



*A Merry Covid-free Christmas to all  
our readers!*

**I**t will not have escaped your notice that we live in interesting times. Unfortunately for the wrong reasons, because when most social activity is closed down, sporting activity is suspended and even a visit to friends and neighbours is proscribed, then there is not much interesting to report on locally. The Parish Council still meets once a month via Zoom, and Mrs Ed's report appears on page two. The Parish

Hall remains closed, thus proceedings of the Parish Hall Management Committee, also conducted through the internet, had little new to discuss, although a record of what we did talk about appears on page four.

As a small local organ, we eschew political comment, so we have shamelessly filled the gaps in the news with trivia, humour (we hope) and articles and stories culled from editions from our library of back numbers.

## Parish Council

**A**nother Parish Council meeting held on Zoom this month, with the usual mixture of “I’m sorry, you first . . .”, “No, sorry, I was just going . . .”, “Well, what I was about to . . .” and “Go ahead, no sorry . . .” etc which all goes with the Zoom territory. However, we were able to agree last month’s minutes and with no public comment this month, we moved swiftly on to the planning applications. After a brief discussion, there were no objections to the erection of detached annexe accommodation for a dependent relative at Brick House Farm in Northwood Green, the Listed Building Consent for use of a groom’s cottage as an independent dwelling at Ninnage Lodge or the felling of several trees which are past their best at The Limes, in the village. These are to be replaced with native fruit trees.

Fiona then updated us on some earlier applications, namely that the application for three glamping pods at Sunnybank at Elton had been refused and a single storey extension at Lower Rye-croft had been granted. We were also advised that a certificate of lawfulness had been issued for a shed/workshop at Yew Tree Cottage in Flaxley.

We then moved on to the proposed housing development at Churcham. The problems facing the Forest of Dean District Council, in terms of where to build the houses that the government is demanding, were laid out in the Strategic Options Consultation. In considering the new Local Plan, they have to make provision for about 4000 dwellings on sites not currently identified, over a 20 year period. And all this at a time of great uncertainty, with the gov-

ernment proposing to reform the planning system and change the way housing provision is determined, not to mention the delays and uncertainty caused by the pandemic.

So their preferred option is now out for consultation so we all need to look closely at this and make our views known. It states that “The strategy which has been approved is one that will see many of the existing sites that are presently identified being developed, most notably at Lydney. It also proposes a new mixed use development at Beachley using the army camp which is to be vacated, a major development at Newent and a new settlement. The location of this is yet to be fixed but the best location may be in the broad area where the A40 and A48 meet. All these potential sites need further work, not least to see how they can be well linked to an environmentally friendly transport network and how travel patterns and work patterns may change permanently following the current pandemic. The major sites will need to include a mixture of housing, employment, green-space and community facilities.” You can read all about it at <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/LocalPlanPreferredOption> and have until 29th Jan 2021 to comment. I think the process of registering and logging in to comment is a bit daunting but you can also e-mail [localplans@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:localplans@fdean.gov.uk) or comment by letter sent to: **Local Plans, Forest of Dean District Council, Council Offices, High Street, Coleford, Gloucestershire, GL16 8HG**. But don’t hang about as the consultation is only open until 29th January 2021.

The document states that the Council intends to provide this housing “in a

manner that makes the optimum contribution to the reduction of carbon and in a manner that can deliver environmental gains including green infrastructure“ but I find hard to accept that building on greenfield sites is going to fulfil this aim.

Chairman Simon Phelps reported that other local authorities in a similar position have extended the closing date for their consultations to next summer. It is



*The packed hall for the public meeting in February*

felt that public meetings are essential if the plans are to be fully discussed and public opinion gauged, but it is unlikely that such events will be permitted this winter. In the absence of such meetings, publicity for the plans and encouragement to everyone to make their views known is really important. Fiona has e-mailed everyone who attended the public meeting about the eco-village proposal and the support of other parishes in the district is being sought.

