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SALTASH AND DISTRICT OBSERVER



December 2017 - Issue 309

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See
Christmas
article on
page 4

A Message from the Editor...

Established 25 years...

And, 26 Christmas messages from the Editor!

I cannot believe another year has passed, where has this year gone! It has been quite a year for the Observer, as we celebrated our 25th Anniversary back in August and we are now bringing our 26th Christmas edition to our readers, I have to say I have loved every minute of it... (some days more than others) seriously its been amazing.

I feel honoured to think the businesses of Saltash have supported us to bring to you the Observer for all these years.

The businesses have been through the highs and lows of the financial climate along with the rest of the country, but here we are still working together and supporting each other, may it long continue.

Christmas is a time of giving...

Once again the town has taken on its own special seasonal magic, the Christmas festival and parade has passed, our celebrated lights are now glistening and our shops are filled with traditional and unusual Christmas fare and ideas for gifts. Our Town is ready once again 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

A Christmas Message for the 26th Year!

In this season of goodwill for the twenty sixth 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

Staggered Tolls Suggested as Tamar Traffic Nears Saturation Point

Staggered bridge tolls with rush hour drivers' paying more than off peak motorists crossing the Tamar is one suggestion put forward to avoid the Tamar Bridge reaching traffic saturation point in the next two decades. A park and ride system with a large car park in the Saltash area and connecting buses to Plymouth is another alternative which will be considered as part of a £20,000 study led by Plymouth City Council and supported by Cornwall Council.

The bridge is anticipated to reach capacity sometime between 2030 and 2040 according to different studies. In fact it is already sometimes at saturation point during peak

periods. Meanwhile without a toll increase by 2019 the maintenance costs will bring the reserves held by the bridge and ferry committee below the £2 million considered to be the

acceptable minimum.

Cornwall Council has to date not favour the park and ride option and no site has been put forward for it. There are doubts over its effectiveness since

although many shoppers and workers in Plymouth would require fast and frequent busses into the city centre; the majority of those heading into Plymouth from South East Cornwall are targeting the hospital and industrial units around Derriford. There would need to be a variety of buses with differing destinations to make any scheme attractive.

A further alternative favoured by some county councillors is to speed traffic by abolishing tolls altogether. This has been done on all Scottish crossings, including the Forth Bridge, and the Severn crossings will be toll free as of next April.

It is also hoped that the promised increase in stopping train services between Penzance and Plymouth, which will follow signalling restructuring, will help take commuters off the roads.

One reason behind the need for a toll increase is that bridge users continue to subsidise the Torpoint Ferry. While the joint bridge and ferry management received around 75-80% of its revenue from the bridge, around 75-80% of its spending

goes on the ferry. Saltash town councillor Steve Miller recently proposed that Saltash town council should urge for a separate toll structuring with ferry users paying a proportionately higher toll than bridge crossers. However he received no support and could not find a seconder for his proposal.

In fact there has recently been a slight fall in traffic over the bridge, down by 1.1% in the year up to July 2017.

Those crossing the bridge can in any event be reassured that no change in toll structure can be implemented without a full public enquiry followed by an Act of Parliament.

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You may have already seen in the press that Cornwall Council recently conducted a residents survey. The results were quite favourable for Saltash compared to the rest of Cornwall but showed that overall we do not compare well with other local councils. The thing that stuck out for me was how poorly informed people thought they were, if you don't feel informed you are not going to have a good opinion of anything the council does. I've come across this a few times recently where someone was angered by an event but when presented with the facts was actually happy with what had happened. 53% of people in this area said that they were not informed enough; so I'm taking this as a challenge over my next few slots in this column, prepare to be informed!

Have Your Say

A lot has happened at Cornwall Council in the last month and it makes it hard to know where to start. In many respects the most important issue, because it is so pressing, is the proposed budget for the next four years. The grant from central government has been getting smaller and smaller and soon it will disappear completely. Cornwall Council has saved £300 million but still needs to save another £75 million in the next four years. I keep writing the word "save", but let's be honest they are cuts. What do we cut to reduce the budget by another £75 million? The Council is only allowed to borrow money to invest and the budget cuts cannot be offset by raising Council Tax without a referendum. There are proposals on the table which include an increase in council tax of 1.99% and an increase of 3% for adult social care next year and 1% in 2019. The important part here is that these are only proposals and nothing has been decided yet. If you would like to know



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For Observer readers
Sam Tamlin

Cornwall Councillor for Saltash West
E: sam.tamlin@cornwallcouncillors.org.uk.

more or have an opinion about the budget and want to have your voice heard you can have your say by going to www.cornwall.gov.uk/budget 2017. These are going to be very tough decisions with difficult consequences, so your opinions given in this consultation really will make a difference.

