds. Many thanks to all concerned, further details and thanks will be confirmed in the next issue of **The Bridge**.

Congratulations to Village players for another successful Panto.

Demand for space in our Hall is steadily increasing, early bookings (or enquiries) are advisable. I look forward to hearing from you.

Many thanks to all users and supporters of the Hall.

John (Hardisty)

## Laurie Lee Prize for Writing

This prize is part of **The Stroud Book Festival** (see [stroudbookfestival.org.uk](http://stroudbookfestival.org.uk) for the rules of the competition and details of how to enter). There are two categories: one for 16 to 20 year olds, the other for those over 21. Prose or poetry may be submitted. I have included this in **The Bridge** hoping that it may encourage residents of Elmore to enter. There are generous cash prizes. The 16 to 20 winner in 2024, has given me permission to publish one of her 3 poems here. Estella is a 6<sup>th</sup> form student at Pates Grammar School and lives in Chalford but is a frequent visitor to Elmore – she did her work experience at Wholly Gelato (Dream placement. Yum yum). Sadly there is not enough space to include her longest poem,

‘Avebury’ or her short poem ‘Monday Evening, Between Exams’.  
But I can fit in ‘November’.

## **November**

And then, November, to school mornings tightly knit over  
With heavy clouds on the skyline, an oath of afternoon rain,  
Pretty red poppies ache away what dust remains of summer  
And their bonnets wilt dark, droop and decay, as though  
Fainting ladies, quailing on the roadside. A man  
On the pavement fastens his pin tighter. Though he is old  
He is still too young to remember. And he strides over  
The limp flowers, because the children never really  
Stopped dying. A low wind passes through the dank streets  
With a biting vengeance, lifting hats to pull at loose hair,  
Begging for attention. Play with me, it howls, as the sky,  
Already tender, cracks, and the rain crashes down.  
Thunder bellows; Nature herself tosses in her grave,  
Soft soil churning, peppered with Stones  
That pierced the gentle flesh.  
On and on the day deepens, richly dark by nightfall,  
And hands nursing warm mugs watch the miserable weather  
From the comfortable side of a window. Eyes darken at the  
Short days, hollow days. Woodsmoke and cider and prickling lights.  
While outside the world groans, the year sinking into self-mourning  
Macabre and cold. And finally, as the clouds relent slightly,  
Pulling back to reveal a pond, a puddle, of stony night sky,  
The stars seems to whisper, maybe one day, when it’s not all so tiring  
And Nature nods her grieving head in agreement and weeps

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## Parish Council Meeting Dates 2025

March 2025	Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> March	
May 2025	Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> May	2 Annual Meetings
September 2025	Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> September	
December 2025	Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> December	

All the above will be held in the Village Hall at 7pm

## Copy Dates for The Bridge 2025

Friday May 9<sup>th</sup> 2025

Friday August 1<sup>st</sup> 2025

Friday October 10<sup>th</sup> 2025

Please send copy to the editor on or before the above dates. Regular contributors will be warned of each of the dates 2 to 3 weeks in advance. Handwritten copy should be sent to Rose Cottage, Elmore, GL2 3NS and electronic copy to [rosecottage1818@gmail.com](mailto:rosecottage1818@gmail.com)

The editor is grateful to John Tooth who has agreed to take over from Chris Camm in distributing **The Bridge** (Haywicks, Stonebench and Weir Lanes)