The parishes most affected by the plans have got together and have enlisted the help of David Crofts, a planning consultant, to scrutinise the plans and assess their viability, and they will share the cost of his fee.

Moving on to financial matters, Fiona had circulated the first draft of the budget for next year which will be fur-

ther discussed when Chairman Simon has got some quotes for the drainage of the school playing field.

**Highways** Flooding and pot holes are common problems in our parish with flooding at Boseley (now resolved by jetting out the pipes), at Cleeve, at Adsett House, in Church Lane and at White House Farm. Unfortunately the flooding has caused damage to the road surfaces at Boseley and Church Lane as well, and although Church Lane is listed for work within the next five years, we understand that this is becoming less likely due to economic constraints. Highways have been out to look and plan some more jetting near Adsett House and White House Farm and they have also been asked to look at St John's Point and Chapel Lane. Mark Stephens and his son have kindly offered to clean out the ditch in Church Lane.

#### **Burial Ground Extension**

Chairman Simon has been in touch with drainage companies who will look at the details of what is required to drain the field for the school playing field and give quotes. It also has to be levelled, but things seem to be moving on this now, and one of the companies would be able to start work in the New Year. It was agreed that this is going to involve a fair amount of work and may need a sub-committee to take it on.

#### **Around the Parish**

One of the trees on the Northwood Green playing field has died so Mike Townsend will replace this with a silver birch. Perhaps we are not quite so green-fingered in this parish as we think we are, as two trees in the burial ground have also died! It was agreed to get expert advice from Jerry Green at Westbury Court Gardens as

to what would be the hardest replacements.

#### **Telephone kiosk at Stantway**

Ideas are sought for a good use for this. One idea was as a defibrillator station, and John Henry will look into this pos-



sibility, but other ideas would be welcome for consideration.

**Footpaths** The riverside walk, which now only has two stiles to climb, is well worth doing. A footpath at Boseley needs some work done on it and the old stone bridge behind Adsett Court is in a bad way and is beginning to block the ditch. The National Trust would like it restored whereas the Public Rights of Way team intended to replace it with a wooden bridge so they are going to discuss this between them and Brian Robinson will also be asked to help with this.

**Correspondence** As well as the consultation regarding the Local Plan, there is another consultation open on the proposals for the new community hospital in the Forest of Dean. Further details are on page seven..

Our next meeting will be on Monday 21st Dec at 7pm - it will again be on Zoom but Christmas jumpers and mince pies will be on display.

*Di Landon*



**W**hat little there was to discuss at the virtual Parish Hall Management Committee meeting was comfortably disposed of in the 40 minutes allocated to us by Zoom. Chair Jan D'Ambrogio opened the meeting with the good news that the fish and chip van in the Hall car park had raised £30 for the Hall funds. Gen Riley added that there had been an hour long queue when the van called at Minterworth, and Sarah Mitten suggested that the next visit should be publicised on the roadside board.

Jan had received a suggestion that the Hall car park might be used as a site for fast charging points for electric cars, but having investigated, found that there was insufficient capacity on the local grid. Gen Riley proposed that the issue be kept under review. On a related topic, Jan announced that Western Power would be working on the mast adjacent to her house, on Hall grounds, and we should receive a wayleave of £1.15 p.a. (sic)

#### **Treasurer's Report**

Sarah noted that rent had been received from the surgery and a further £235 from fundraising. Although, in these troubled times, rental income is vanishingly low, so are outgoings. There are, however, some fixed running costs,

nevertheless, Sarah was happy to report that the Hall finances were looking a little rosier.

#### **Projects.**

The installation of a ventilation system for the main hall is the principal issue currently under review, as post-Covid, air circulation could come under scrutiny. Unfortunately the two members who know anything about it could not be present, so it will doubtless be on next month's agenda.

Responding to a question, Jan confirmed that she was in discussions about the installation of solar panels in order to enhance the Hall's capacity.

