

# Maiden Bradley

No. 280 October 2012

Parish News



Dog Show success  
for Kathy Williams  
and Rosie.

## Diary October 2012

|                            |   |                             |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Mon        | Black Box & Blue Bins Collection<br>Bingo – Village Hall                            | 7.00 am<br>7.30 for 8.00 pm |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tue        | Garden Club Meeting – Village Hall  | 7.30 pm                     |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Thurs      | Village Hall Committee Meeting  | 7.30pm                      |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Fri        | Curry Night in aid of the Village Hall  |                             |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Sat        | Bird Club - meet Village Hall Car Park  | 10.00 am                    |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Sun        | Holy Communion – Church   | 9.30 am                     |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> Mon        | Household & Garden Waste Collection<br>Book Club – 71 High Street                   | 7.00 am<br>8.00 pm          |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> Tue        | Parish Council Meeting – Village Hall   | 7.30 pm                     |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> Wed       | Mobile Library – Somerset Arms  | 9.35-9.45 am                |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> Sun       | Matins – Church<br>Community Garden BBQ etc   | 9.30 am<br>12.00 midday     |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> Mon       | Black Box & Blue Bins Collection  | 7.00 am                     |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> Thu       | Welcome Club Meeting – Horningsham Hall   | 2.30 pm                     |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> Sun       | Harvest Thanksgiving – Church   | 10.30 am                    |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> Mon       | Household & Garden Waste Collection   | 7.00 am                     |
| 23 <sup>rd</sup> Tue       | W.I. Meeting – Stourton Village Hall  | 7.30 pm                     |
| <b>24<sup>th</sup> Wed</b> | <b>Deadline for Contributions to October MBPN</b><br>Mobile Library – Somerset Arms | <b>9.35-9.45 am</b>         |
| 27 <sup>th</sup> Sat       | Hallowe'en Party – Village Hall   | 2.00 pm                     |
| 28 <sup>th</sup> Sun       | Holy Communion – Church   | 9.30 am                     |
| 29 <sup>th</sup> Mon       | Black Box & Blue Bins Collection  | 7.00 am                     |

Dr Harding's Surgery every Monday at 36 Church Street except Bank Holidays 5-6 pm.  
Due to pressure of work the Surgery at Silton, Bourton, is unable to accept repeat orders for medication by telephone. Please bring your orders to 36, Church Street the week before they are due so that the Doctor can collect them.

Dustbin Day every Monday; for Bank Holiday changes see Wiltshire Council website.  
Mother & Toddlers every Tuesday 10.00 am to 12 noon.

Useful telephone Nos.: The Village Shop: 844206; The Post Office: 845040; The Pub: 844207; Village Hall bookings – Mrs Lisa Cripps 844956; Dr. Andrew Murrison MP: 01225 358584 or murrisona@parliament.uk; Mere Link Scheme 01747 860096.

Maiden Bradley Parish News: contributions are welcome in any format.  
E-Mail: editor@maidenbradley.net or contact: Pat Kennedy: 845397; Meg Oliver: 844317;  
Treasurer Les Mayne; 845235: email; lesmayne@hotmail.co.uk.

## Editorial

September was another busy month in the lives of the villagers of Maiden Bradley with charity walkers, sky divers, Village Hall fundraisers, village shop volunteers, bike riders, welcoming service for the new vicar, bell ringers, community garden members and more, all contributing to the versatile and energetic activities of us all. If you would like to join in with any of these activities, please contact us at the News and we will put you in touch with the right person.

*Pat Kennedy 845397, pat.kennedy6093@gmail.com or editor@maidenbradley.net*



The licensing and installation of our new priest-in-charge, Revd Carol Wilson-Barker, took place at St Michael's, Mere, on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> September at an inspiring and inclusive service conducted by the Bishop of Sherborne, Dr Graham Kings. Many people from all three parishes in the benefice attended as well as many more from Carol's previous parishes. At one point in the service gifts of welcome were presented to her by representatives of village organisations – Angus Neish, as Chairman of our Parish Council, gave her a beautiful basket of flowers. It was obvious that the welcomes were very genuine and that Carol felt their warmth.