Despite not being able to borrow to balance a budget local councils are allowed to borrow in order to invest. It's something that Plymouth has been doing for a while and are now using income from these investments as another source of funding. In the last full council meeting it was agreed that Cornwall will start its own investment program in jobs and homes. The fund will start with £70 million, however if successful may increase to £600 million. This will allow the building of a thousand council houses as well as generating economic development and jobs. If the plan is successful it will also increase income for the council in to form of taxes and rent.

Additionally, the way care is delivered to Cornwall's elderly and most vulnerable adults is also changing. Cornwall Council Cabinet have agreed a plan which will provide visits based on client need and get rid of 15 minute visits. The package of proposals also includes a pay increase for care workers by implementing the National Living Wage Foundation's rate of pay. It is hoped that this will alleviate one of the biggest problems faced in Cornwall of recruitment and retention of care workers which in turn will reduce the use of agency staff and consequently reduce

costs overall.

Electoral Review.

Even more change is on the horizon in the form of Cornwall's very own electoral review. It has already been decided that in 2021 Cornwall will elect 87 councillors which reduces the size of the council by roughly 25%. The boundaries have not yet been decided but divisions need to have a fixed number of people within them. Saltash currently has four divisions but it doesn't follow that the town will end up with three. Unfortunately it's not that easy; as a town we are currently over represented and the population means we could easily end up with two and a half. This means Saltash may well be sharing a councillor with some of the neighbouring parishes in 2021. Currently the town council divisions match Cornwall's, my suspicion is that the Electoral Commission will decide to change both. If they do decide to move the boundaries they need local views on where these boundaries should be, if you have a view on this please contact the Local Government Boundary Commission by 19th February.

Free Parking

I think I'm able to squeeze in one last thing in the space available, by the time you read this it should be close to Christmas so it's a good time to mention that there will be free parking in Saltash on Friday 22nd December. The car parks are, Alexandra Square, Bellevue West, Bellevue East & Culver Road.

Merry Christmas everyone and have a happy New Year.

Peter Ryland Chamber Chairman – Keeping us Updated...

I hope you all enjoyed the Christmas Festival on the 2nd December. Luckily the weather stayed reasonably good. It was somewhat of a surprise to me that I had to look up to someone but the stilt walker was taller than me, although one youngster did ask if I was on stilts!!

I would thank all those who helped with the Christmas Festival for all their efforts especially Danielle Frith of Truly Scrumptious under whose leadership the event was organised. I would also thank the Town Council for the Christmas lights especially Councillor Mike Parker of Saltash DIY who organised them.

Congratulations must also go to the YMCA charity shop, newcomers to the town, who took the Chamber Cup for the Best Dressed Christmas Window and West Country Embroidery who were the Children's Choice, as judged by local school children.

Other thanks must also go to the Bookshelf who organised the Christmas Bake Off, Community Market for Santa's Grotto, Diverse Events who organised stall allocation etc., Marilyn Grose for Youngstagers and Hilary Frank for the Lantern Parade along with all the other activity organisers. But the biggest thanks must go to the people of Saltash who supported the event and kept Fore Street safe (the police only had one lost child to deal with and it didn't take long for Mum to turn up). Hopefully, for those who do not already shop in Fore Street, it showed them that there is a good range of shops and that the town centre is a welcoming place to shop, not only at Christmas but all year round. And, with respect to Christmas shopping, don't forget that there is free parking in town centre car parks on the 22nd for those presents you had forgotten to get. The Chamber was

involved in the consultation regarding this.

In the New Year the Chamber members will decide whether they want to organise the Christmas Festival in 2018 and we would welcome any feedback, whether positive or negative on this year's event along with any ideas as to other things that could be included. On other matters, we continue to liaise with the developers of the retail site at Carkeel and we should know in the next few months as to whether they have been successful in their planning application.

We have also been asked by the Cornwall Chamber to respond to the consultation regarding the rail network and are consulting with members at present as to how their businesses could be affected.

I said it last month, because I thought I would not be reporting again before Christmas, but to repeat "Merry Christmas" to you all on behalf of the Chamber.

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Wards are Closed but Clinics Continue St. Barnabas Friends Assure Saltash

The wards are empty, the accident and emergency facilities disused, but St. Barnabas Hospital remains open and busy with thirteen clinics operating within the hospital. The League of Friends of St. Barnabas Hospital remains active and anxious to reassure Saltash that its cottage hospital is still supplying vital services within the town while its future is considered.

'Along with the citizens of Saltash we were devastated to hear of the temporary closure of the in-patient beds at St. Barnabas.' Chair of the Friends Mrs. Joyce Mepsted told the Friends annual general meeting. 'We have had to respond to people who think the hospital is closed and have been doing our best by continuing to keep a profile at community events.'

As well as the many clinics the physiotherapist has four hundred patients each month, saving many visits to Derriford. The hospital also continues to be a base for the Acute Care at Home team as well as other community nurses, continuing to provide for all.