#### **Severndipity Club (bar)**

Gen Riley confirmed that at the A.G.M on November 11<sup>th</sup>, members of the committee were all re-elected, and agreed to circulate the minutes. In the absence of football matches the situation is being kept under review. Val Morgan-Townsend confirmed that owing to high levels of wastage due to lockdown, the bar would make a loss for the year.

#### **Odds and Ends**

Jan noted that forward bookings were coming in slowly, and highlighted the need for a rent review. She also noted that she was looking for a roofer for the Hall roof. On the subject of which, she

proposed that the Christmas tree should be tethered to the flat roof at the front of the Hall.

On which festive note, she closed the meeting, urging members to wear festive jumpers and bring their own glass of wine

to the December Zoom meeting. So saying, she stroked the cat which had occupied her lap throughout, and disappeared from the screen. *Ed*



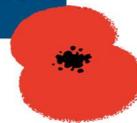
### **Westbury-on-Severn Parish Hall update November 2020**

We had to close. Please be aware that the bar will be closed until further notice. But depending on Government guidance in December some of our user groups may be able to resume their sessions – we wait to see.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all of the Parish Hall Management Committee

Here's to a prosperous 2021 when the hall can be open to the community and we can rekindle the spirit.

*Jan D'Ambrogio*



**T**he Westbury on Severn Branch of the Royal British Legion would like to express their thanks to all those who generously donated towards this year's Poppy Collection. Despite the Branch members being unable to do the usual door to door collection, we managed to collect a total of £1145.90. This was achieved by being able to place collection boxes at many sites throughout the Parish.

We would like to thank all those who donated towards the Appeal, those people who agreed to have collection boxes left on their premises and particularly to John and Beryl Watts for all the time they devoted to organising the Appeal.

Due to the COVID restrictions, Westbury Branch were only able to conduct a short Act of Remembrance Cere-

mony at the War Memorial, and unfortunately this lacked the poignancy of the usual proceedings due to the fact that the police were unable to provide the manpower to close the A48, thereby affecting the Two Minutes Silence.

Thanks to those who attended the Ceremony.

*Simon Phelps, Branch Chairman.*

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### Winter Wellness Campaign

The District Council is launching a campaign over winter this year called Winter Wellness. The aim of the campaign is to share and highlight those resources, wherever they may come from, that can help residents to stay healthy physically, mentally and emotionally throughout winter. That may be something as small as a phone befriending service or a neighbour that always keeps a look out, or something much larger.

An assessment of Gloucestershire's health needs earlier in the year, showed that as many as a quarter of the people living in the Forest are dealing with illness, deprivation, isolation and mental health problems.

Forest of Dean Council Leader, Cllr Tim Gwilliam explained: *"Our Winter Wellness campaign aims to highlight the help that is available and signpost people towards services, groups, support and advice that can help. It might be people are struggling with food and perhaps can't get out, or need practical suggestions about cooking cheap meals. Or it could be that people are looking for health promotion advice to help them quit smoking or to get fitter. It might just be that they are looking for activities to stop them becoming isolated during the winter months."*

He added: *"There is a tremendous amount going on that is organised by community groups, social enterprises, businesses, and volunteers, as well as the services provided by the key agencies like the councils, the NHS and others.*

*I would urge everyone to look out for their families, friends and neighbours and keep an eye on the campaign and check out the support that's available."*

If you think the Forest of Dean Community Wellbeing Service might be able to help you and you would like to talk to someone in confidence please: call 01594 812447 or 01594 812399

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### Work on Westbury Brook

**W**e are delighted to share that Kingsthorpe Ltd at Home Farm, Flaxley Abbey, in partnership with the Environment Agency will soon begin an ambitious programme of river restoration and environmental improvement along the Westbury Brook to improve water quality and create a better place for people and wildlife.

As part of our developing catchment restoration strategy, works will include creations of buffer zones to keep livestock away from the river channel, removal of artificial in-channel structures and the addition of natural flood management interventions.

