

**A Merry Christmas
& Happy New Year**

SALTASH AND DISTRICT OBSERVER

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December 2016 - Issue 297 Established 24 years

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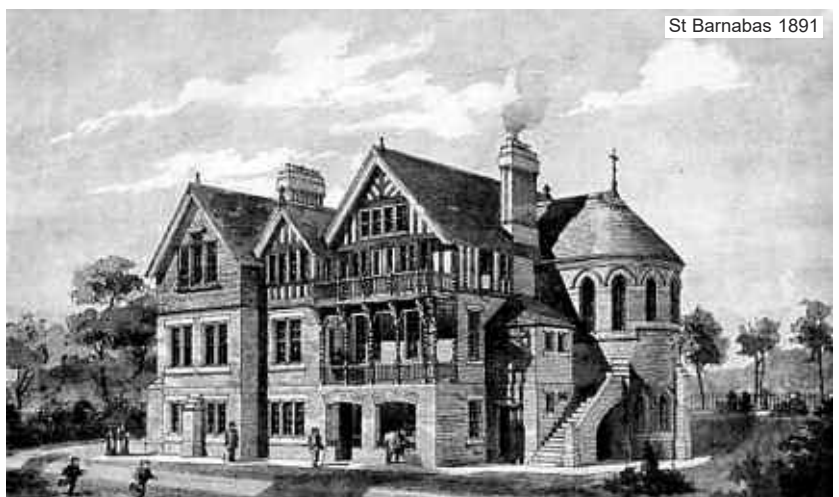
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Action Plan to Include Best Use of St. Barnabas Hospital

While much loved and respected by patients and families our community cottage hospital of St. Barnabas is rather tucked away and unknown by many residents, said Chair of the League of Friends of St. Barnabas, Mrs Joyce Mepsted at the league's annual general meeting. The league seeks to raise awareness and in particular raise funds for medical requirements and patient comforts not provided through the health services.



Over the last year the league had succeeded in raising over £1,500 through a series of organised events and through stalls at town events. This was in addition to over £6000 received by way of donations and membership fees. The league was also pleased to have been selected by Saltash Co-op to be one of three charities to benefit from their new members' card scheme. This money, it is hoped, will be put towards creating a new garden and sitting area for patients and visitors. Among the many new items already purchased are bed tables, blinds, blood pressure monitors, nebulisers, bladder scanner and a stand and walking aid.

Councillor Mrs Hillary Frank who addressed the meeting. She thanked the efforts of the hard working committee and especially its Chair, Mrs Mepsted.

The Chief Executive of Cornwall Partnership Foundation Trust, Phil Confue added that the hospital staff really appreciates the efforts put in by the hospital friends and that there is a real need to continue to help and support the hospital.

The NHS, he added, is now reviewing everything that it does in Cornwall and how it can make best use of its resources. This includes the local hospitals, such as St. Barnabas. There is every intention to keep services local so far as possible and local views are to be sought as to how St. Barnabas can be more of a service to Saltash.

Currently the community hospital in Cornwall are owned by NHS Property Services and leased out by the Foundation Trust, he explained. It does not help that the two bodies are currently in dispute as to who should pay for repairs to a total value of around £18 million. A further problem is the physical layout of the hospital over two floors with a lift that frequently breaks down and boilers that need replacing.

However the hospital does have a future as a part of Saltash health care. Mr.

Confue assured his audience. There are no plans for it to be lost to the community, but issues as to the best way for it to go forward, as a local 'well being' centre. He would like to see the day centre in particular better used as a wider community resource and the theatres, currently under used, as a real resource for health care. 'It is a wonderful building offering real opportunities', he believes.

A sustainable transformation plan for health services in Cornwall is under way and will begin with public meetings between now and February 2017 to discuss getting the best out of available services. He promised to ensure that one such meeting would be in

Saltash. By May there would be full consultation on prospective plans for the next five years of health service, in which the future development of hospitals such as St. Barnabas would be included, leading to an action plan being published by Autumn 2017.

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Gateway to the Woods



A tranquil woodland oasis, a few metres from the heavily trafficked Tamar bridge, can now be entered through a wooden archway created by local students and their staff.

When the Cornish Cross was erected the adjacent piece of scrubland was cleared, planted out and turned into an attractive piece of open woodland known as Elwell Woods.

Now the project has been completed by Cornwall College, utilising lottery fund money provided for the woodland's transformation. Students came up with a variety of designs for a gateway to the woods. Once

one had been selected the oak was sourced from Scotland and carved out by students, emblazoning the name 'Elwell Woods'.

A team of college lecturers, led by Jamie Rowley then had the hard task of digging down a metre into what appeared to be virgin slate, adjacent to the site of the old Saltash Brewery, before erecting the wooden gateway. A team of students was then tasked with tidying up and completing the project.

New Year Bus to Derriford

The running of a regular bus service between Saltash and Derriford hospital, planned for this Autumn, is now hoped to commence service early in the New Year.

Community Enterprises PL12, who planned to set up the service soon after acquiring a second Hopper bus for the community have found the task more taxing than anticipated. They decided to adopt a cautious approach and ensure that all was in place with the necessary administration and IT support to ensure that it runs smoothly from the start.

The good news is that while there has been a delay in beginning the service there has not only been considerable interest from potential passengers but also three potential volunteer drivers have come forward. This should help in the running of a service with around seven return trips each day, times for which will be fully publicised when all is fully organised.

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How many Cornwall Councillors does it take? To change a light bulb? To get a pothole mended? Or even, to run Cornwall Council?



CORNWALL COUNCIL



and our PL12 community
For Observer readers
From Councillor Joe Ellison

At present there are 123 Cornwall Councillors (Saltash has four) and in response to Government, an Electoral Review is being carried out into the future number, starting from the 2021 election (not next year). Popular opinion probably thinks that 123 is too many and that shedloads of money could be saved. The Conservative group on Council certainly does and unsuccessfully proposed just 70 at yesterday's Full Council meeting. In the end, we voted for an interim number between 105 and 115, figures that are supposed to be evidence-based, but seem to me to be equally plucked out of the air

However, consider some facts:

* If the objective nationally is that each Councillor should represent about 5,000 voters, then Cornwall is already fairly under-represented. We are fifth nationally in the number of voters per councillor.

* Before Cornwall became

unitary, there were 82 Cornwall County Councillors, but also over 240 Councillors on Caradon, Penwith, Kerrier Councils etc, all paid, so Cornwall Council has already made considerable savings.

* The local casework workload is considerable, particularly for urban councillors. We have all just completed a typical week's survey, and for me at least, it amounts to about three and a half days per week – in addition to meetings on sub committees and town committees, there are housing, estate maintenance and above all, parking problems. This is why, most Cornwall Councillors are retired or positively elderly – who else would take on almost a full-time job for £12,000 per year, and be constantly criticised?

* Having said that, please ignore my cynicism – next May, Saltash needs to elect four good men (or women) and true to Cornwall Council. Derek, Bob, Hilary and I would be delighted to help and advise anyone who feels an urge towards candidacy for public service...

Council Tax continues to rise

The Conservative government austerity cuts continue to bite. During the last four years, Cornwall Council has made savings of £107 million, by efficiencies, staff cuts, and cuts in services, such as public toilets. Another service saving (by drastic reduction of subsidy) announced this week

has been that all 26 leisure centres, including Saltash, have been hived off to a national company called GLL, instead of the present operator, Tempus Leisure. As you know, Saltash Town Council is soon to take on management of the Waterside and its assets and during 2017, will almost certainly have to take on Saltash Library. Such devolution is happening throughout Cornwall, and often, it's Hobsons Choice.

At yesterday's Council it was agreed that the 2017/18 budget will be £492 million, which will once again mean a council tax increase of 3.9%, the same as last year. Under the Medium Term Financial Plan, the same increase is likely for the next two years too.

The Government continues to impose a 2% cap, and progressively withdraw the Rate Support Grant, which will be zero by 2020. However to enable local authorities to cope with the ever-escalating costs of Adult Social Care, a further 2% increase is allowed earmarked for this purpose.

The net result of this cap on council tax has been that the larger town and many parish councils, including Saltash, have seen considerable increases in their precepts over the last two years. It's seen as the only way to carry out to maintain services or essential projects and enforced devolution at a local level. But it is probable that the

hated DCLG (Department of Communities and Local Govt) will impose a similar 2% cap on local councils in 2018, so expect more of the same to come!

Cornwall Local Plan

After over eight years work, at Truro it was also agreed to meet the lengthy list of final modifications required by the Government Inspector to allow the CLP to be adopted. This will be a relief to all those of us who sit on the East, Central, West or Strategic Planning Committees, as up to this point, the default planning standard has been the National Planning Policy Framework, which can be variously vague, over-prescriptive or often just inappropriate.