Meanwhile the League of Friends has been well supported by local residents and businesses. The Saltash Co-Op's community fund has

supported the Friends for the second year running and the Friends' committee has been busy creating an attractive and welcoming garden and seating area from last year's donation. This year's donation from the Co-Op together with a generous gift from Saltash Baptist Church would enable the Friends to purchase two portable ECG Machines desperately needed by the Acute Care at Home team and the community matron. The Ladies Choir too has kindly allowed the League of Friends to benefit from their concerts.

'The NHS is going through a period of change and I have been working with the Saltash Health Group which aims to provide an improved health service in Saltash', concluded Mrs. Mepsted. 'This will be based at both surgeries as well as at St. Barnabas Hospital for the greater benefit of Saltash'.

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Mayoral Matters

As usual this has been a busy month for Saltash Town Council. We are working hard on plans for the next council year, costing them and looking for the best way forward.

I recently attended a meeting of the St Barnabas League of Friends. Sadly there is no good news as to its future, in fact no real news at all. There are several clinics and welfare support departments that could be located in the building and the League of Friends are battling on to make sure this iconic asset to our town does not disappear.

I would like to say a big thank you to the people who work with us in the Council. They work so hard supporting the councillors and the town. Many people have sent us letters saying how happy they are with how good the Waterside is looking now. This is something which I very much endorse. However there are others who you might or might not meet without whom the Council could not function. So we are grateful for your cheerfulness and dedication!

I am looking forward to the Christmas Event coming up soon. Won't it be great to celebrate the Christmas season with all the wondrous things that will be taking place on and around the town centre!

Finally I hope this Christmas and New Year brings you health, happiness and all you hope for.

*Cllr Jean Dent
Town Mayor*

Saltash Company Wins a Prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise



Computech IT Services, a leading software development house based on Tamar View Industrial Estate, has won a Queen's Award for Enterprise 2017. Now in its 51st year, the Queen's Awards for Enterprise scheme is one of the most prestigious business awards in the country, with winning businesses able to use the esteemed Queen's Awards emblem for 5 years.

C.E.O., Garry Thompson and C.O.O., Kevin Baskott, represented Computech at a reception hosted by Her Majesty, The Queen, at Buckingham Palace earlier this year. At a further ceremony held last month, The Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall, Colonel Edward Bolitho, acted for The Queen and presented the Award along with a commemorative glass trophy. The Lord Lieutenant was supported by Councillor Hilary Frank, Vice Chairman of Cornwall Council, who read out the Scroll of Dedication.

Computech received the award in recognition of their outstanding achievements in

international trade, particularly to the USA, with their BusinessMan Business Management Software. Just 102 companies nationwide were awarded a Queen's Award for Enterprise this year, putting Computech in an elite group.

Colonel Bolitho said: "I am delighted that Computech has won this accolade. Cornwall is home to some of the best entrepreneurs and innovative businesses in the country. Computech excels in its field, trading all over the world playing a vital role in creating jobs and driving growth in Cornwall. I am extremely proud

that they have been recognised for their achievements in export and hope they continue to prosper."

Councillor Frank, who represents Saltash South on Cornwall Council, added: "It was particularly thrilling to be able to take part in such a significant ceremony for a Saltash company. Computech has worked hard to improve its exports over recent years and the Award is a testimony to the hard work and dedication of all the staff. There is such a tremendous family atmosphere here - no wonder they are achieving great things!"

Supermarket Pulls Out of Carkeel

Plans for the redevelopment of the supermarket site by Carkeel Roundabout, formerly acquired for a Tesco store, have again been put on hold.

As stated in your September Observer two major stores, Aldi and Home Base, were due to set up on the site alongside McDonalds and Costa Coffee outlets.

However Aldi have now pulled out of the scheme, leaving the 1729 square metre food store site unoccupied.

Iceland have shown an interest in taking on a site here, but a smaller one than Aldi were planning, and confirmation is currently awaited.

Proposed meetings between developers, Town Councillors and developers and the Saltash Chamber of Commerce were postponed until there was more certainty over the development's future.

Roundabout Opens Six Months Early

Commuters and other drivers passing through Carkeel should enjoy a winter of content as the long running work on improving the roundabout, due to end next spring, has been completed six months ahead of schedule.

The six million pound scheme is intended to help speed through the forty thousand vehicles per day that pass through Carkeel. It is designed to cater for future expansion of Saltash and Callington and the traffic increases that will be created.

Highways staff will continue to monitor the traffic lights and adjust them if required. The so-called 'intelligent lights' can read traffic levels and adjust their own timing to help speed traffic through. Where installed elsewhere in Cornwall they are said to have improved traffic flow by up to fifty per cent.

While the work has caused delays they have been minimised by avoiding total closure and doing much of the work by night.

Churchyard Cornish Stone Recycling

The original wall of St. Stephens's churchyard constructed of local Cornish stone, is to be rebuilt, the Town Councils' burial board has agreed.