She attended her first service at All Saints' the following Sunday when the benefice came to join in Songs of Praise. She will be our minister at two services in October – Communion on the 7<sup>th</sup> at 9.30 am, and our Harvest Thanksgiving on the 21<sup>st</sup> at 10.30 am. We very much look forward to having her at All Saints' then and having led us in those services we hope that she will begin to feel that she knows us!

*Meg Oliver - 844317*

## Lead theft from the roof of All Saints' Church

Many of you are aware that on the night of Friday, 28 July a section of lead was stolen from the roof of the church. This is an update of how this is being dealt with.

60% of the lead was taken from the flat roof over the porch. A vehicle was driven up the drive to the porch and this is why, for the time being, there is a temporary stone slab in front of the gates to stop vehicles entering the church yard. A more permanent solution to this is being discussed.

The PCC have been in touch with the Diocese and English Heritage to ask their advice on what course of action we should take to repair the roof and then to protect it. Following advice given, we are in the process of getting the necessary planning documentation and estimates to replace the missing lead. Alarms will also be installed on the roof of the church as soon as possible to deter thieves from returning in the near future to take the rest of the lead. Although the church will receive some money from the Insurance Company this will not be enough to cover all the costs of replacing the lead and the alarm installation.

The church is faced with raising approximately £12,000 to meet the total expenditure. This is going to be tough but to keep our Grade 1 listed building waterproof this has to be done. In the meantime Henry Crabbe has put up a temporary tarpaulin to cover the roof but this will not be sufficient to deter water getting in to the fabric of the building.

*Liz Nixon*

## Family News

We can easily miss items of family news and if that is for lack of 'sleuthing' we apologise! It would always be most helpful if anyone who has an exciting or important piece of news to share could make sure that I know about it. You can phone me or write a note and leave it at the shop for me. Thank you.

*Meg Oliver - 844317*

## Somerset Arms

Our lovely landlady Cate, from the Somerset Arms, is returning to South Africa for a few months for a family matter and we wish her a safe journey and return to us at the New Year.

## Chay Coulbert

Just a few words about my nephew Chay who you may have seen on the TV or in the paper practicing his yoga with Prince Charles. The one legged tree position suits him as he only has one leg now, having lost one in an assassination attempt in Afghanistan. As a Special Boat Service member, he was well out in front of a patrol with two Afghan National Army soldiers, when a lot of small arms fire forced them into the only available cover, a shallow depression beside the track. The IED only partially detonated beneath him. The main patrol stopped about 150 metres back and waited for an armoured vehicle to advance behind. The Afghan soldiers did the most dangerous and courageous thing that a soldier can do: they picked the very badly wounded Chay up, then carried him back over 150 metres of open ground under heavy fire.

Please remember, when you see reports of Afghan treachery that if it were not for those two heroes, Chay would probably have been led to death. While Chay is none too pleased to join the ranks of the war disabled, he does have a wound that trumps his brother's. Remember Lewis Coulbert (23 years old) the soldier who was shot in the arm, dug out the bullet, sticky taped a wound pad on and carried on fighting, and now "only" has a 50p size scar?

My brother has gone through a lot of anxious moments over the past three years. Please join us in praying for Lewis's safe return home from Afghanistan in October.

*Rob Coulbert*



## **My Bike Ride – Charity Fund Update**

I am about to close the “Save The Children” charity fund for my bike ride and I am very pleased to report that the total amount raised stands at £1,441.22 (including gift aid tax relief) ) of which a fantastic amount of £356.95 was contributed by the villagers of Maiden Bradley. The full list of donations can still be seen on the following charity web page until the end of September, together with a number of photographs if anyone would like to see why I enjoyed the ride so much (or make last minute donations to push the total over £1500!) -

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/RayKenzieJOGLE>

Thanks again for all your support and very generous donations.

*Ray Kenzie*

## **Village Hall Fundraising**

Thanks to everyone who donated and/or gave prizes and attended the last Bingo evening. We raised £160 for Village Hall funds. If anyone would like to donate prizes for October we will be very grateful.