The requirement to approve applications without material grounds for refusal, backed up by developer appeals to the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol, is often seen as a developers' charter and Cornwall legal fees in respect of appeals cost £475,000 last year. Now at last, the Cornwall Local Plan, to which our planners have contributed and formulated, will take precedence.

Of course there is a downside – Cornwall has to accept 52,500 new houses in the county whether we think we actually need them or not over the period from 2010 to 2030, and demonstrate a five year land supply. It should be pointed out that the headline number also includes many houses already built or already approved – in the case of Saltash, it includes 1,200 houses at Broadmoor Farm, which SHOULD meet our foreseeable housing needs. It is also anticipated that 38,000 sorely-needed new jobs should be provided in the same period.

Resilience – what resilience?

As I write, the trackbed of the main train line north of Exeter has been washed away again and how long will it be before a disaster similar to 2014 happens once again on the Dawlish section of the line? Cornwall is effectively cut off from the rest of England by our totally inadequate infrastructure.

If that wasn't bad enough, the A38, one of our only two trunk roads through Cornwall, is frequently shut owing to road accidents. The section from Carkeel to Bodmin Carminow Cross has about a dozen accident black spots, yet no work will be implemented before 2020 at the earliest by Highways England.

As Cornwall Councillors, our ability to influence rail and road infrastructure is almost negligible. Yet we have six Conservative MPs in Cornwall with the ear of Government Ministers, and the remainder of MPs in the SouthWest are of a similar political stance. It has been said recently that £60 million will be spent on rail resilience problems but this pales into insignificance beside the billions that will be spent on the immense vanity project that is HS2.

Chamber Chairman Peter Ryland Keeping us Updated

The New Year is the time for resolutions, a case of "Ring out the Old, Ring in the New," and with 2017 only a few weeks away, is it time for Saltash Town Council (STC) to make a few resolutions that will benefit Saltash. Let us not forget that many of the councillors may not be still on the council come the elections in May and yet, in my opinion, their period of office has not produced anything of significance to be a legacy for the future.

There has been a lot of talking but nothing of significance has finally been achieved. Part of the problem, speaking as an outsider, seems to be the inordinate amount of time it takes to action any idea. For example if, under the auspices of Saltash Town Centre Improvement Group (STIG), an idea is approved which needs S.106 funding, the application for funding has to be approved by the next STIG meeting before then needing STC approval at a full council meeting and then the approval of the S.106 forum meeting before ratification by the County Council. This whole process can take 4 months at least. "Ring out the Old, Bring in the New."

STIG and the Neighbourhood Plan are the only two areas where STC and the private sector are both parties to the decision making process but I believe that the private sector/community should be allowed to play a greater role in the future of Saltash. The present government has put great emphasis on "Localism" and, indeed, STC is looking to receive, devolved, many assets and responsibilities from Cornwall Council (CC) but is there a business plan to show how these assets can be used to benefit the town? Furthermore how does STC plan to manage these assets? Is this where the Community Interest Company (CIC) becomes involved? The CIC is the lessee/manager for 18 Belle Vue Road, occupied by the food bank and Citizens Advice. The question should, in my opinion, be asked

whether the CIC should be the manager for all community assets, after all the CIC includes both councillors and the private sector on its board and has proved, with the many functions it does run, that it can be an effective manager. Basically, how should matters be organised, co-ordinated and managed in the future. It's time for STC to take control, challenge the status quo, adapt to change, set a plan for the Town and put the structure in place to deliver it! "Ring out the Old, Ring in the New."

Through the volunteer service at the CIC we know that there is a great desire to help on a volunteer basis and within the people of Saltash from my contacts at the Chamber there is also a desire to help from the businesses. So I say to STC to make resolutions to be entered into in the New Year which will

leave a positive legacy that will be the template for the future. Create the plan and structure the various forums that will enable positive ideas to come forward. Sort out the formalities/procedures that will enable these ideas to progress and involve your community and businesses so that there is a positive future for Saltash. Let's forego the negativity and longevity and act together for the benefit of all in Saltash. Look at the bigger picture rather than the small snapshot and make Saltash a model for others to follow and not a town that is "on the end of Cornwall" or "in theory a Plymouth suburb."

Finally, on behalf of the Chamber and its members, I would wish the community of Saltash a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Ring out the Old, Ring in the New!

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Mayoral Matters...

Ever wondered what that round bit on the side of St. Barnabas Hospital is? Well – it's a chapel. A beautiful chapel! As Mayor, I had the privilege of attending the traditional December service to bless the crib in the chapel. It was a time to reflect on the dedicated commitment the volunteers in the League of Friends of St. Barnabas have given over the years. Since it was formed in 1963, the League has raised over £550,000! This has enabled them to buy equipment like bath hoist chairs and an ECG machine, helping staff to provide a high level of nursing care and helping to maintain patients' comfort and health.

Now that we are in the season when we wish each other good health for the New Year, it seems appropriate to focus this article on St. Barnabas Hospital. The timing is good for another, perhaps more foreboding reason: local health and social care organisations throughout the country have been instructed to work together to create a 'Sustainability and Transformation Plan' (an STP) for their local area. Each STP must be a 5-year programme where health services are integrated with the social care services provided by local authorities under "one plan, one

budget and one system to better serve the local community."

GPs working more closely with hospital specialists, district nurses and social workers to improve care for people with long-term conditions would certainly be a positive outcome of an STP, and people with greater visionary powers than me are able to say that in the long term implementation of STPs will lead to an improvement in quality of care as well as in efficiency. But at a time when recorded hospital deficits are hitting £2.45 billion, waiting lists are growing and there is a chronic underfunding of social care there will certainly be plenty of challenges along the way. Those challenges are likely to be even more acute here in Cornwall, with higher proportions of elderly people living in rural locations.

And here in Saltash the word 'rationalisation' that crops up in the STP guidelines makes people fearful of what might happen to St. Barnabas Hospital. Have a read of this: "It must be recognised that whilst Saltash may be justly proud of its cottage hospital, which is unique in possessing one of the finest views in England, one of the most beautiful little chapels and a building which is generally pronounced 'charming', it is perhaps by the very reason of its prettiness, a



most expensive house to keep in repair." These words are not taken from a recent report, but from the first Hospital Report ever written, back in 1898! So, more than 100 years ago it was already being noted that the layout of the building meant that maintenance bills were not particularly low. And right now the boilers in this charming building need to be replaced... Not cheap!

Many of you will remember the temporary closure of the Minor Injuries Unit at St. Barnabas due to lack of staff. Well, the struggle to recruit staff was another of the challenges that was highlighted by Phil Confue, Senior Responsible Officer for the Cornwall STP, at his talk at the AGM of the League of Friends in November. He was, however, encouraging, saying: "We have a once in a generation opportunity to transform local health and care services over the next five years." He said he believes there is a future for St. Barnabas Hospital, but that there must be transformation, and encouraged everyone to think of ways of how to make the hospital more of a community asset, with a focus on wellbeing. Phil has agreed to come and speak to

Saltash Town Council at its meeting in the evening of 5th January. So please come along if you have suggestions on the future of St. Barnabas Hospital. Or speak with one of your town councillors, who will be able to relay and amplify your views.

The name Barnabas is said to mean 'Son of Consolation'. In this current swirl of unrest in the health and social care services, it seems appropriate to remember the consolation that the nuns, staff and volunteers at St. Barnabas Hospital have brought to the local community over many years. I'd particularly like to pay tribute to the dedicated, excellent service given to the League of Friends by Dr. Colin Randall, who retired at the November AGM after 6 years as President.

Ward names in St. Barnabas include Peace, Brightness, Hope, Comfort and Charity – all very appropriate messages to be writing in our Christmas cards, don't you think? As 2017 approaches, on behalf of all councillors on Saltash Town Council allow me to add one extra message: Good Health One and All.

*Cllr Hilary Frank MCIL
(Japanese) Town Mayor*

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Past, Present and Future**

Ho! Ho! Hopper Bus Trips

December 2016 – January 17

Sunday 11th December

Lifton Farm Shop Pre-Christmas Lunch

Meal cost not included

11am till 4pm £5

Friday 16th December

Exeter Christmas Market

Seasonal Shopping on Cathedral Green

10am till 4.30pm £12

Saturday 17th December

Mousehole Christmas Lights

With Truro stop off on way down

15.00pm £14.00

Sunday 18th December

Buckfast Abbey Christmas Carols

11am till 5pm £4.50

Wednesday 28th December

Post-Christmas stroll around Burrator

Reservoir

Hopper on hand for Café Stop when legs give up!

10am till 2pm £4

Thursday 29th December

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Sat 17th **Switch** (Bar)

Christmas Eve

Sat 24th **Hi Jack** (TBA)

Boxing Day

Monday 26th **Ronnie Del Rio/Karaoke** (Bar)

New Year's Eve

Sat 31st **Wendellas** (TBA)

New Year's Day

Sun 1st **Karaoke** (Bar)

Sat 7th **Ashes To Ashes** (Bar)

Sat 14th **Coverfire** (Bar)

Sat 21st **Decibelle** (Bar)

Sat 28th **Stage Two Duo** (Bar)

**Wishing you A Merry Christmas
& A Happy New Year**

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Guildhall Seeking to be Wedding Venue

The historic 18th century Guildhall is to be made available for weddings and other ceremonies if an application for registration of the premises to be made by the Town Council is approved.