However it may not be possible to re-use the original stone in reconstruction, If not the stone will be retained until it can be recycled on as suitable site elsewhere.

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Festive Lights, Lanterns and Fireworks Light the Way to Saltash Christmas

Christmas came once more to Saltash with a special seasonal celebration as crowds packed a darkening street awaiting the grand switch on of our festive lights.

There was as ever plenty to keep the expectant crowds entertained with a feast of fun organised this year by Saltash Chamber of Commerce. It began with the exciting sight, and sound of what was estimated to be almost two hundred Santas on motor bikes, passing through on their way to take presents to the Cornish Children's Hospice.

There was no further vehicular traffic through the town, which was fully pedestrianized as gathering crowds came to sample the stalls lining Fore Street. Some were commercially run, some by local charities, all offering seasonal food, drink and gift ideas. Shoppers could also admire our own friendly family shops, many beautifully decorated for Christmas.

The best decorated, and winner of the Saltash Chamber of Commerce Cup, was deemed to be the YMCA shop. The children's choice award was West Country Embroidery, chosen by school councillors from St. Stephens School who all took their selection very seriously.

Number Four, Fore Street

housed Santa's Grotto and he was kept busy with young visitors, all helping raise funds for Jeremiah's Journey. Visitors of all ages enjoyed the town museum and Eliots Time Warp Store, both specially opened all day.

Mayoral duties for Councillor Mrs Jean Dent included judging the bake-off organised by Debbie Keast at Saltash Bookshelf. Father Christmas himself, a connoisseur of mince pies, of which he samples many thousands during his Christmas delivery, aided her in her choice. The judges eventually opted for the baking of Dave Briars, hopefully not resulting in marital strife since he had entered in competition with his wife Jayne.



Meanwhile there was a rich variety of entertainment on the stage at the foot of the street. As darkness fell hundreds gathered to watch our Youngstagers in their seasonal take on 'A Christmas Carol' and the Geraldine Lamb School of Dance in fast moving action to Christmas music.

The crowd was well warmed up and ready for the grand countdown to the moment when a river of festive lights streamed up the street. Soon after, another stream of lights appeared, the lantern parade, now a firm Saltash tradition but seemingly the best ever as our local

children proudly bearing a lot their own creations, alternated with magnificent illuminated ballerinas, penguins and Father Christmas. No sooner had the

parade reached the top of Fore Street when the night sky lit up with fireworks, heralding in yet another Saltash Christmas.



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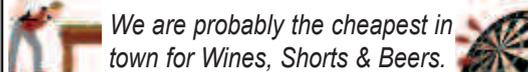
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A Tale of Many Marriages

The speaker at the Saltash Old Cornwall Society's November meeting was proud to proclaim that he had married a different woman every week - all with his wife's approval. Mr. David Dunn was describing some of the highlights of his career in the Saltash Registry Office, where he presided from 1997, recording the births, deaths and marriages in special 'registrar's ink, originally supposedly made of soot and blood, and which grows darker over the years.

There were many happy and some amusing tales, especially of marriage ceremonies that he had performed, some out of the office in various 'approved premises'. These varied from castles to farms, from coastal forts to slate caverns. There were sadder moments, such as when special leave was granted to speed through the 'death bed' marriage of one with a terminal illness.

Registrar's certificates, as Society Secretary Martin Lister observed in his vote of thanks, fulfil vital roles for the family historians of future generations, and he thanked Mr. Dunn for his talk and for his work in recording vital records of family events for those who will come after.

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 - Friday & Saturday Food Markets continue Local food direct from growers
 - Hosting Tuesday's Drop-In Dementia Café
 - The Dementia team gained runner-up in a National Award
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Fridays: Fri 15th Los Limpos

Fri 22nd Roosters Fri 29th The Brakes

Saturdays: Sat 16th Banana Thieves

Sat 23rd Blue Soule Sat 30th Fellow

Heart

Sundays: Christmas Eve

Sun 24th Wireless

New Years Eve Sun 31st Banana

Thieves (Ticket Only)

Seasonal Greetings

Papergirl Passes Out at Sandhurst

A Saltash girl whose career began at age 13 delivering the Saltash Observer for us around her Carkeel home has achieved her lifetime ambition by passing out at Sandhurst's Royal Military Academy as Lieutenant Rebecca Church.

We first knew 'Becks' after she left Bishop Cornish school for saltash.net community school and proved herself enthusiastic and efficient in her monthly deliveries around the industrial estates. She subsequently worked hard part time at Tamar View Fruiters and as lifeguard at the China Fleet Club. From school she was accepted at Bristol's University of the West of England to study physiotherapy, and with her degree returned to practice at Derriford Hospital while also serving as army reservist medic.