Bingo – The next Bingo evening is on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> October.

Curry Night Friday 5<sup>th</sup> October. Tickets at the Village Shop or contact Mel 01985 845111

Calling all children for Saturday October 27<sup>th</sup> Halloween party, Village Hall 2.00 pm

*Pam - 844897*

## **Poppy Appeal – 2012**

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Falklands War. Few will forget the images beamed into our homes by new technology and the sacrifice of Servicemen who lost their lives, or were badly injured, during those days of conflict. 2012 has seen The Royal British Legion reassess some key areas; how to better support beneficiaries and how it should be organised to deliver such changes for the future. Its springboard remains, as it has for generations, to be there long-term to support Servicemen and Servicewomen in need. Maiden Bradley plays a part in ensuring their continuing care in a changing world.

Our house to house collections are licensed to start on 27<sup>th</sup> October and continue until 10<sup>th</sup> November.

Those kindly collecting are David Morse (High Street, Frome View), Mary Stevens (The Knapp, Barcroft and Frome Road), Diana Stevens (Church Street, Somerset Arms side), Pippa Brierley (Church Street, Village shop side, outlying farms). The Village Shop will have one static point and the Somerset Arms, two.

Please remember that if you are a taxpayer and use a Gift Aid Envelope The Royal British Legion can reclaim 28p for every £1.00 given from the Inland Revenue. Over £190 was raised in this way during the 2011 Appeal. The Collectors have a supply of envelopes. Please do ask for one.



*Pippa Brierley*

## Parish Council 11<sup>th</sup> September 2012

**Co-opton of New Councillor,** Councillor Sarah Fry signed her co-opton papers and was welcomed to the team.

**Best Kept Village Competition.** The Parish Council was pleased to hear that the Parish had come third in the judging for the South Wiltshire Medium Village category. The following comments were made: the Hedges, trees walls etc. and residential gardens were all neat and tidy. The Church and surrounds were well maintained providing a tranquil haven. The Village Hall was neat and tidy. The Community Garden within the walled area was well thought out with various plots marked out and cultivated. The new orchard project sounds exciting and we look forward to seeing it in the



coming year. It was lovely to see a thriving Village Shop and Post Office run by the community and plants on sale from the Community Garden. The notice boards were up to date and easy to read. The community litter pick was very successful – not easy with a trunk road going through the village. For a small rural village the commitment of the community in keeping it alive and thriving with the shop, garden, parish plan and future developments is to be commended.

**Parish Steward.** The following items were reported to the Clerk -

The Damaged section of highway on Bradley Lane between Dangell's Barn Farm and Yarnfield Cottage: it has cracked and fallen away.

It was reported that the drains are not coping on the pub side of Church Street: the water now goes down the pavement outside of these houses and could potentially flood the houses in the future. It comes in on the pub forecourt and it continues to run down, hits the Traffic Calming area and funnels onto the pavement.

The 30mph sign in Back Lane has been hit by a car.

The weeds in Church Street need to be sprayed again as the chemicals used have not worked.

The Clerk was instructed to also ask if Community Pay-Back group could weed Church Street and clean the play area equipment.

If you know of any area that requires attention in and around the Parish please contact the Clerk on 213436, or Wiltshire Highways Department on 0800 232323.

**Village Hall Consultation.** Councillor Kay Mayne reported to Council on the recent Village Hall Committee meeting and who the members of the new Committee were. The new Chairman of the Village Hall Committee had come to the start of the meeting to introduce himself to the Councillors and discuss the thoughts of the Committee. It was agreed that the Parish Council will provide a forum for opinion to be expressed; the Parish Council will assist the Village Hall Committee in organising this. The Parish Council is to facilitate an open evening for parishioners to display their thoughts on the various ways forward for the Hall and Recreational Area. November was discussed as the best possible time to hold it, and a date will be announced in the next edition of the Parish News. The different groups will need to provide their displays with their thoughts to the Clerk in late October.