Thos would allow civil marriage and ceremonies, civil partnership registrations, naming ceremonies and the renewal of civil marriage vows to be conducted either in the upstairs 'Long Room' with its attractive barrel roof, or in the smaller Council Chamber below. A separate interview room would be required which could be either the Mayor's Parlour or the reception office. The Mayor's Parlour itself could be used for ceremonies with small numbers attending.

This follows the closure of the Saltash Registry Office adjacent to the surgery in Plougastel Drive, where ceremonies were formerly conducted. The office itself has been relocated to the library but ceremonies cannot be conducted there. There is, therefore, currently nowhere in the town licensed for civil ceremonies, though the China Fleet Club and the Cardinal's Hatt Inn close by are both so licensed, as are Pentillie Castle, St. Mellion Golf and Country Club, Lantallack Farm and Port Elliot, further afield.

There are currently four Council's in Cornwall offering wedding venues, these being Looe, Penryn, St. Ives and Truro as well as Tavistock over the Devon border.

The Town Council accepted a recommendation from its services committee to submit an application for registration of the Saltash Guildhall at a cost of £1,525.00.

The cost of hiring the Guildhall for this purpose will be considered once the application has been approved but other Cornish civil venues charge between £150 and £360 for a room around the size of Saltash's Long Room, dependant upon length of time and maximum number of guests.

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December 16

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Wednesday 21st Open Mic

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Fri 23rd Roosters Fri 30th Suitcase Slim...

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Christmas Eve Sat 24th **Wireless**
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A Celtic Feast of Apples, Fun and Fireworks

The traditional Celtic spirit of Cornwall came alive on a chill November night as an estimated three thousand adults and children flocked to Warfelton field to share in celebration of Kalan Gwav.

This Cornish festival traditionally marked the first day of Winter but was also a celebration of harvest and in particular the gathering of apples.

Apples were thus to the fore in Warfelton field as, following the lighting of the beacon by Chair of Saltash United Football Club Colin Phillips, and following lively music from the Rubber Band, the Guardian of the Apples called upon the children, many of whom were bearing horses heads, to follow the band and Wassail the apple trees. Adults followed the children to the four trees planted around the field, each of which was given a



Photo Jenny Lightley

traditional 'Wassail', the word meaning 'good health'. Verses were chanted to excise evil spirits and guarantee a bountiful harvest next year,

Then the next group of entertainers, the Burraton Boys, lead a communal singing of the 'Essa Wassail', a song specially

written for the event and which it is hoped will become a part of an annual Saltash tradition.

The apple theme was also in evidence among the many stalls which promoted toffee apples baked by local guides, and a variety of apple based cakes, chutneys and other produce. An apple crusher

borrowed from Cotehele produced apple juice and mulled apple juice helped to warm many of those enjoying the festivities.

This could be enjoyed with burgers and a delicious hog roast. There were a number of entrants for the best scarecrow, which had been sitting outside local houses before they were judged and then brought to Warfelton. Special awards were given to 'Living Scarecrows' Jasmine and Caitlin. Children's entertainment including bouncy castle, slide and a highly popular 'Last Man Down' on which your Observer reporter declined to join a fellow local scribe.

There was continual live



Photo Jenny Lightley

music until just after eight p.m. when emcee Bob Austin led the countdown to the climax of the evening. All eyes were to the south as the most spectacular Saltash display of fireworks for many years lit up the Saltash November sky.

The event was organised by a small but dedicated team led by Mayor Hilary Frank with especial support from Saltash United Football Club and Girlguiding Saltash. It is hoped, following the obvious success of the evening, that funding will be available to make it an annual event.

The Winners of the Kalan Gwav Bake Off



Photo Jenny Lightley

- * Lisa Quick - for her Spicy Pumpkin and Apple Preserve
- * Caroline Robertson - for her Apple Pie
- * Teresa Jones - for her Apple Cake
- * Emma Jolly - for her Apple Custard Sandwich Signature Dish

The Winners in the Children's Categories were:

- * Connor & Owen Luton
- * Francisco Olney

Mayoral Chain Reaction To Loose Pendant

The Mayor Councillor Hilary Frank did not wear Saltash's splendid Mayoral chain as she conducted the November meeting of full council. The reason was that the clasp that attaches the chain to its medallion has been bent out of shape and was no longer dependable. The gold medallion was presented to the borough of Saltash in 1891 by the Mayoress Mrs W Dusting, to form the centre piece of the Mayoral chain, links of which were traditionally presented by bygone mayors back into the nineteenth century.

It has come close to being lost in the River Tamar, the medallion having previously been loose and fallen overboard when Mayor Vic Harding was on board a boat at Saltash regatta, but was quickly saved before sinking.

To avoid a similar fate befalling it Councillors agreed to pay around £300 for the clasp to be repaired and as small safety chain added, in time for the chain to be returned and worn at the Remembrance Day ceremonies.

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- FREE EVENT

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Tues 13th Dec:

Festive Quiz Night

From 8.30pm

Thurs 22nd Dec: Christmas Raffle

(Everyone Welcome)

Fri 23rd Dec:

The Hungry Bears

From 9pm

New Years Eve

FREE ENTRY

8pm till late



Bullers Christmas Opening Hours: Fri 23rd Dec 12pm - Midnight



Christmas Eve 12pm-Midnight

Christmas Day 11am - 3pm

Boxing Day 12pm - 11pm



Tues 27th Dec 4 - 11pm Wed 28th Dec 4 - 11pm

Thurs 29th Dec 4 - 11pm Fri 30th Dec 12pm-Midnight

New Years Eve 12pm -1am New Years Day 4pm -11pm

Monday 2nd January 4-11pm

Food available December and January Tues - Sat 6-8.30

(limited menu due to time of the year)

Food...The Kitchen will be closed from Christmas Eve and will re-open again on Tuesday 3rd January.

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Seasonal Greetings



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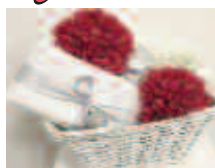
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A Message from the Editor... One Year on...

A little indulgence from the Editor!

That's what I said last year! I cannot believe a year has passed since I made an announcement that my beautiful Twin Grand daughters were born. It has been a wonderful year watching them develop into the little individuals that they have become. They are so different in personalities it is

amazing, and so much fun to see what they will do next.

I am constantly asked "how are the girls" when can we see them, so here they are at one year on.

Harriet & Scarlett have just celebrated their first birthday last week. I can only say Christmas has a new meaning for me this year, I cannot wait to celebrate it with our little angels who have brought so much love into our lives.

Thank you to my beautiful daughter and son in-law for sharing this wonderful gift, and all the joy that they have brought.

My Christmas Message to you all

By the time you read this, the town will have taken on its own special seasonal magic. The Christmas festival and parade will have passed, our celebrated lights will be glistening and our shops will be filled with traditional and unusual Christmas fare and ideas for gifts.

Once again our town will be able to offer all that is needed to make Christmas special.

As we build up the excitement that Christmas always brings to the young and those of all ages who are young at heart we should perhaps spare more than a moments thought for those less fortunate. Whether it be those whose lives have been devastated by war or just those local families who will be dependent for Christmas cheer on the charity and goodwill of others, we should remember that Christmas is a time of giving – and not only to kith and kin

We bring you a Christmas Message for the 25th Year!

In this season of goodwill for the twenty fifth time we on the Observer are once again happy to send all the compliments of the season to all of our advertisers, many of whom have supported us throughout the decades, and to all of our readers and friends in Saltash and district and indeed worldwide who enjoy their

monthly Saltash Observer through our website.

May you all be filled with the joys of the festive season!

Your Editor Mary Crawford



Clay Country Poet Commemorated On Record

The lunar like mountains of Cornwall's clay country, far removed from the county's tourist image, evoke a mystic magic of their own. This magic was well captured by Clay Country poet Jack Clemo whose centenary has been marked by an exciting project from locally based Bodmin Moor Poets. Local poets Ann Gray and David Woolley, who organise an annual poetry festival on the moor, worked with renowned regional musician Jim Causley to produce and record a musical setting of ten of Clemo's most evocative poems.

Ranging from the hymn setting of 'Clay Dry' with organ background to the pastoral bliss of 'Wedding Eve' Clemo's verse and Causley's music combine to capture and portray this barren landscape of gaunt chapels with fading congregations and of mewing gulls nesting on clay-white cliffs above blue water pits.

Jim Causley's vocals and piano are backed by a variety of instruments and by a children's choir from Brannell School itself in the heart of clay country. The CD together with the lyrics of the ten poems are produced by David Woolley for Westwords/ Bodmin Moor Poetry Festival.