This lead on to her achieving the dream she had held on to since aged 13, acceptance at Sandhurst and now passing out as a Commissioned Officer, Physiotherapist in the British Army, to the delight of proud parents Peter and Jo Church.



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Boxing Day 11am -12 00 midnight
New Years Eve 11am -1 00am

January 2018
Every Sunday
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Sat 13th **Vicious Kitten** (Bar)
Sat 20th **Toby Graham** (Bar)
Sat 27th **Stolen Agenda** (Bar)

February 2018
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Safe Cycle and Footpath to Callington Gaining Support

Strong support for a proposed 'safe passageway' for walkers and cyclists between Callington and Saltash was evidenced at a packed public presentation held in the St. Mellion Golf and Country Club. Saltash Town and County councillors were amongst those lending support to the scheme.

The presentation followed a feasibility study carried out by Cormac on behalf of Cornwall Council. St Mellion Councillor Bridie Kent introduced Rebecca Lyle of Cornwall's transport strategy team and Adam Warden of Cormac who outlined the proposed route.

The route had been worked out by two St. Mellion parish councillors and the parish council then persuaded Cornwall to carry out the study and part funded it.

The proposed route runs from the edge of Callington, where it links in with an existing cycle route to Guinnislake. It follows a series of quiet lanes, and highway verges with some land takes necessary where the verges will not allow the proposed three meter wide pathway. It ends at Roods Cross, Hatt where it could connect with an enhanced cycle route through the new development at Broadmoor and on towards the town centre. Alternatively it could continue from the

proposed roundabout at Roods Cross, through Carkeel village along what should be a quieter road when through traffic is diverted towards Stoketon Cross. The cycle way would then cross the by-pass on the existing overbridge.

The feasibility study also looked at an alternative scheme using quiet lanes throughout, around Pillaton. However it concluded that this would be too lengthy and in parts too steep to attract any but the most determined leisure cyclist.

The new route proposed would, it is hoped, attract commuters as well as families. A survey by St. Mellion parish council has shown a number of residents would never cycle or walk the existing busy road but would consider doing so on a safer route.

Those present at the meeting, clearly favoured the scheme though there was concern at there being up to four crossings of the busy A388 and the need for button controlled lights at these was

emphasised.

The full scheme was costed at around £2½ million construction costs, not including land purchase, controlled crossings and legal fees. A number of relevant landowners have indicated willingness to co-operate.

'St. Mellion parish council has shown what a small council can achieve and could put many larger councils to shame', said Cornwall Councillor Derek Holley, and Rebecca Lyle added how good it is for Cornwall Council to work with a positive and pro-active parish such as St Mellion.

The next stage is to prove a strong business case, provide evidence of demand, supporting growth, and a propensity to cycle. Thereafter it will be a question of bidding for funding to see the scheme become a reality.

I WOULD LIKE TO SAY THANK YOU!

I would like to express my thanks to all the people who sponsored me in my 12-hour Indoor Bowling stint in aid of Children in Need.

My contribution of £216 helped to swell the Club's total to over £695.

Thank you all very much.
John White.

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Seasonal Greetings

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Fri 22nd Dec 3pm - 11pm (£15) Mousehole & Angarrick lights with Truro stop off	Thurs 4th Jan 9.30am - 5pm (£10) January Sales @ Exeter
Sat Dec 23rd 12.30 - 17.30 (£7.50) Buckfast Abbey Carol Service Christmas Lunch	Tues 9th Jan 2pm to 5pm (£5) Visit to Kernow Mill
Wed 27th Dec 11am - 4pm (£6) Lunch at the Royal Oak @ Meavy and a walk around Burrator Reservoir	Sun 14th Jan 11am - 4pm (£6) Lanhydrock House for Lunch
Thurs 28th December 2pm - 5pm (£5) Cothele Christmas garland and a walk and pickup at Calstock.	Tues 16th Jan 10am - 4pm (£5.50) Sale Day @ Trago Mills and Newton Abbot
Sun 31st Dec 12 noon - 6pm (£10) Rugby Exeter Chiefs v Leicester Tickets £28 (4 tickets left)	Sun 21st Jan 9am - 5pm (£15) Clarks Village (Street) & Shoe Museum
	Fri 26th Jan 10am - 3pm (£5.50) Tavistock Market Day
	Sun 28th Jan 11am - 4pm (£6) Lunch @ Engine House Kit Hill

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Seasonal Greetings

SHERYLL MURRAY MP WRITES...



Last month saw the presentation of the budget. The aim of the budget was to lay the foundations for a Britain fit for the future – investing for the long-term while supporting families and businesses under pressure now, setting a path to a more prosperous Britain.

I was pleased to see real investment in preparing for the

economy of the future by taking the National Productivity investment fund to £30 billion and by putting the UK at the cutting edge of science and innovation through investing a further £2.3 billion in science and innovation, taking spending to its highest level in 30 years. I was also pleased to learn that we are increasing the National

Living Wage by above inflation, cutting income tax by raising the personal allowance, freezing fuel duty for the 8th year, investing to support our NHS and reducing the amount of time that people have to wait for Universal Credit.