**Please can parishioners wishing to have a display contact the Clerk as soon as possible so that she can make arrangements for display board's tables etc. The Parish Council does have a projector if anyone wishes to use slides or a power point presentation.**

### **Planning**

Application Number: S / 2012 / 902 Location: 18 Church Street, Maiden Bradley Warminster. Proposal: The erection of a single storey rear extension. The above application has been granted permission .

**Items for the next Agenda - Media Policy, Parish Footpath Standard Review, and Projects for the 2013/2014 year, Phone Box and Community Emergency Plan**

**Date of the next meeting.** The Council agreed that 9<sup>th</sup> October 2012 would be the date of the next Parish Council meeting. As always, the Parish Council meeting will be open at the start with an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions or make comments on any matter. The website Southwilt.com (Maiden Bradley) can be accessed to read a copy of the Agenda and Minutes electronically or copies are displayed on the Community Notice Board at the village shop.

Mrs Sarah Jeffries can be contacted by email on maidenbradleyipc@o2.co.uk, by phone on 01985 213436, or post to Parish Clerk, 9 Beech Grove, Warminster, BA12 0AB.

### **Come and join us on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> October at the Community Garden**

Looking for new members! We've got exciting new plans and would like to attract new members for the allotment for 2013, which will be our fourth year, to help you grow your own fruit and veg, whilst working with the rest of the team to grow crops for the community, via the village shop.

On the 14<sup>th</sup>, we will be having a barbecue and refreshments, and there will be quite a few of us present to talk about next year's plans. So, we hope that as many potential new members will join us. In addition, we hope to press apples for cider and juice, so if you have any apples spare from your own gardens, please bring them along too. It's not been the greatest of summers for hard fruit, so we are a bit short, but we'll do our best. Please join us from 12.00 on the 14<sup>th</sup>.



*Mike O'Brian and The Maiden Bradley Community Garden Team*

## Welcome Club

We went to Sidmouth for our August outing, visiting a re-vamped Newcott Café for coffee. This venue is now designed in the style of an American Diner and renamed Route 303. We arrived at Sidmouth at about 11.30am so we had plenty of time to do whatever we chose. A few spots of rain did not spoil our enjoyment and we boarded the coach at 2.45pm and drove to the Donkey Sanctuary – it was good to see the donkeys again. They have a beautiful home and are very well looked after. Some of our number helped round up a loose animal which had somehow managed to get through a gate. We returned to the coach for the raffle, and unbelievably I won the booby prize again, making this three out of four times in recent raffles! The rain began as we drove off but, yet again, we had enjoyed plenty of warm sunshine.

Sidney Blackmore joined us on September 20<sup>th</sup> and gave us an interesting afternoon telling the story of William Beckford, a famous Wiltshire gentleman.

Alan Truscott will be bringing some more antiques on October 18<sup>th</sup>. Alan is always most interesting and has a delightful presentation style.

Our Coffee Morning is on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> November. All the family is very welcome to join us and maybe pick up one or two early Christmas gifts. We shall be in the Horningsham Hall from 10am – 12 noon. Come and sample our delicious coffee and yummy biscuits!

*Chris Short - 847373*

## Village Hall Fund Raiser

### Curry Night - Friday 5<sup>th</sup> October

3 course Meal £12.50 pp

Including Vegetarian Options - Bring your own Drinks

#### Specimen Menu

3 Starter Platter

Mel's - Spicy Meat Balls, Veggie Samosa's, Prawns Gambas  
With various dips

-

Beef/Lamb Curry

Chicken Korma

Mel's Bombay Style Vegetables

Pea & Lentil Curry

-

Ice cream & Fruit Salad

-

Tickets must be pre-booked no later than Fri Sept 28<sup>th</sup>. Tickets will be on sale in the Village Shop, or contact Pam Colbert 01985 844897 or Mel Thomas 01985 845111

## **The Garden Club**

The topic of our next meeting, on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, is "From Nothing to Something". Tony Davies is giving us a talk with slides showing the creation of his garden in Bourton, and how he developed it from builder's rubble to a beautiful 'show garden'. Non-members are welcome, and the £2 per person cost includes tea or coffee.