**Observer Telephone
Numbers**
07971484872 or 01579
345699
Email your copy to:
marycrawford@hotmail.com

School Crossing Patrols Still May Be Lost

The school 'lolipop' crossing patrols who see children safely to and from a local school are still at risk of being lost to the town as Cornwall Council cuts continue.

Those threatened are close to Burraton School in Liskeard Road and Fairmead Road. Councillors debating the issue agreed that as few children use the Liskeard Road crossing there was little argument for retaining the patrol.

However a large number of children cross Fairmead Road which is also busy with commuter traffic as children arrive. It was noted however that since the patrol has been moved up the road to a safer position many children still cross unsupervised where the patrol used to be.

Councillors discussed the possibility of pedestrian controlled lights but doubted if these would be funded by Cornwall while they are seeking to reduce costs by withdrawing the patrols. They also mentioned the possibility of the Town Council taking on the cost of approximately £3000- per year. Meanwhile they have invited all local school principals to meet councillors and discuss the issue.

Parents were reminded however, that it is the parents' responsibility to ensure children get to and from school safely, not the responsibility of the school or the Town or Cornwall Council.

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oOo

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Curried parsnip soup with rustic croutons

oOo

Baked fillet of hake with wilted spinach and smoked salmon tartare
Roast breast of Cornish turkey
with bacon wrapped chipolatas and cranberry and pork stuffing
Contre file of beef
with parsnip puree and a port wine reduction
Pan fried chicken breast on mashed potatoes
Mediterranean roasted vegetables and creamy basil pesto
Woodland mushroom risotto with parmesan and truffle oil
Selection of seasonal vegetables and roast potatoes

oOo

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oOo

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Sunday Lunch: 12:00noon - 3:00pm
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Watch the Observer for more information on Events for Christmas & The New Year

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Enrichment Experiences are High Points of Education for Head Teacher

There have been only four head teachers during the half century during which saltash.net academy has been on its present campus. 'This sums up our kind of school, a true community school where those who have served as heads really believe in our founding principal of inclusion and are a hundred per cent committed to providing the best possible education for Saltash and the surrounding area'. So said Mrs Bryce when the school, its former staff and students, and the wider community came together to share in its fiftieth anniversary celebrations in the summer of 2015.

The school has marked many changes and achievements during the decade and a half of Mrs. Bryce's headship. The new millennium saw Saltash gain specialist school status in combined science, mathematics and computing. This enabled the school to forge important links with international companies such as Microsoft, which still continue, and to achieve global recognition with associated exciting opportunities for staff and students. These have included four students aged 12 and 13 being invited to attend the Microsoft Global Forum for Education in Barcelona. To celebrate the granting of specialist school status and to mark the entry into the digital age the school's students themselves opted in 2004 to rename the former Saltash Community School as saltash.net.

School Farm

At the same time the school became one of only a few in the country with a rural dimension built into its specialist bid. Students are proud of the school farm and its increasing range of livestock, not least the students from all over East Cornwall with special needs who attend its Trematon Zone.

Another significant change came with the gaining, in 2011 of academy status giving new opportunities to enhance the education and pastoral care it offers to its students.

The school has recently renewed its status as an international school. This has encouraged a wide number of students to seize the opportunities opened up to travel abroad, enhance their language skills, and often to

decide on a career resulting from the opening up of the world to Saltash students.

Spring 2014 saw the launch of the Saltash Multi-Academy Regional Trust (SMART) following the conversion to academy status and following eighteen months of links with Landulph Primary. The past decade has been one in which saltash.net has continually built on its links with local partner schools and helped make the jump to 'big school' easier for its year 7 students.

Extra-curricular experience

Yet as Mrs. Bryce looks back over her fourteen years of headship, and at all the achievements of the school and its students, it is the wide ranging extra-curricular experience which she recalls most vividly and which has given her the greatest sense of achievement. From when she first saw the excitement in the eyes of the inner city London children as she took them into the countryside which many had never seen before, she has been a firm believer in the enrichment that children derive from sharing new experiences and challenges with their peer group. This would not have been possible without the dedication of the saltash.net staff, to whom she pays tribute for sharing her enthusiasm and always being willing to go the extra mile to give up time to help students share these life enhancing experiences.

The thrill experienced by arts and science students when first viewing our capital city on a school visit is one which Mrs. Bryce has never tired of observing. Whether it is a visit to a university by students likely to attain a place in such

an institution, or a stay in a youth hostel on the Cornish coast by some of the school's more vulnerable students, it is these life enriching experiences Mrs Bryce believes, that have helped make her time at saltash.net such a rewarding experience, despite the hard work that goes into organising such visits. They have enriched her own life too, such as a recent 'first' for her, sharing the drama of a rugby international at Twickenham with her students after a former student, now a member of staff at the school, managed to secure 40 tickets. It is this contact with former students, and watching their progress, that is the other most rewarding experience of her career in Saltash. From those who have become stars of the stage and the concert hall, the doctors who save lives, the accountant who now audits the school books and all who have progressed in their varied lives, she shares in the success of those who have, during their years at saltash.net, been guided into their varied careers. Since she intends to continue living in Saltash she looks forward to continuing to monitor the progress of past students.

Rudyard Kipling

Reflecting on his own school days the writer Rudyard Kipling pondered on the legacy which each of those who have had the responsibility of teaching the young passes down to those who have been under their aegis. In his verse he paid tribute to all such teachers, in concluding

*'For their work continueth
And their work continueth
Broad and deep continueth
Greater than their knowing'*

Heading Home to Head Cornish School

Brought up and educated here in Cornwall, saltash.net academy's head teacher Mrs Isobel Bryce has taught in a variety of schools in inner and outer London, the leafy home counties, and in Plymouth, 'I have enjoyed every school in which I have taught', she enthuses, but her aim for many years was to get home to teach in Cornwall. She moved down to teach in Plymouth in 1998 but was 'determined to move across to Cornwall', she recalls, and she achieved this aim fourteen years ago on being appointed as head teacher of saltash.net.

Being brought up in Polperro within a strictly Methodist family the duty to give service to others was impressed upon her from her earliest years. She was educated at Liskeard Grammar School before deciding to read English Literature at London University.

The opportunity to attend university was, she considers, a highlight of her life, together with all of the cultural opportunities that London opened up to her, and she urges her students to make the very most of their university years – they will not come back again.

It was while in London that she determined to make teaching her career and she went on to gain a PGCE qualification in teaching at London.

Her first experience of the 'chalk face', was at St. Augustine's school in Kilburn, Inner London where 70% of the students were Afro/Caribbean and 20% Asian. Having herself gained a Duke of Edinburgh award she was soon persuaded to involve herself in training students to achieve this and some of her happiest memories of this period are of the wonder and delight with which the inner city children greeted the Hertfordshire countryside in which they did their outdoor training.

From there she moved to

her first experience as a qualified teacher in Enfield, North London, where she taught English at a school where 70% of the students were Cypriots many with Greek or Turkish as their first language. Here she had the pleasure of initiating the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme within the school.

She was then pleased to

have the opportunity to return to St. Augustine's this time as a fully qualified teacher.

Following teaching experience in Inner London, Outer London and leafy Hertfordshire for a total of twenty years Mrs. Bryce was delighted to return to her beloved West Country in 1998 when a teaching vacancy arose across the

Tamar at John Kitto School in Plymouth. From here she moved on to Devonport High School for Boys as Deputy Head before crossing the Tamar back to Saltash and to the school on which she has made her mark for the past fourteen years and from which staff and students join in wishing her a long and happy retirement.



Mayor's Tribute with 'Respect and Gratitude'



Cutting the cake at the school's 50th Birthday Celebrations

Following fourteen years of sharing the exciting achievements at saltash.net academy with students and staff, popular headteacher Mrs Isobel Bryce has decided that it is a good time to retire and 'hand over the reins' to a colleague. 'These fourteen years have given me the chance to see two generations of students progress their way through years 7 to 13,' she told Saltash Town Councillors when Mayor Councillor Hillary Frank invited her to a special presentation at a full Town Council meeting. 'It also enabled me to celebrate a very special year that marked the school's fiftieth anniversary last summer and to share so many memories with past students and staff members.

'Always you have had the interest of the children at heart and have nurtured them', the Mayor declared as she presented Mrs. Bryce with a special limited edition print of the town. 'This is donated to you with glorious respect and gratitude for all that you have given to the town'. The Mayor spoke of the links between the town and the local community, which Mrs. Bryce had maintained and strengthened during her term as headteacher.

Her 'amazing colleagues, especially the Senior Leadership Team of whom her successor Kate Littledyke is one, are deserving of my especial thanks' said Mrs Bryce in reply. With over two hundred staff to serve around fourteen hundred students the school is now one of the town's major employers.

She thanked also the governors for their amazing leadership and management for which they voluntarily give up their time.