We know in South East Cornwall that we need to build the homes our young people need, setting a target to deliver 300,000 homes per year nationally, reforming planning to unlock land for first time buyers, abolishing stamp duty for over 80 per cent of first time buyers and investing more to take government support for housing up to £44 billion.

The amount we are borrowing is reducing but it now looks like it will take longer than we first thought to balance our budget. The last thing we need to do at the moment is massively increase deficit by massively spending money we simply don't have as the Labour Party would have us do.

With a rural area like South East Cornwall I was really pleased that we will cancel the fuel duty rise scheduled for April – keeping it frozen for the eighth consecutive year meaning the average car driver is £850 better off since 2010. It was great to see the long needed link road between the A30 and St Austell get funded and am determined that we get the preparatory work underway so that we can bid for the much needed

improvements to the A38.

Our economy is still in growth and it is great that employment is up by over 3 million, with over 32 million people in work. Unemployment is down by over 1 million since 2010 and the unemployment rate has not been lower since 1975. It was great to hear earlier in the year that in South East Cornwall the number of people on out of work benefits had reduced by 43% since 2010 and that there were more people in work than ever before.

Lastly I must send my congratulations to the royal family. Firstly to her majesty the Queen who celebrated her 70th Wedding anniversary to the Duke of Edinburgh and secondly to Prince Harry who celebrated his engagement to Meghan Markle. The Royal family do so much for us and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them.

It was a real pleasure to join many constituents at the Annual Saltash Sailing Club Dinner at the China Fleet Club. As always the meal was fantastic and I would like to thank the Club for inviting me to join them again. It was good to see how successful the members have been over the year at sailing. It was also good to see so many young people taking up the sport.

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

Support for Youth Groups

Three local organisations providing activities for young people to share have been promised a total of £40,000 by Saltash Town Council.

The town's two youth clubs will each receive £15,000. These are The Core, by Saltash College (formally known as K3), which provide a wide variety of activities and support services, and Livewire on Waterside, which especially encourages young people making their own music as well as being a popular venue to hang out and share company.

The Core particularly looked for funding to improve its popular cafe which offers training and work experience, while Livewire aims to utilise funding to improve its lighting.

A third grant of £10,000 will go to Carkeel based Junkyard Indoor Skate Park.

Conundrum Corner

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

- 1 Where would you be if you were visiting Paddy's Wigwam? (9)
- 2 The Composer Chopin wrote most of his work for which instrument? (5)
- 3 Which letter has the most files in the game of Scrabble? (4)
- 4 During which War did the Battle of Rorke's Drift take place? (4)
- 5 Which sea creature has three hearts? (7)
- 6 Which Element is present in all Acids? (8)
- 7 What flavour is the drink Absinthe? (7)
- 8 The island of Zanzibar is part of which African Country? (8)

Conundrum Answers on Page 7

I hope you have enjoyed this little Quiz throughout the Year and I wish all our Readers the Compliments of the Season

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Letters to the Editor...

Dear Mary,

According to OFGEM, households on the national grid pay around 8% of their annual combined energy bill towards 'environmental and social costs' of which less than one tenth (approximately £8) is paid to homes benefitting from the feed-in-tariff. This tariff paid to owners of solar panels has fallen dramatically from around 44 pence per kilowatt hour in 2010 to just over four pence per kilowatt hour today. The rather generous price originally offered was to encourage adoption of what was new and expensive technology, the average installation price in 2010 being around £10,000 for a four-kilowatt array, which would most likely cost around £5,000 to install today. Some who invested in these alternatives did so for profit and some did it to save the planet.

I agree that the high wholesale electricity prices that large solar and wind farms have been able to guarantee through the Government, for many years to come, are a moral disgrace now that wind generation costs are comparable to that of gas-fired power stations. However, it is also the case that for too long we have paid too little for energy, not considering the great environmental cost of carbon emissions. In this regard Councillor Holley may be grateful for his north facing, cool and damp garden, if we continue to rely on 'cheap' fossil fuels to partially meet our energy demand and therefore, send global temperatures sky high. If his back-garden faces north then I presume the front of his house faces south and he could, if affordable to him, invest in renewable technologies and corresponding battery storage and come off the grid altogether. He wouldn't receive the 'disgusting' feed in tariff which could net him around £60 a year but he would not have to contribute to other households' FIT payments, universal smart meter installations, low carbon generation initiatives, any initiatives to provide low cost or free insulation to poorer households, or energy

Dear Editor

As a resident and teacher of Cornish in Saltash I would endorse Wella Brown's comments in edition 308 of the Observer.

Wella is probably the greatest authority on Cornish grammar today.