If you'd like to find out more please contact me - *Graeme Flory-Kish, Head of Operations & Projects for Kingsthorpe.*  
*gflorykish@kingsthorpe.co.uk*  
*Mobile 07901 550235*



## Hospital Consultation

The public are now being invited to comment on the proposals for the new community hospital in the Forest of Dean. Planning for the hospital is now at a stage where the proposals for the inpatient unit, outpatient services, urgent care, diagnostic services and other facilities on site can be discussed with the local community. Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust announced the site as the Lower High Street Playing Field in Steam Mills Road, Cinderford, in December 2019 and they have been working with Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group since then to reach the stage where a proposal about the new hospital can be put to the public. They want to encourage participation in this Consultation, which is an important next step in the development of the new hospital.

The proposal is for a hospital which includes a 24-bed inpatient unit, urgent care facility, x-ray, ultrasound and endoscopy, and a range of consultation and treatment rooms for outpatient appointments. Experiences of providing care throughout the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic will also influence the final design, to minimise the risk of infections spreading and to allow for social distancing between staff and patients.

The public consultation will run until Thursday 17 December. The consultation materials and survey are online at [www.fodhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.fodhealth.nhs.uk) or <https://getinvolved.glos.nhs.uk/>

Written booklets can be requested by:  
· sending an email to: [glccg.participation@nhs.net](mailto:glccg.participation@nhs.net)  
· by writing to: FREEPOST RRYY-KSGT-AGBR, Fit for the Future:

FOD Hospital, Sanger House,  
Valiant Court, Gloucester Business  
Park, Gloucester, GL3 4FE

· by leaving a message on the  
*Freephone number: 0800 0151 548*

EasyRead versions of the consultation document are also available on request. Should you wish to discuss this consultation, or have any further questions or comments, please contact [glccg.participation@nhs.net](mailto:glccg.participation@nhs.net)

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## “Ready, steady, census”

The decennial census is almost upon us.

Households across Westbury-on-Severn will soon be asked to take part in the nationwide survey of housing and the population. It has been carried out every decade since 1801, with the exception of 1941.

Information from the digital-first census will help decide how services are planned and funded in your local area. This could mean things like doctors' surgeries, housing or new bus routes. Households will receive a letter with a unique access code in the post, allowing them to complete their questionnaire online. Paper questionnaires will be available on request.

Census day is March 21 2021

*For more information, visit:*  
[www.census.gov.uk](http://www.census.gov.uk)

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## Ignorance

Ignorance of the law is no excuse, but it's better than no alibi at all.

*Discussion is an exchange of knowledge;  
argument is an exchange of ignorance..*

## Church Times

### Christmas Services in the Benefice (2020)

#### Blaisdon

December 13th, 6pm, Christmas Readings & Carols.

Christmas Day, 9.30am, Christmas Family Communion.

#### Flaxley

December 20th, 6pm, Carol Service.

#### Minsterworth

December 20th, 5pm, Advent Carol Service with Christingles.

Christmas Day, 10am, Family Carols.

December 27th, 5pm, Traditional Christmas Carol Service

#### Westbury with Northwood Green & Rodley

December 20th, 4pm, Carol Service.

Christmas Eve, 11.30pm, Christmas Communion.

*The Christmas service timetable has been planned and published with hope and optimism that Covid 19 restrictions will allow our intended worship to go ahead. However our priority, at all times, will be to keep people safe and therefore changes might need to be made in terms of format, delivery and how we all participate.*

*Every effort will be made to publicise any changes to services in each parish as new advice and developments emerge, but for the latest updates and information at any time please contact your Church Wardens.*

In December 2020 Mary and Joseph will visit the following places:-



1.12 to 4.12 **Minsterworth Church**

5.12 to 7.12 **Flaxley Church**

8.12 to 11.12 **Walmore Hill School**

12.12 to 14.12 **Blaisdon Church**

15.12 to 17.12 **Westbury School**

18.12 to 20.12 **Westbury Church**

*Please feel free to call at these locations when they are open, and ask to see Mary and Joseph.*



*"Well, yes. I'm happy. But I could be happier"*

### Walmore Hill News

The children are continuing to work hard and are enjoying their lessons both indoors and outdoors. Cygnets' topic is called 'Splendid Skies' this term and we have experienced lots of different weather conditions for the children to observe already!