The incredible support from the town and local community had also been extremely important to her, she added. She especially

singled out the various youth organisations including Livewire, The Core and all the local sports clubs and cadet groups. 'All of them make such a difference as we cannot care for the children on our own – as it is said "it takes a village to rear a child."

Lastly, but by no means least, Mrs Bryce thanked her family who had been especially supportive, 'It is a stressful job and can be a lonely one with hard decisions to be made. My husband Richard, my marvellous nonagenarian mother and my two daughters Francesca and Imogen, both of whom have passed through the school, have always been understanding and there to support me.

Imogen is currently reading architecture at Nottingham University. Here she has been joined by older sister Francesca, studying United States and Canadian History and Politics, having recently returned from a placement in Canada. Francesca is currently considering keeping up the family tradition of both parents by

taking up the vocation of teaching, in her case history.

The retiring headteacher now looks forward to spending more time with her family but will not be entirely leaving the world of education. She will continue to support the school's work in developing its multi academy trust with local primary and secondary schools. She also is considering education consultancy and hopes to do some writing, especially about how she has worked with more challenging students to ensure positive alternatives to exclusion. She is proud that over the last decade there has been only one permanent exclusion from saltash.net, a major achievement considering the wide variations of students home and backgrounds and their many personal problems. It is perhaps proof that the student body, over the fourteen years of Mrs. Bryce's headship, really have shared with her the school's credo that whatever their background and whatever their abilities, one and all can 'Believe and Achieve'.



Pictured above: Sharing the fun of the students' 2013 May Ball

It has been a Special Pleasure

We on the Saltash Observer have greatly enjoyed our special relationship with saltash.net academy and promoting its widely varied activities and achievements. It has been a special pleasure to visit the school and discuss educational and other topics over coffee with Isobel Bryce and her P.A. Jude Hollyman. Mary and Martin add our personal good wishes and thanks for hospitality received, to our congratulation on all that she has achieved and hopes for a long and happy retirement.

To Mrs Bryce

Happy Retirement

Best wishes from all staff and students at saltash.net community school





'Daddy Christmas'....

Tom Payne, an out-of-work actor, was standing in this year as Santa Claus at one of the big stores in the High Street. One morning, three or four days before Christmas, his wife, Marjory, announced to him, 'I'm taking Emma into town this afternoon. We'll be going into the Stores, so I'll bring her in to meet Father Christmas'.

(Emma was a pretty little six year old, their one and only child. She was still in bed).

'Don't be silly, Marjory. She'll recognise me straight away'

'Not with all that cotton wood over your face she won't.'

'All right have it your way' (She usually did)

That afternoon was largely spent by Marjory and Emma wandering around the big stores doing some last minute Christmas shopping. The journey into town Marjory has used to impress upon her daughter the fact that the Santa Claus they were going to see in the stores was the only true and genuine Santa. All the others she had seen in shops and in the streets were make-believe and paid to dress up. Emma had to believe her, of course.

Awe struck

When all the shopping was finished, Marjory paid the entrance fee, pulled the curtain aside and with Emma entered into Santa's grotto. She took the sight of Tom in her stride. She was used to it; he'd done this before several times. Emma on the other hand, was awe struck and stood rooted to the spot, until Tom picked her up and sat her on his knee. He felt her shrink from his touch and was distressed for a moment, until he realised that she was not shrinking from him but from some awesome creature of her imagination.

Once she was comfortably settled, he started on his standard routine; 'What's your name?' 'Do you go to school?' 'Any brothers and sisters?' (he felt pretty foolish, asking his own daughter such things)

At last he got around to the ultimate question; 'What do you want me to bring you on Christmas Day?' Her answer was inaudible. She had to repeat it two or three times before they heard it. When they did it came as a shock to both parents.

'A puppy dog please'. There was a deadly silence. This had created a desperate situation. One thing neither of them wanted was a dog running around their flat, but it was not Santa's place to tell the child that. On the other hand, if Tom, as Santa, were to promise a puppy, he would bring up her hopes, only to shatter them later and utterly ruin her Christmas.

Tom, raised his eyes and glanced across at his wife. She gave him a resigned half-smile and a slight nod. Oh well, thought Tom perhaps she's got some bright idea how to solve the problem.

Meanwhile 'Very well, my sweetheart, I will make sure you get your puppy.' The effect on Emma was instant and electrifying; she started wriggling around and

A Christmas Story by E.G. Lister

clapping her hands violently in between bouncing up and down on Tom's knee. But she bounced once too often and found herself slipping backwards and about to fall on the floor. Luckily Tom was able to catch her in time and pull her up again, so all was well.

'It's daddy'

Except, that is, for one small thing. When she felt herself slipping, Emma tried to save herself by grabbing the nearest thing in sight. This so happened to be Santa's beard. It was just hooked round the back of his ears, so it came away quite easily, leaving his face quite bare and clean-shaven.

Emma stared at the thing in her hand in horror and amazement, then raised her eyes to the face above her... and SCREAMED.

'It's daddy' she shrieked, 'It's not Santa - its Daddy Its Daddy'

Tom glanced towards Marjory again, but her eyes were shut fast while she sorted out her ideas;- Tell the truth? - No -. Tom would never forgive her. Carry on with the deception, bluff it out? - well, she could try.

'Don't be silly dear, of course it's not Daddy. It's Santa Claus. Whatever gave you the idea? Oh yes I see He is like Daddy isn't he? Very much like him, Quite amazing. And now' she added hurriedly. 'I think its high time we went' Tom nodded.

'I have to give you a present from the shop', he said, handing Emma a parcel. (it was later discovered to contain a skipping rope, one of a large order which had



The Christmas Window Competition 2013 by kind permission - Treasure Island
Photo Mary Crawford

been found to be completely unsalable - little girls don't skip any more)

'Say, Thank You and goodbye to Santa Claus', said Marjory 'Thank you and goodbye, Santa'

'Goodbye Emma,' came the reply and to Marjory . 'Goodbye' Madam,' and he gave a sweeping bow.

North Pole

On their way out of the store, Emma looked up at her mother and asked , 'How did Santa know my name?'

'He must have heard me using it',

'And why was he wearing that funny thing over his face.'

'To keep it warm. I expect. It is bitterly cold up at the North Pole, where he lives. He must have forgotten to take it off.

As soon as his family had left him and before calling in his next client. Tom sat back and pondered on the dog question. Was it so outrageous? After all she was an only child and had no one to play with. Caring for a dog

might also help develop a sense of responsibility. And Marjory had sort of acquiesced, hadn't she? Oh yes, and his landlord's bitch had had a litter a short time ago and he still has two of her pups - dear little Scotties. He'd be quite willing to sell one. The situation was made, down to the last detail.

When he arrived home that night, Emma flung herself at him and shouted, 'I've been to see Santa Claus to-day'.

He picked her up in his arms and held her tightly. 'And what did he have to say to you' he asked.

'He said I was going to have

a puppy for Christmas.'

'And so you shall, my sweet', He looked rather anxiously at Marjory. She was wearing a broad smile on her face.

Suddenly Emma leant back in his arms and examined him closely, 'Daddy, why is your face so red?' 'she asked and wiped his cheek with the back of her hand. 'Look ' she said 'it comes off. It's like Mummy's lipstick. Why did you put it on?'

Then she leaned back again and took another long look at him 'Daddy' she said, 'you look eck-zackerly like Santa Claus did'.

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Seasonal Greetings from Mike Joan & Staff

Children Come to Share in Remembrance Service



Photo Sarah Oakley



Photo Sarah Oakley



Photo Sarah Oakley

In the year that marked the centenary of the Battle of Jutland and the Somme and seventy five years since the Plymouth blitz a larger number than ever appeared to be present in Saltash to mark Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday.

Children in particular were to the fore, both in Fore Street when the town fell silent for two minutes on the anniversary of the silencing of the guns of the Great War, and at the Civic Remembrance service.

At the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month traffic in Fore Street stopped and the distant boom of the gun at the Citadel could just be heard through the silent street. Sharing the experience were a number of Saltash schoolchildren. They were joined by a group from Brook Green School, Plymouth who had been visiting the re-enacted World War I trench behind Saltash museum. All of the children went on afterwards to visit the newly opened Peace Garden.

On the Sunday the town's youth group including Navy, Army and Air Force cadets and various Scout and Guide troops were especially well represented at the Civic Service in the Wesley Church and the march down Fore Street that followed. They were joined this year, for the first time by a large number of children from the Military Kids Club (formerly HMS Heroes). These are children who have a parent actively serving in the forces and after the wreaths had been laid at the war memorial they went on to lay their own hand made carnations and sprigs of rosemary for remembrance.

Especially moving during the church service was a reading by MKC Heroes Cadet Eira Oakley whose father is currently serving in Afghanistan. She read a poem 'My Remembrance' composed by her mother and herself. In it she spoke of missing her father but of realising that she does get to share happy times with him when he returns, while some other children will never again have this joy.