I would also commend the attempts of non Cornish speakers to make use of Cornish but it must be realised that Cornish grammar and word order is different to English and some advice should be taken - for example in giving a Cornish house name to your home.

The suggested names Treledan and Halledan are both acceptable but please note that both are stressed on the second syllable 'led', Tre LED an, Hal LED an.

*Keep up the good work
Graham Sandercock
Latchbrook, Saltash*

discounts for the elderly, which is what the rest of the 8% on bills is used for.

Whether depriving the less fortunate of help to bring their properties up to standard is morally wrong I leave the reader to judge but not acting on climate change and making every personal effort to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions is a moral disgrace. Households that receive the feed-in-tariff also make their contribution to the cost of maintaining the national network and supporting those who are less well off, when they pay their bills.

Every household needs to substantially reduce its energy consumption to tackle global warming and in doing so will reduce its energy bills and proportionately the amount of money available to prop up the bad deals that have been made on new nuclear and renewables. In the end, acting now to change our ways will force the Government to reconsider its energy policy, save thousands of species from extinction and protect us from the privations associated with extreme droughts and floods.

*Rebecca Pearce
Saltash*



Dear Editor

Many congratulations on your 25th anniversary and last front cover article. Both produced the best of Saltash. Your periodical provides a most valuable service to the town about what is going on, and the excellent article about Flanders Fields records a fine example of some of the work performed in the community. As well as protecting us Firefighter Mike Parker and civilian cadet instructor Alan Chowings go the extra mile, or miles in this case! - To give up their time to take our Fire Cadets to Ypres, to represent our town and county in honouring and respecting those killed in war in such a meaningful and practical way.

I believe that we in Saltash can feel proud of our local paper and community Fire Fighters and Cadets

*Yours faithfully
Barry Brooking
Saltash*

Dear Editor

Having read the Observer for several years and have found various articles of interest. But the article about the talking bench with Ann Granville, caused me to write to you as Ann is clearly without a voice of her own!

To render the poor woman mute by the simple statement that "the batteries can no longer be acquired" leaves me feeling you haven't been given the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

As an electrical engineer I feel certain that a battery could be acquired that fits the requirements of the circuitry.

I think it is the lack of desire to get Ann operating or the budget for the same that is leading to the non repair of the poor woman!

*Yours
Martin Webster*

Email your copy to:
maryecrawford@hotmail.com

Twinnings Top in Town Quiz

Which two rivers join to form the Humber? Where did TV's 'Minder' drink? And for how much did the owl and the pussycat buy the ring?

These were three of the mind-boggling questions set to the sixteen teams that entered this year's town quiz, a well established annual feature of the Saltash social scene.

This year it included a 'picture' round in which competitors had to identify such well known characters as Prince Harry, Joanne Lumley and Observer Editor Mary Crawford, whom one team mistook for Pippa Middleton.

It was close run thing throughout but the winners by half a point were Saltash Twinnings, followed by equal second Saltash Heritage and Seriously Brain Dead.

And the answers to the three questions are Trent and Ouse, Winchester Club and one shilling.

Essa Files

This year I have been particularly looking forward to December for two reasons. The first is that I have been getting really bored of the traditional 'it's too early to celebrate Christmas' / 'oh come on, wear a festive jumper and dance to Jingle Bell Rock, you grinch' argument. I have to admit that I feel a little more comfortable with Saltash' Christmas event being back in December this year, but really on this issue I am a true liberal - if you want to start decorating your tree and making up your list for Santa in October then fine with me, just so long as you don't want to force me to listen to 'Last Christmas' and demand that I join in with your premature excitement.

The second reason is that I have been getting bored of my moustache, or rather of only having a moustache. Those of you who know me in real life will be aware that I do generally sport facial hair on both lip and chin, but for the last month I have been a 'tache only man. Not only has this meant rediscovering the joys of shaving but it also makes me look uncomfortably like Mr Bronson from Grange Hill.

The reason I have been putting myself through this minor ordeal is that I have been participating in 'Movember' - an annual event to raise awareness of and money for men's health issues. More details can be found on their website, but essentially lots of men grow

A Clean-Up and Seed Scattering on Churchtown Farm

Saturday 18 November saw twenty people (including five children and some members of Saltash Environmental Action Group) meet at the main entrance of the Reserve to undertake the autumn clean up. Armed with bags and litter pickers they spread out over the fields and beaches to remove any rubbish. Thank you to the 'Friends' for their hard work and to members of SEA for tackling the beaches. After completing the task, the volunteers were rewarded with hot drinks and cakes as a token of our appreciation.

We are pleased to say that their task was a fairly easy one as the amount of litter was fairly low - only 20 small bags. However, the amount of filled poo bags caused us a great deal of concern. The designated 'Poo Patrol' collected 3 kilos and most of the other collectors had several bags in



with their general rubbish. Bags were found hanging in trees and just thrown in the hedges. This is both unsightly and unhygienic and can be dangerous for wild animals on the reserve. Please, please, please take your poo bags with you and deposit them in the bins provided at the entrances to the reserve. Our thanks from Churchtown Friends to all who participated and made the occasion such a rewarding experience.