We supported the Royal British Legion again this year and raised £94. All of the children took part in the two minutes silence on the 11<sup>th</sup> November. We also supported Children In Need and this year we came in to school with 'creative' hairstyles and funny hats. We also enjoyed taking part in 'keep fit' activities during the day, supported by Sam our rugby coach and Joe Wicks!

We are looking forward to celebrating Christmas at school...It will be different this year, but we will still make sure it is a special time for the children. We have already started ordering our Christmas lunches, as well as booking a Virtual Pantomime!

With best wishes,

Mrs. Suzanne Loten, Cygnets Class

### October 2020 Weather Report

Warmest Day 6/10/20 17.5c

Warmest Night 29-30/10/20 11.5c

Coollest Day 28/10/20 9c

Coollest Night 9-10/10/20 1c

Wettest Day 4/10/20 36mm

Total Rainfall 174mm

Number of Wet Days 22

Hail and Thunder 28/10/20 Hail  
31/10/20

Predominant Wind Direction, West-  
erlies, mostly Slight

Average Maximum Temperature  
13.2c

Average Minimum Temperature  
5.8c

### Churchyard Working Party

We had to cancel our November working party in the Churchyard as the weather was certainly not favourable. We think that it would have been permissible in spite of the Covid restrictions as it could certainly count as outdoor exercise and the churchyard is decidedly large enough for us to keep at a very safe distance from members of other households. We don't know quite what the Covid advice will be by the second Saturday in December (12<sup>th</sup>) and we certainly don't know what the weather will be doing, but if both are favourable we shall be there from 10am until 1pm. At the moment, we have to bring our own refreshments, but we would welcome anyone who wants to join us. Please bring your own favourite tools. *Di*

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### Westbury Sport

By Mark Landon

It goes without saying that, as we enter this second lockdown period, the sports report may take on a somewhat threadbare appearance on account of virtually zero organized sports taking place. Sadly the RFU have sent this season into touch with a spiralling punt well into the back end of 2021. Ken Boulton's aspiration to nail his first drop goal from the half way line has been put on hold for the time being.

The football was a ray of hope but now sadly that has also been paused for the time being. However, even this week, and not for the first time for men of a certain age in the village, encouraging

developments from the laboratories of Pfizer Inc give cause for hope. We shall see.

Running Club has also been put on hold although I was already finding myself naturally socially distancing on account of not being able to keep up, but organised running will resume once permitted.

Which leaves us with only one solitary round of golf to report on. However this was no ordinary round, it was the traditional Pete Wyman Whackeroo at Forest Hills Golf Club where massive cash prizes were on offer. I may exaggerate somewhat as I won one of the “massive” cash prizes and spent it on nibbles on the way home, but nevertheless the competitive levels were intense. Young Ian Dunn and father Dennis headed off in the first group with magnificent drives but were not to be seen again by your correspondent (attending in his professional capacity) and they had gone off by the time we finished. In fact as sports reports go, this one will be a bit Spartan as I can’t remember any of the scores, but Mike Matthews smote the ball mightily but often it seemed to disappear despite landing in the middle-ish of the fairway. Pete Wilson had a consistent round. He was multitasking by also taking lots of photos for the players to analyse afterwards and maintained a jovial approach to triumph and disaster in equal measure.