Future dates for your diary Monday 12<sup>th</sup> November, when we visit Lakeside Garden Centre, and a Christmas Dinner on Monday December 10<sup>th</sup>.



*Kim P - 844524*



*Pictures are of Lakeside  
Garden Centre*

## **Recycling Area**

The recycling bins will be removed from the area opposite Barcroft at the end of September and will not be replaced.

## **Door to Door Sales**

The local police are concerned that unlicensed door to door sales persons are operating in the area. If anyone calls at your door attempting to sell anything at all you are advised to ring 101 and report it to the police.

## **Photo Shoot by Tempest – Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November**

Please come and have your family photographs taken – ideal for Christmas presents. The photo shoot will take place at the Village Hall from 10am until noon on Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup> November. The photos will be taken in a private room and there will be tea, coffee and cakes to enjoy while you wait. All the money raised by this event will go to the Owlets Mother and Toddler Group. For more details please phone Julie on 01985 844425.

# THE SHOP

## SUPER SATURDAY

6 October



... we are

launching Ali's Pantry - a new Maiden Bradley business offering scrumptious cup cakes, classic cakes and celebration cakes to order. Special tasting and a raffle to win a cake of your choice!

**NEW IN STORE!**



Selection of high quality house and garden plants - great gifts! Fresh from the Flower Hut - supporting another small local business.

**Halloween coming!**



**Look in the shop!**

## JOB VACANCY!

With the change of management in the shop an employment opportunity has arisen. We are looking for a reliable and enthusiastic person who can take charge on 2 Saturday mornings each month.

For more details please contact Kay Mayne in the shop. Applications, in writing, to be left in the shop.

Tel: 01985 844206

E-mail: [maidenbradleyshop@gmail.com](mailto:maidenbradleyshop@gmail.com)

Website: [maidenbradleyvillageshop.posterous.com](http://maidenbradleyvillageshop.posterous.com)

Maiden Bradley Community Village Shop – run by you, run for you

## Recipe of the Month - Cream of Courgette Soup

The weather has turned much cooler now that we are in the early throes of Autumn. In such conditions there is nothing like a warming bowl of soup at lunch time or in the evening after a day out in the garden. Despite the inclement summer, courgettes are in abundance and a good way to use them up is this tasty, warming dish. An utterly delicious soup, delicate in colour, creamy in texture and with a subtle flavour.

Serves 4-6

30ml/2 tbsp olive oil  
15gm/1/2oz/1 tbsp butter  
1 medium onion, roughly chopped  
900gms/2 lbs courgettes, trimmed and sliced  
5ml/1tsp dried oregano  
about 600ml/1 pint/2.5 cups vegetable stock  
115gms/4oz dolcellate cheese, rind removed, diced  
300ml/1/2 pint/1.25cups single cream  
salt and ground black pepper  
fresh oregano and extra dolcellate to garnish



Heat oil and butter in a large saucepan until foaming. Add the onion and cook gently, stirring, for about 5 minutes, until softened but not brown.

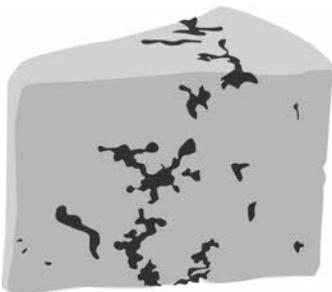
Add the sliced courgettes and dried oregano and season with salt and pepper. Cook over a medium heat, stirring frequently, for about 10 minutes.

Pour in the stock and bring to the boil, stirring constantly. Lower the heat and partially cover the pan. Simmer gently, stirring occasionally for about 30 minutes. Stir in the diced dolcellate until melted.

Pour the mixture into a blender or food processor. Process until smooth.

Add two thirds of the cream. Stir over a low heat until hot but not boiling. Check the consistency and add more stock if the soup is too thick. Taste for seasoning, then pour into heated bowls. Swirl in the remaining cream. Garnish with fresh oregano and extra cheese and serve immediately.