Recently our Cornwall Wildlife Trust Reserves Officer and a few willing volunteers set about the task of sowing a Wildflower Mix on a patch of prepared ground on the north-east corner of Lower South Ground (near the end of the disabled path). The mix was specially chosen for the site and included Yellow Rattle

which will help to keep down the grass on the patch. The Friends Group were able to fund the purchase of the seed. We are not expecting a great show next Spring as the seed will probably take a couple of years to germinate fully.

Bob Austin. Chairman of the Friends of Churchtown Farm Nature Reserve.

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Zulu 5 Octopus 6 Hydrogen
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Conundrum Answers: 1

Adam Killea

Crime is Rising Police Support Officers are Reduced

Criminal offences reported to the police in the South East Cornwall sector have risen by 18% over the past twelve months. Inspector Julian Morris told the Cornwall Gateway Community network panel. There were a total of 2908 crimes reported with 900 of them in the Saltash area and 570 around Torpoint. This represents an increase of 8 crimes per week.

The increase can be at least partially accounted for by a change in the method of recording historic crime, explained Inspector Morris. For example if police attend a 'domestic' incident where the complainant alleges a series of assaults upon her by her partner, each of these assaults is now recorded as a separate 'crime'.

Changes to manpower are planned following a release of money from police reserves to increase the number of operational officers over the next four years. Since 2009 the Devon and Cornwall force has seen a reduction in officers from 3500 to 2900. In addition to extra officers being appointed there will be a team of police staff supporting front line officers, for example by taking witness statements, freeing up the officers for more active roles.

To achieve this the number of police community support officers (PCSO's) were to be reduced. It was anticipated that of the 13 PCSO's in South East Cornwall just eight will be retained. The reduction would be implemented through offers

of alternative employment and through voluntary redundancy.

Saltash would retain two PCSO's in addition to a sergeant and neighbourhood beat manager based at a newly refurbished police station. There will be an additional six police officers covering the area including Saltash, Torpoint, Liskeard and Looe.



A Degree and a Driving Pass for Duchenne Boy William

Ashley and Michala Jane have every reason to be proud of their 20 year old son William. He passed his driving test earlier this year and in the summer graduated from Plymouth University with a degree in Games Design.

But what makes such achievements special is that William has all his life been a victim of Duchenne Dystrophy a form of muscular dystrophy that affects only boys and until recently limited life expectancy to the late teens. William has no ability to his legs, has limited power in his arms and leads his entire life in a wheelchair.

Not that this prevents him from aiming high and achieving his aim. The driving examiner believes him to be the first 'Duchenne boy' in the South West, if not the country, to pass his test and he now enjoys driving his specially adapted van with rear ramp and front seat that moves out so that he can drive his wheelchair straight in.

'There is no steering wheel, just a joystick, it feels surreal to watch him drive', says mother Michala.

Similarly he decided to study for a degree using his computer skills and decided that games design was best suited to his mental and physical abilities. Although his support workers have advised him that it is not necessary, he is now determined to find a job where he can utilise his qualification.

His parents, who have two other sons and a daughter, received the diagnosis when William was two and a half and still unable to walk.

Duchenne Dystrophy is a genetic condition passed in the female line, but his parents are unaware of any history of it in their family. It cannot be cured but recent research enables it to be managed and services can be provided as a result of which life expectancy is being extended.

William's father Ashley has raised funds for Action Duchenne through his cycling activities and all of the family is delighted that Ashley's hair salon, for whom Michala works, has chosen it as one of their two charities of the year.

'William is always happy, always with a smile on his face', says, Michala. 'We could not be more proud of him'.

Saltash.net Students' Spectacular Fundraising for St. Luke's

Saltash.net was delighted to hand a cheque worth over £1000 to St Luke's Hospice, following fundraising efforts at the end of the 2016-17 school year.

Money was raised from a non-uniform day, but over £700 of the total £1013.27 donated, arose during Curriculum Enrichment Week when a group of 8 students spent the week creating a variety of products. They then used their entrepreneurial skills to sell them at Waitrose at the end of the week. The group received some fantastic publicity and even starred on local radio!

Nina Wearne, Community & Events Fundraising Manager for St Luke's Hospice Plymouth, visited saltash.net on Halloween and accepted the cheque during assembly before presenting the students with certificates thanking them for their hard work.

Emma Gue, Teacher of Personal Development, who organised the cheque presentation, said, 'We were thrilled when Nina Wearne was able to come in from St Luke's Hospice to receive our cheque. This small group of students demonstrated real passion and determination in this fundraising venture. We are so fortunate to have such active young citizens at saltash.net.'

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