Sad to report (well, not to me so much but for him) your esteemed editor had a round to forget and despite the bright sunshine and glorious autumnal forest colours his early upbeat mood soon deflated like a hot air balloon shortly after landing. Thwack and groan followed thwack and groan, it was as if one was standing outside Cynthia

Payne’s front room (before she got arrested, of course) as the ball steadfastly refused to go where it was told.

Hole after hole saw our rapidly ageing and fading playing partner shuffle across the greens, soon followed by the ball whizzing back across it into the opposite bunker. So mentally scrambled was he by the end of this torturous round that he could be seen looking at his wrist hoping that his rangefinder watch (which he had forgotten) would tell him how far away the flag was - although he was standing on the edge of the green barely 20 yards away from it. After finally holing out he opined that maybe a four week lockdown was a good idea. It’s a cruel game....

And what of our perennially despairing Director of Football? Well he was last seen on his hands and knees planting bulbs in his preferred 4-4-3 formation in his back garden.



*If Ed was an astronaut*

*For a few years we published a fictional account of the life and times of Dirk Storm, the Lord of the Manors of Astted, Yeldor, Olten, Southwood and Eastham.. The episode below was published in c2005 since when two of the people on whom the characters are loosely based are no longer with us and left us far too soon.. They are Anna Tempest and Joan Treasure, both greatly missed. I have spoken to their husbands who have given their blessing.*

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## Storm's Yuletide Triumph

by Alan Don

**D**elicate flakes of soft snow swirled and drifted against the mullioned leaded lights of Astted Hall, where they died and drifted down the glass like the tears of an angel, saddened by man's inhumanity to man. The low leaden sky, birthplace of the pristine flakes, brooded over the bleak winter landscape, a lone wolf howled in the solitude of the Woods of Yel and the owl for all his feathers was a-cold. Within the stout walls of his ancestral seat, Dirk Storm, Lord of the Manors of Southwood, Olten, Yeldor, Eastham and Astted, drew his copious fox fur cloak a little tighter round his hunched shoulders and gazed into the roaring log fire as the flames leapt and crackled, casting strange shadowed arabesques on the limewashed walls behind him. For all that it was bitter cold without and he would not see seventy again, Storm was content. After the humiliation of being proffered only an insignificant role in the Mummers' previous production, his loyal vassal Bartholemew Whymoan had begged him to return to the stage and reprise his performance as Gropy in Ambrose Welshclerk's rendering of the traditional story 'The Tottie Awakes'. He had been studying the script for some weeks and was pleased to discover that the skills which had made him a darling of the audience all those years ago had not deserted him, and he had so far been able to memorise the first three

words of his part.

His pleasant reverie was interrupted by the entrance of Scuttlebutt, his latest bodyservant.

"Beggin' your pardon your Worship, her Ladyship would like to see you in her antechamber."

Storm heaved himself laboriously from the enfolding embrace of his overstuffed fauteuil, drew his cloak a little tighter and shambled towards his wife's chamber.

"Ah, there you are, Dirk", Lady Nana Storm looked up from the list she was preparing. "Should we invite the Landlesses to the Christmas banquet do you think?"

"Good grief, no. She's fine, but I don't want that ghastly bore of a husband upsetting the other guests"

"You're right", replied Lady Storm, scratching out the offending names. "Is everything else prepared?"

"Yes, my sweetness. On the morrow we slaughter the boar, the equipment is assembled in the great hall and a relay of small boys has been recruited from the surrounding demesnes to turn the great spit handle".

"Well done dear. We should retire. Tomorrow will be a busy day".

The eve of the great banquet dawned clear and bright, the countryside lay pure and white in the still air, glistening under the bright sun low in the east. Storm had arisen early and was sipping at his first glass of mulled Rhenish of the day as Scuttlebutt eased his silken hose on to his sturdy legs.

"Scuttlebutt! Take those off at once", barked Storm, "and bring them here".

"Sorry, my Lord. I forget myself"

"Indeed you do". Before he could berate his manservant further he was interrupted by an urgent knocking at his door.