The reading out of the names of those from Saltash who fell in two World Wars and in subsequent conflicts was, in error omitted from the service. In order to rectify this the names were instead read out during the Town Council meeting the following week.

Rat Run Drivers At Risk

Those drivers who seek to cut off a corner and avoid Burraton traffic lights by cutting along Taylor Road are not only breaking the law but are invalidating their own insurance policies.

As the road is clearly marked 'Access Only' a driver involved in an accident while passing through could find his insurance did not cover him. Similarly non residents who park in the street could be without valid insurance in the event of damage to their vehicles.

These facts were brought to the attention of Saltash Town Councillors discussing the ongoing issue of though traffic using the road, annoying and endangering residents. 'The access only signs are some deterrent but the Police do not regard this as a major problem', said Councillor Joe Ellison. 'The blocking off of one end has been suggest but this would upset some residents'.

'This is certainly the most dangerous road in Saltash', concluded Councillor Derek Holley.

Conundrum Corner

Taking the initial letter to the one-word answers to the following eight questions can you re-arrange them to make the name of a local place?

- 1 What name is given to the large class of Molluscs that include Snails and Slugs which move using one large muscular foot? (10)
 - 2 What was the Surname of the singing sisters Maureen, Anne, Bernie, Coleen and Linda? (5)
 - 3 On which River does the Germany City of Cologne stand? (5)
 - 4 What name is given to a sound wave which has been reflected with sufficient strength and time delay to be distinct from the original sound? (4)
 - 5 Which London Film Studio produced Comedies such as The Lavender Hill Mob? (6)
 - 6 Of what do Fennel Leaves taste? (7)
 - 7 What is the name of the London Landmark which was the work of the designer Sir Edwin Lutyens? (8)
 - 8 In which School were Tom Brown's Schooldays spent? (5)
- Answers on page 10

Saltash Hosts Old Cornwall Federation Festival

From the full length of Cornwall those eager to celebrate and preserve the proud heritage of Cornwall converged upon Saltash to mark the Winter Festival of the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies.

Saltash Old Cornwall Society was this year hosting the event in the town's Wesley Church which was filled with around two hundred visitors. There were stalls lined the meeting rooms for guests to patronise before gathering in the main church to be welcomed by the Federation President Miss Priscilla Oates. There was a parade of banners from each of the societies led by a piper before Mr. Ernie Reynolds, President of Saltash Old Cornwall Society welcomed one and all mentioning that 2016 marked the seventieth anniversary since three Saltash citizens came together, found forty likeminded persons, and founded the society that is flourishing today.

Mayor Councillor Mrs Hillary Frank, herself a

proud Cornish maid, welcomed all to Saltash. She spoke of her decade in Japan, homeland of her husband and consort, comparing that country with Cornwall in it respect for its ancient traditional culture.

There was then a varied programme of entertainment for the rest of the day. The girls of Tan Ha Dowr, a young Cornish dance and music group, performed traditional Cornish dances, similar in style it was observed, to those of fellow Celtic lands in Brittany and Ireland. There followed a talk on the Cornish dialect, of vanishing local words and expressions and the need to preserve them as part of our culture.

Mike O'Connor and Barbara Grigg then performed on fiddle and harp, various music which Mike had written or transposed for the series 'Poldark' in which he was involved and which, he noted had boosted Cornish tourism by 25%. He had worked with star Aiden Turner, who had been most friendly, thanking and shaking hands with each 'extra'.

All involved in the programme had a deep respect for Cornish culture and wished to do as good a job as possible, Mike reported.

After a break for tea and saffron buns the afternoon concluded with our own Burraton Male Voice Choir singing a selection of Cornish songs concluding with 'Hail to the Homeland' before leading one and all in a rousing chorus of 'Trelawny'.

Josh Carves Prize Pumpkin

Saltash children eagerly entered into the spooky spirit of Halloween with a pumpkin carving competition organised by the Saltash Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

A generous £100 donation from new members Tony and Nenia Gartland was divided to allow £50 for prizes and the balance to purchase pumpkins which were given out to children from the 4 Fore Street premises.

Tony Gartland also made his premises at 'Speedy Prints' available to display the finished pumpkins.

The first prize was awarded to six year old Josh Ryland for his 'Minecraft Pumpkin'.

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Mayor Supports Christmas Tradition at Ashley's

The festive fun of Christmas is guaranteed to be experienced at Ashley's hairdressing salon where for over twenty years Mary has been producing her own seasonal traditions to bring cheer to her clientele and raise funds for charity.

Each year customers vie to produce the best example of 'sweet wrapper art' purchasing sweets for a charitable donation, then twisting the wrappers to create an art work to the Christmas theme. We have always enjoyed marvelling at the confectionary constructions that her eager clientele come up with.

This year, Christmas at Ashley's started on the first of December when, two days before the grand switch on of the town's festive lights,

Mayor Councillor Mrs Hillary Frank attended the salon to formally switch on the Ashley's Christmas lights. Having served Saltash for twenty-nine years Mary, together with her staff of 'little helpers' were ready to see in Christmas in fitting style.

This will light up the salon as Mary lights up the lives of so many customers who are also her friends, said the Mayor.

This year's Christmas Ashley's Charities are Alzheimer UK and Princess Trust for children with cancer.



I have never before told this story to a soul for fear of being laughed at. But who cares?

When you have reached my age you have become accustomed to being laughed at. It all happened one Christmas many years ago when I was in my twenties.

A few days before Christmas Eve I received a telephone message from a cousin of mine inviting me to spend the holiday with him and his wife and family.

I accepted like a shot. They had only recently moved into a remote village called Pendark, about eleven miles from where I lived.

I had never actually been there and only had a very vague idea of the way, but my cousin gave me very explicit directions.

'Take the main Truro road,' he said 'Then fork left at Trelight to Deepwater.

Pendark is about a mile from there, up a narrow lane. It is all well signposted'.

It was pitch dark and pouring with rain when I got into my little old Austin Seven on Christmas Eve and set out for Pendark.

I had no difficulty in finding the Deepwater road but I never did

The Deepwater Road – A Seasonal Story for Christmas

reach the village.

I must have been very near it when my windscreen wiper packed up. It stopped quite suddenly and for a while my view ahead was blurred but I soon found that if I kept my speed down, I could just manage to grope my way along. But the result was that I must have missed a signpost and taken a wrong turning.

It was not long before I realised that I was hopelessly lost.

I suppose I ought to have turned around and gone back, but it was getting late and I decided to carry on and trust to luck. I soon found myself in a perfect maze of little lanes in the midst of the most desolate countryside.

I had almost given up hope of reaching Pendark that night when I saw the lights of a house, half hidden in a dense plantation of tall trees.

It was my first sign of life I had seen for several miles and I decided to stop and ask my way. About a hundred yards further on I came to a gateway.

The gate was standing open, so I turned in onto a gravel drive winding between tall rhododendron bushes, which suddenly emerged onto a large open space in front of the house.

To my astonishment, instead of the small villa or farmhouse I had expected, I was confronted by a large Georgian mansion.

There must have been scores of windows in the great facade and, to add to my astonishment, more than half of them were ablaze with light.

There appeared to be a Christmas Eve party going on. I could look right into the ground floor rooms and they were thronged with beautifully dressed

people and festive with holly and mistletoe.

I could see a quartet of musicians playing in a corner, but, strangely enough, I could not hear a sound. I walked up the steps to the front door and tugged on the old-fashioned bell pull.

The door was opened just wide enough to reveal a little, wizened old man in livery.

He had a candle in a brass candle-stick which he held high above his head. 'You cannot possibly stay here'. He snapped. 'I have no wish to stay here'. I answered.

'I am on my way to Pendark. All I want you to do is to tell me the way'.

He stared for a moment, then said, 'I'm afraid I cannot help you', and tried to close the door.

I put my shoulder to it and held it open. We stood for a few moments, pushing against each other without a word.

Suddenly he stopped pushing, stepped back and said most ungraciously, 'Wait here while I enquire'.

I stood away from the door and it was immediately slammed in my face.

He was back in a few minutes. 'Turn right at the gate', he snarled. 'A few hundred yards up the land and you're back on the Deepwater Road

'There you' I cut him short. I took a shilling from my pocket, pressed it into the palm of his hand and folded his fingers around it. 'Thank you' I said 'and a Merry Christmas to you, too'.

It was a childish gesture, I suppose, but left him looking down at the coin with utter disgust. I told my cousin and his wife about the episode over a rather belated dinner.

They, of course, as newcomers, had never heard of the house.

When the time came to return home, I decided to take another look at the house in daylight. I found the lane where I had rejoined the Deepwater road and soon found myself back at the entrance.

I left my car in the lane and walked up the drive. As I turned into the open space in front of the house, I felt a sudden chill of sheer horror: the place was no more than a burnt-out shell overgrown with weeds.