Enjoy.



## Poem of the month -

O Autumn, laden with fruit, and stain'd  
With the blood of the grape, pass not, but sit  
Beneath my shady roof; there thou may'st rest,  
And tune thy jolly voice to my fresh pipe,  
And all the daughters of the year shall dance!  
Sing now the lusty song of fruits and flowers.

"The narrow bud opens her beauties to  
The sun, and love runs in her thrilling veins;  
Blossoms hang round the brows of Morning, and  
Flourish down the bright cheek of modest Eve,  
Till clust'ring Summer breaks forth into singing,  
And feather'd clouds strew flowers round her head.

"The spirits of the air live in the smells  
Of fruit; and Joy, with pinions light, roves round  
The gardens, or sits singing in the trees."  
Thus sang the jolly Autumn as he sat,  
Then rose, girded himself, and o'er the bleak  
Hills fled from our sight; but left his golden load.

*William Blake*

## Shop News

As you will have read in last month's Maiden Bradley News the committee has reluctantly had to say good bye to our Chairman, Steve Meek. When I agreed last year to become Vice-Chairman I was under the illusion that he would be in the village for a long time! So here I am taking on the mantle but now with another unexpected large gap to fill. Anne, after 11 years of working tirelessly in the shop, has decided to retire. Anne has been with the shop since it began life as a community shop in 2001. She has given as many voluntary hours as she has paid hours. Her hard work, her enthusiasm and her commitment to the village has been second to none. We all wish her well in her retirement and I know we will be relying on her expertise to guide us for some time to come.

I am pleased to report that Kay Mayne has accepted the position of Shop Manager. Since her return to the village Kay has given many voluntary hours to the shop and the committee are confident that we will have a smooth transition as she takes on the managerial role. Inevitably there will be some changes as she puts her own stamp on the shop but I know she will listen to what the village wants and do her utmost to achieve a successful and profitable business. Sam will continue to be an assistant with increased responsibilities. We do, however, now need to take on a 3<sup>rd</sup> person to be in charge for 2 Saturday mornings each month. Saturday is an important day for the shop. If anyone is interested in this vacancy then please get in touch with Kay for more details.

*Liz Nixon*

## Sport England Improvement Fund –

The following has been passed to us from Sport England -

“Has your council been inspired by the Olympics to improve its facilities? Over the next five years, Sport England’s Improvement Fund will invest £45m of National Lottery funding into medium-sized projects that will improve the quality and experience of sport. This will be distributed via five funding rounds with £3m available this year (2012/2013), £9m in 2013/2014 and £11m per year in 2014/2015, 2015/2016 and 2016/2017. “

Applications are invited for sums from £150,000 to £500,000. The 2012/13 round will have closed by the time the News is published. It had a focus on artificial pitches and swimming pool changing rooms. The focus of bids for future years has not yet been publicised, but it could well include multi-purpose initiatives of the sort we are considering for the Rec!

## Walk10 for Marie Curie Cancer Care Nurses

The air was still and warm with cheerful walkers gathering for the event despite the fact that for many, this would be a memorial walk.

There were just a few at first, wandering towards the starting line inside the entrance to Stourhead Garden and being a little early meant that time could be spent with the face painters, buying torches, memorial lanterns or just listening to the playing of the band.

All seemed sensibly dressed for the occasion, we did our warm up fitness workout and as the start was announced, a throng of several hundred people wearing their bright yellow T shirts, funnelled themselves along the path, around the lake and into the wood. A choir sang as we approached the Grotto and as we sank into our walking pace, twilight descended.



It wasn’t a race but on trying to reach the front group of walkers I found myself falling into step with a lady who was walking in memory of her mother; there were many who had names attached to their T shirts and many who bought and named lanterns to light the pathway on our return, two hours later.

We picnicked back at the starting point, listening to more great music and watching the fire eaters. The local Marie Curie Nurse announced that over £12,000 had been raised which encouraged me to think of next year’s 10k and to find some sponsors!