"Sire! Sire! Ill news!" The urgency in the voice of Clod the swineherd from beyond the door caused Storm to stiffen.

“Let him in, Scuttlebutt!” he snapped  
 “S-s-s-ire”, stammered Clod, rushing in  
 and falling at Storm’s feet, “it’s the boar,  
 Sire, it’s, it’s it’s...”  
 “Out with it man!”  
 “It’s gone, Sire”,  
 Gone?” said Storm, “gone where? Gone  
 to the fayre? Gone hunting? What on  
 earth do you mean man.”  
 “Just ...gone, Sire. Vanished”  
 “Have you looked for it?”  
 “Oh yes Sire. Everywhere, it has just dis-  
 appeared”  
 Storm could scarcely believe his ears. His  
 prize boar, dubbed Sir Porkeval, had been  
 hand raised from a piglet to a weight of  
 almost fifteen stone to feed his loyal  
 liegemen at the Christmas revels.  
 “Well, we must search again!” he yelled,  
 “assemble all my serfs and liegemen at  
 once and have them meet me at the  
 pigscote. We’ll start there”  
 The word had spread that Sir Porkeval  
 was lost. They came from all around.  
 Count Schnozzlo T’Amato, Sir Frowen  
 Barne-Convoutour with his new young  
 wife Nolisa, Sir Candid and Lady Trove,  
 Angus and April McPewter, Aidron Od-  
 dlingtin, Ambrose Welshclerk, Baron  
 Benny de Coulton of Yeldor and many  
 more. Their footprints in the new snow  
 spiralled away across the fields as they  
 quested hither and thither, prodding  
 hedgerows, peering into ditches even gaz-  
 ing up into trees. Just in case. All to no  
 avail.  
 After many exhausting and fruitless hours  
 of searching they returned to Astted Hall,  
 anticipating a cup of warm mulled wine.  
 Storm was desolate. What would he feed  
 his guests on the morrow? Pork at the  
 Christmas revels was a tradition, a tradi-  
 tion that decreed that only the dedicated  
 beast, in this case Sir Porkeval, could be  
 consumed.  
 His elder daughter, Chelra, came quietly  
 into the room.  
 “Father....”, she began.

“Not now, dearest”, Said Storm, “I have  
 to think”  
 “It’s just that I believe I heard some-  
 thing”, continued his daughter undaunted,  
 “outside, in the pit where the garderobes  
 empty”.  
 Storm looked at his daughter, puzzled.  
 The garderobe pit, beneath the high walls  
 where all the human waste accumu-  
 lated ,was a noisome place, to be avoided  
 unless absolutely necessary.  
 “What were you doing there?” he asked.  
 “I told you. I heard something. A sort of  
 grunting, some kind of animal I would  
 guess”.  
 Storm turned sharply. “Scuttlebutt! Clod !  
 Come with me”  
 In the waning light, the men approached  
 the reeking hole, holding kerchiefs over  
 their noses. Sure enough a faint rootling  
 noise was audible, and there, just discerni-  
 ble above the ordure, the unmistakeable  
 snout of Sir Porkeval.  
 “Fetch ropes and pulleys and more men”  
 shouted Storm, as his servants ran grate-  
 fully off on their mission. As night fell, an  
 extremely odorous but otherwise un-  
 harmed fifteen stone porker was hauled  
 from the open cess pit and returned to his  
 pigscote, to be slaughtered on the mor-  
 row.  
 The yuletide banquet at Astted Hall was a  
 resounding success. The revels continued  
 until the early hours, with sack and  
 Storm’s second best Burgundy flowing  
 freely. Above all the mighty repast met  
 with universal acclaim. As the guests  
 were leaving Lady Trove laid a hand on  
 Storm’s arm.  
 “My dear Lord Storm”. She murmured,  
 “that was truly magnificent. The pork was  
 especially toothsome. You must let me  
 have the recipe for the marinade”.

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