There was not a whole pane of glass in any of the windows and part of the roof had fallen in.

I walked up to the front door: it was nailed up with some bits of boarding.

The events of Christmas Eve flashed through my brain. Had it been a crazy nightmare or was my mind becoming disordered?

Whatever the explanation, it was curious that there, lying on the broken flagstones of the porch, was a bright, shiny shilling.

E. G. Lister

Essa Files...

I've spent quite a while staring at a blank page with this column this month. It's not that I don't know what to write about: for someone who is active in politics and who worries about the world and the next generation there is only one story this month – the election of Donald Trump to be the next US President. My struggle has been to link it in to Saltash without making the link seem tenuous or contrived.

The truth is though that I don't need a link. Trump's election affects everyone on the planet including Saltash.

Trump was elected on a platform of distrust, fear and hatred; of envy anger and blame. A platform of making people distrust their neighbours, fearing change, hating those who are different, envying those who succeed, being angry with those who don't do what you want, and blaming the world for what makes you unhappy. Beyond that he mocked the disabled, insulted the families of a dead serviceman, denigrated women, called Mexicans rapists, incited violence against peaceful protestors, and proposed banning an entire religion from coming to his country. This is the man who is about to run the world's most powerful country,

command the world's most powerful military, and hover his finger over the world's most powerful nuclear arsenal.

It is true that there is little we can directly do about it. We didn't have a say in electing him, and have no voice in what he will do now he's in.

What we can do is try to keep distrust, fear and hatred out of our own corner of the world. To fight envy anger and blame in our community. To love our neighbours, to speak up for minorities, and to challenge bigotry and prejudice.

None of this will change the fact that a terrifying demagogue will sit in the most powerful chair in the world, but right now it's what we can do to care for our community and the people in it, and that is no little thing.

Adam Killeya

'Bring Your Grown Up To School'

With just over half a term at saltash.net under their belts, our Year 7s were invited to bring their families into school to discover just what the students get up to. Bring Your Grown-Up To School, an annual tradition at saltash.net, took place on Thursday 10th November, and featured a morning of superb creativity, from both students and parents. This year's BYGUTS was a record breaking event, with over 150 grown-ups coming to enjoy and take part in the fun.

Students and their parents were split into groups, each being led by a member of teaching staff, and assigned a Cornish hero on which they were to create a creative and eye-catching presentation.

Participation by all involved was fantastic, as the groups got stuck into Cornish figures such as novelist Daphne du Maurier, the Eden Project's Tim Smit, master mariner Captain Bligh, Bishop Trelawney, the last native Cornish-speaker, Dolly Pentreath, and the crew of the Penlee Lifeboat disaster.

The morning's activities were based on Integrated Learning, a subject that Year 7 take alongside more traditional subjects like English, Maths and Science. Integrated Learning teaches students about the "SECRET" skills of Self-management, Effective participation, Creative thinking, being a Reflective learner, an independent Enquirer and an effective Team worker.

The creative limits of both students and parents showed no bounds, as all groups created fantastic art displays, whilst others also opted to present their hero via song and dance. Students had earlier made full use of the resource banks, containing every colour of paint, glue, paper and everything needed to create a wonderful work of art.

Deputy Head Teacher, Mrs Griffin, once more acting as judge, enjoyed all the performances, but deemed Mrs Benzie's group's presentation on Captain Bligh, from HMS Bounty to be the best.

Students from the winning group have been treated to a breakfast during registration as a reward for their hard work and victory.

"We really aim to welcome parents and carers into their children's school lives," explained Grant Taylor, Head of Year 7 and Transition. "Bring Your Grown-Up To School day is a real celebration of how well Year 7 have settled into this next stage of their learning journey! They are proud to show off their new school to their families, and we are proud of our fantastic Year 7s!"

Parents left very positive feedback, with many praising the friendly and fun atmosphere, whilst one parent noted that that having the chance to work with her daughter, alongside her classmates and other parents was a real plus.



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Seasonal Greetings

Free Wi-Fi in Cornwall's Libraries

People visiting any of the Council's 26 libraries will now be able to log on to the internet from their own tablet, phone or laptop following the introduction of free Wi-Fi.

Mark Read, Cornwall Council Service Director for Customer Access and Digital Services said: "The introduction of free Wi-Fi, which allows people to access the internet through their own phone or other device whilst in the library, provides a great opportunity for people to have free, instant, easy access to Council services online."

The introduction of free Wi-Fi in libraries is yet another way in which we are improving access to Council services and helping our residents get online."

Through the Council's online self-service, people can go to the Council website at www.cornwall.gov.uk and perform many tasks including viewing their personal council tax account information, managing and viewing their benefits, paying for many services, signing up for garden waste collections and ordering bulky waste collections.

Angela Woodford from Truro who won an iPad air after being entered into a free prize draw for signing up to online billing says: "I do everything online! I'm completely paperless with everything else already. My Council tax was just another bill that is now online. It's great, it means I get no post!"

Anyone visiting one of our libraries that doesn't know how to get online can also sign up for a free four-week

computer course for beginners. Learners can now bring their own devices if they wish or there will be access to computers in the library.

The library computer courses have been a resounding success to date, with one user stating that they would continue to use the library's internet service even though they have home access.

So far, we have supported 550 people each year to get online at our library venues, with statistics showing that 85% of people attending a course are still using the internet six months later.

Prior to the introduction of free Wi-Fi in all 26 libraries, learners would have had to either be transferred to other libraries, or wait for places on these courses. Now that free Wi-Fi is available, there will be an increase in the number of people able to access the internet and take part in courses.

Geoff Brown, Cornwall Council Cabinet Member for Communities, added: "Cornwall Council welcomes the introduction of Wi-Fi to all of our libraries and we hope everyone finds it useful. If anyone cannot use the online system to access services, then they can contact us by phone or if necessary a face to face meeting with an officer can be arranged at a mutually convenient venue".

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Rail Plan Welcomed

Local MP Sheryll Murray joined fellow South West MPs and Rail Minister Paul Maynard to launch the report 'Closing the Gap' prepared by the Peninsula Rail Task Force which outlined a 20 year plan for investment into the South West Peninsula's strategic rail network.

Sheryll, along with some of her colleagues, faced some of the problems being experienced by train passengers on Monday when they were unable to reach Parliament by rail and had to, after many hours, abandon their rail journey, return to her car and do the journey by road. Many other passengers did not have this option.

The document is a 20 year plan for rail investment which has 3 main objectives, namely;

Resilience and reliability
 Faster journey times
 Improved connectivity with sufficient capacity

In a statement after the launch Sheryll Murray said, "I welcome this report and its plan for action. This in no way detracts from the clear need for action now and following my dreadful journey on Monday I have made some suggestions on how customer experiences could be improved even when there is an issue."

"I will continue to raise this important issue and in particular the need for Resilience and reliability. The system we have at the moment is clearly not acceptable and we must do more."

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SHERYLL MURRAY MP WRITES...



I have caught up with our Police and Crime Commissioner Alison Hernandez. It is good to have a Commissioner who I can sit down and chat with about my concerns for policing South East Cornwall. She stressed to me how important she sees public access to the force.

On Remembrance Sunday afternoon I joined Mayor Hilary Frank and guests to attend the Service at the Wesley Methodist Chapel before we marched down Fore Street to lay our wreaths on the War Memorial outside St Nicholas and Faith Church. I had also attended the Remembrance Parade in Looe in the morning. It was good to see so many people attending both services to show their respect to those who had paid the ultimate sacrifice during conflict and also to pay tribute to our brave armed forces.

It was so good to see so many children attend the service this year. I was particularly pleased to see them lay the poppies they made during their own special service on the War Memorial.

I spent the short Parliamentary November recess in Cyprus at the invitation of the Cypriot Government. Cyprus is unfortunately an island divided since 1974 by a UN buffer zone known as the green line. Cyprus has been ruled over by many different people's including some Egyptians, the Romans, some French, the Venetians, the Ottoman Empire and more recently by the British.

Cyprus was granted independence in 1960 but unfortunately different groups of the population wanted to either be part of Greece or Turkey and this dispute led to many deaths, displaced persons, missing persons and a divided island with the UN operating a buffer zone and maintaining peace. I am pleased to report that much action is being taken by both sides to find a solution to the Cyprus problem and I wish all sides well in this. Cyprus is a beautiful island with great history and friendly people on both sides of the divide which is enjoyed by many Brits every year as a safe holiday destination. I did not get to see any of the beaches (or even the hotel pool!) on this trip as it was very much work but certainly am considering coming back on holiday to do so.

At 11am on the 11th November I was in Cyprus. The Parliamentary delegation that I was with took a break this year to visit Waynes Keep cemetery for a very moving service in the UN buffer zone with the troops from many nations who guard this area.

One of the troops I met was from Liskeard. Being surrounded by many British war graves and by derelict and damaged buildings certainly brought home the true cost of conflict.