*Pat Kennedy*



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Local pre-school Leaping Frogs has finalised the plans for its new site in Zeals. Now called Leaping Frogs Day Nursery the successful pre-school will be expanding to provide full daycare facilities from September 2012.

If you are interested in registering your child or baby with Leaping Frogs and would like to chat to someone about joining, please call Victoria or Becky on 01747 861186 or 01985 220483 or visit our website [www.leapingfrogs.org](http://www.leapingfrogs.org) for more information.

**Tony Layard**



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# Richard Robbins

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garden care  
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## *Baby & Toddler Group*

Outdoor Play, Ball Pit, Play Dough, Bikes,  
Puzzles, Painting, Indoor slide

**Tuesdays 10 – 12**

**Maiden Bradley Village Hall**

Friendly and informal atmosphere for  
children to play and parents to relax!

£1.50 for 1st child 50p for each  
additional child

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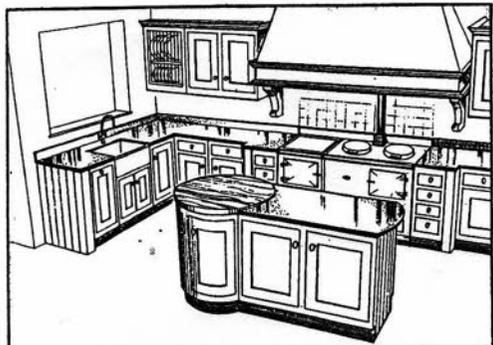
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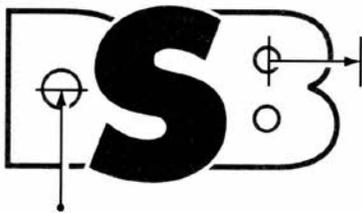
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## Notes from Afghanistan

At the time of writing, I am 8 weeks into my tour here in sunny Afghanistan and am delighted to report that the balmy temperatures are slowly easing, with a high each day of around 35 degrees. I have ventured outside the wire on five occasions, and have become accustomed to carrying lots of kit, as well as jumping on and off helicopters.

I conduct regular visits to Lashkar Gah and Kabul, two places that could not be more different. Lashkar Gah is more rural and dusty than Kabul, which is, as you would expect, much more developed. The Afghan officials I deal with are incredibly accommodating and hospitable, despite the fact that we tend to turn up at facilities en masse, without an appointment. We are always offered cups of Chai (a weak green tea) together with nuts and cake.



Trips to Kabul are very pleasant as we are accommodated at the British Embassy, which is the second largest British Embassy in the world (after Washington DC). We stay in self-contained 'pods' – imagine half of a shipping container made into a compact caravan. The complex feels incredibly green compared to British bases in Helmand, as there are grassy areas with roses and geraniums.

During a recent trip to Lashkar Gah I was allowed to travel in a Jackal, which is an open topped military vehicle (see the picture of me waiting to depart), which gave me a fantastic view of the town. It felt very like India, as the roads were chaotic with lots of motorbikes, tuk tuks and their own interpretation of the Highway Code – you take your life into your own hands

negotiating a roundabout! I saw many stalls selling fresh fruit and their equivalent of naan bread. It was also striking how well groomed people appear in white without the luxury of hot running water and washing machines. The children appear to have very little; however they are full of smiles running around playing.

I am already a quarter through my tour and am grateful to Kay Mayne for religiously sending me the Sunday paper supplements; which have provided on more than one occasion a little escapism on an exercise bike!

*More to follow...Amanda Brown*

## Flower Festival

By kind invitation of the Duke and Duchess of Somerset, we once again held the two day Flower Festival at Bradley House, which we feel was a great success and we raised the sum of £1500.00 for All Saint's Church funds.

I would like to thank all the arrangers, helpers and of course the supporters for being so generous with their time and donations. Many were impressed by the number of children who entered the children's competition and we hope they are budding arrangers of the future. It was delightful to have so many join us at the close of the event, for our 'songs of praise' led by Jane Hurd.

*Diana Stevens*