I would like to wish everyone in South East Cornwall a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

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Saltash PL12 4BL**Dockyard Union Forgather to Tidy the Foreshore**

Saltash Waterside enjoyed an Autumnal Spring clean, courtesy of fifteen eager volunteer litter pickers from Devonport dockyard who had been granted half a day's leave to tidy up the foreshore.

This was the first in what is intended to be a series of environmental projects

following members of the Prospect Union in Devonport creating the roll of environmental representative. They then produced a charter together with other unions as well as Babcock Marine and other stakeholders in the dockyard setting out their responsibility towards the environment and ways in

which they could reduce any negative impact. Representatives were trained up last summer and decided that one thing they might do first is organise a beach clean.

Local resident Tracey Rhodes identified Saltash for their first project. Accordingly the team of around fifteen Prospect union members crossed to Saltash where they joined Mayor's Consort Sho Frank and

Deputy Mayor and Consort Jean and Bill Dent, as well as members of the Saltash Environmental Action Group. They were soon clearing a large amount of debris, some resulting from the recent high Spring tides and they were particularly concerned to identify what litter they found and see if they could source any of it to a particular source of marine pollution.

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Christmas Cheer in Wartime Years

Christmas brings a kind of magic to childhood, a magic that never altogether fades away as we grow older. However happy, busy and prosperous we may or may not be throughout the year Christmas remains a season eagerly to anticipate and to recapture some of that magic of early youth. Little surprise then that when times have been troublesome the future unpredictable and necessities of life in short supply Christmas has been an exceptional highlight of the year, a time to relax and enjoy such simple pleasures as were available.

Christmases during the war years were celebrated very much in the spirit of 'making do' despite increasing shortages making this increasingly harder and it is now interesting to look back at how families managed to survive and enjoy wartime Christmases with so little of what we consider vital to the festive season.

Although preparations for food rationing began almost immediately on the outbreak of war in September 1939 they were not put into effect until January 1940. Christmas in 1939 could therefore be celebrated as in peacetime with as many good things as could be afforded. The most serious shortage was recorded as ground almonds for marzipan. This was not to last.

By Christmas 1940 weekly meat rations per person were to a value of 1 shilling ten pence, around nine new pence, with no let off for Christmas though the Ministry of Food's Christmas present to a war weary populace was a doubling of the tea ration to four ounces a week and sugar up from eight ounces to twelve. While chicken and other poultry was never rationed it was practically unobtainable. Sweets and chocolate could be enjoyed by the nation's children as available until 1942, by that Christmas they too were strictly rationed. Oranges, lemons, bananas and all other fruit imported fruit were unobtainable, except for the fortunate few. One child recalled a Christmas treat, 'One Christmas, in '43 or '44 Dad was in North Africa and he sent us a big basket of oranges. In those days the postman delivered on Christmas Day and they arrived on Christmas morning.

Others were less fortunate and by 1943 it was estimated that only ten per cent of the population would enjoy a traditional Christmas dinner. Even so, for months before, instead of indulging in today's pre-Christmas spending sprees, civilians carefully hoarded their coupons in order to prepare the Christmas treats for which recipes were enthusiastically offered. Carrots were substituted to make Christmas cakes, 'emergency cream' included margarine and milk powder, and wartime Christmas pudding included grated raw potato and carrot. Marmalade and prunes were the main ingredients for Christmas fruit pies. Christmas cakes made with reconstituted eggs were topped with 'holly leaf icing' of Soya flour and margarine. Suggested Christmas presents included marzipan rolled into the shape of apples and pears with artificial colouring and cloves for stalks to be made up into a 'fruit basket'.

Presents too were very much of the 'make do' variety. At first British toy companies had eagerly replaced the role of pre-war German favourites such as Bing and Schuco, and board and card games to pass the long hours in the air raid shelters were especially popular. One advertised card game was 'Black Out the game to cheer you up! - everybody's playing it.' As raw materials became in short supply and factories switched to war production toys and games, like almost everything else, were increasingly hard to buy.

Many war workers such as firemen spent quiet periods building or repairing toys for children who might otherwise have none. And at a

party given by the wardens of Forest Hill, London, the Mayor of Lewisham remarked upon 'The finest toys that I have seen this Christmas'. Local rescue service members had created toy engines, dolls' cradles and rocking horses for Father Christmas to distribute, all from material salvaged from bomb sites. One lady of my acquaintance relished the fine wooden toy made by a local farm worker for her - he was a German prisoner of war.

Presents for adults were also a problem with alcohol and tobacco in short supply, clothes soaps and sweets rationed, and the cartoon 'Squanderbug' continually imploring against overspending on luxuries.

Handmade garments, practical gifts such as gardening equipment, books (though also in short supply) were popular gifts or - for the true patriot adult or child - national savings certificates or stamps.

Christmas decorations still brought magic to the house though largely home made from cardboard, string and sweet papers. With wood in demand for war service fir trees were not chopped down and only tired looking artificial trees survived the war, though many brought in shrubs or bushes from the garden. These however could sparkle with tinsel, the tinfoil dropped by aircraft to baffle radar scanners was eagerly collected for this. And handmade stars or fair dolls topped the well admired ensemble. Whatever hardships there might be, and however many members of the family might be absent 'on active service' every effort was made to make Christmas special. And of course the wartime decree to 'keep smiling through' was never more

noticeable than at Christmas. A Christmas order of the day from a Devon Home Guard commander reads, 'Best wishes for Christmas and New Year. We have certain grounds for congratulating ourselves. Half the trying Autumn - Winter season is behind us. The shortest day has passed. The black out time will gradually get shorter and the amenities of life will improve from day to day'.

And with the long, weary war over at last a lady, former evacuee, noted in her diary at Christmas 1945, 'The Victory Christmas of 1945 is a Thanksgiving. After almost six years of terrible war we are back safe and sound. We thank God that we are together in our home after years of separation and we look forward to 1946 and the future with a smile and a grateful heart and hope to contribute in some small way to the building of a new world fit at least for our children to work in.'

But for the most poignant wartime Christmas memories and to witness the true spirit of Christmas we must go back to 1914 and the first Christmas of what was already known as 'The Great War' and 'the War to end all wars'. Early hopes that the war would be over by Christmas were clearly not to be realised. After a few hectic weeks of moving warfare the troops had already spent months entrenched between the Channel and the Alps. The cemeteries behind the lines were already fast filling with already over a million dead and now putrefying corpses lay unobtainable between the lines. And then the rains of early December which turned the trenches into quagmires had given way to a clear, frosty Christmas Eve.

As darkness fell the Tommies were bewildered to see strange lights above the German trenches. On examination these proved not to be vicious new weapons of war but Christmas trees.

And there rose from the German trenches into the clear night of Christmas Eve the harmonious singing of 'Stille Nacht', the Austrian carol known to every Tommy as 'Silent Night'. The Tommies sang back. Cries of 'Merry Christmas' were exchanged. And then, all along the lines, a few brave soldiers emerged from the trenches and walked towards 'enemy lines'. In every case they were met not with gunfire, but with those who yesterday had been anxious to kill them now walking towards them. That long ago night gifts of tobacco, bully beef, beer and Christmas pudding were exchanged. Those who had been out to slaughter each other instead sought to out-vie each other in their singing. Others took advantage of the chance to remove their dead from no man's land and joint burial services were held together.

On Christmas morning an officer recorded, 'I woke at dawn and on emerging from my dugout became aware that the trench was practically empty. I stood upright in the mud and looked over the parapet. No man's land was full of clusters of khaki and field grey pleasantly chatting together'.

As a contemporary poet noted, 'And foes forgot, that Christmastide, Their business was to kill the other side'.

Rations and gift packages from home were shared as troops enjoyed Christmas dinner together washed

down with beer, brandy and schnapps.

There was conflict between British and Germans, but this took the form of football matches played out in a frozen no man's land recently relieved of the dead. A Saxon Lieutenant recalled a game against a Highland regiment and the roar of amusement that went up from the German team when a gust of wind revealed what the Scots wore, or did not wear under their kilts.

Of course it could not last. High Command on both sides, at first bewildered, started to threaten mass court martial for fraternisation. Front line troops reluctantly warned each other that from tomorrow they had been ordered to shoot yesterday's Christmas comrades. So hostilities dragged on with three more weary Christmases marking another almost four years of slaughter. The few attempts at further Christmas truces came to little or nothing. Yet at Christmas 1916 a British Lieutenant was writing, 'Everything was done to prevent any fraternizing between the two sides as the Boche would use the opportunity to get useful information. Besides things have got passed the stage where one can fraternize with the enemy, there is too much hatred flying about. However I must say going to talk to the Boche in No Man's Land like we did the first Christmas rather appeals to one's sporting instincts, don't you think so?'

As a contemporary 'Carol from Flanders' concluded:

'O ye who read this truthful rhyme, From Flanders, kneel and say: God speed the time when every day, Shall be as Christmas Day'.

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