



THE GUNNAS GAZETTE

Keep up to date with local news and events....visit www.clungunford.com

Since the last issue of The Gazette things seem to have improved on the Coronavirus front, such that the support mechanisms put in place by the Parish Council and The PCC of St Cuthbert's are no longer being used. However, we are conscious that matters may change rapidly during the autumn and winter and that the need for support may arise once more. So, if there is a problem before the next Gazette is issued, please bear in mind that, if necessary, there will be the same support available as before, namely by:

- getting groceries (e.g. by collection from the supermarkets)
- collecting prescriptions from the doctors' surgeries and chemists
- changing cheques for those who need cash

If the need should arise, please call Jonathan Roberts on 01588 660673 in the first instance in the strictest confidence (email: jonathan.roberts@morgoedestates.com) . Likewise, let us know if you can think of anyone in difficulties who is not coming forward.

The Parish Council

At our meeting on 8 July, which was held in the Village Hall with appropriate social distancing, two matters of note were discussed.

First, we were pleased to co-opt Christine Tinker on to the Parish Council to succeed to the vacancy created by Maureen Rooney's retirement. We look forward to Christine's advice and contribution during our discussions. Christine was one of two very able candidates put forward, there being little to choose between them. It is heartening to note that among Parish Councils locally we remain the only one with a full complement, and it is particularly pleasing that we have able interest in reserve and keen to serve.

Secondly, after building up cash reserves in recent years we were pleased to respond to a request from the Parish Hall trustees for assistance toward fencing and signage on the playing field. This was agreed in the VAT inclusive sum of £1,800.00.

Our next meeting is on 9 September 2020 at 7pm. This meeting will be held at the Hall, respecting social distancing, and interested members of the public, as ever, are welcome to attend. Parish matters before (or after) the meeting may be raised either with me or with our clerk, Max Maxwell (01588 661044: clungunfordparishcouncil@gmail.com)
Jonathan Roberts, Chairman (01588 660673: jonathan.roberts@morgoedestates.com)

Clungunford Community bike ride and walk 2020

Some of you may have read in previous issues that the Ride and Stride event for 2020 was unfortunately cancelled, well following the example of most government policies recently we are doing a U Turn and after consultation with previous participants we are now planning a sponsored walk and cycle on the morning of Saturday 12th September. If you wish to join us on the walk then please contact Isabel Jones on 01588 661145 and if you wish to join the cycle or discuss sponsorship then please contact Simon Lyster on 01588 660152.



We will be raising money for the upkeep of St Cuthbert's and the historic churches of Shropshire
<https://www.shropshirehct.org.uk/OtherActivities/RideStride.aspx>

The Gunnas Gazette by email

The Coronavirus lockdown has brought into sharp focus the logistics of delivery of *The Gunnas Gazette*.

For each edition we used to print and distribute 155 paper copies and send out a similar number by email. *The Gazette* is also posted on the website at www.clungunford.com

The numbers receiving the paper edition have remained remarkably static over the years, but after numerous pleas in *The Gazette* for people to switch to the digital edition we have now got the hard copy numbers down to 115. The Committee guess is still that probably all bar maybe 50 homes are capable of receiving *The Gazette* by email.

Our selfless distributors on whom we rely are all among the self-isolating community, and so during the lockdown and for the foreseeable future we will continue to issue *The Gazette* by post rather than through voluntary distributors. In the long run this is not a sustainable solution on current numbers.

It is, therefore, important that **in future** those who are able to do so, take their *Gazettes* by email only, in order to reduce the number of paper copies substantially. Not only can you store them on your devices, but you can see everything in colour – a benefit denied to paper copy recipients – and save a lot of trees into the bargain.

Please, please sign up for the digital edition, if you can, by emailing gunnasingazette@aol.com



In these difficult times we are keen to ensure that Clungunford village hall remains available for activities in the parish while also safeguarding against risks of infection. The hall trustees have therefore undertaken a full coronavirus risk assessment and introduced COVID-19 safety measures. We were able to **open the bar** on the evening of Friday 14th August for the first time in months and it proved to be a lovely opportunity to get together and socialise safely.

Bar night on 14th August



Mike and Isabel Jones and Ben Lambert enjoying a socially distanced drink at the Bar Night

Feedback from this event indicates that there is an appetite for more bar nights, so we are planning one each month on the first Friday (see the advert in this issue!). Remember, the bar is open to everyone so please come along! We do encourage you to book a table though, as our capacity is more limited now under coronavirus regulations.

We are delighted to say that the hall will also be **open for hire** again from September for low-risk activities. Details of our additional COVID-19 conditions of hire (and our risk assessment) can be found at www.clungunford.com. If you have any questions about booking then please contact Madelene Wilkinson in the first instance at clungunfordhall@gmail.com.

Many of you will not be aware that we previously had a **community post office** service provided one day a week in the Village Hall. We are currently in discussions about reopening this post office service. We hope that this will be

completed in the next month and when the service restarts we will update you on the opening times and services which will be available. Watch this space!

We are pleased to say that, despite the lockdown, we have been able to complete most of the work to develop the area next to the hall as a **garden seating area**. It is now a very pleasant and useable space compared to how it used to look.....



Before.....

And After



The hall is also in the process of getting a new coat of paint and the trustees are grateful to all the lovely volunteers who have been helping paint. Once again, we couldn't do this without you all. Thank you!

Stay safe, and we hope to see you at the hall sometime soon!

Max Maxwell

on behalf of Clungunford Village Hall Trustees

Parish Church News

The Rev Annie Ballard, Vicar for the Parishes of the Middle Marches Benefice, can be contacted at The Vicarage in Bucknell (tel: 01547 530030). Should you need more information about services, events etc, please contact our Church Wardens, Michael Jones (tel: 01588 661145, email: mpjt51@hotmail.com) or Edward Gledhill (tel: 01588 660485, email: edward@aepledhill.co.uk).

It was with great delight that we returned to our beloved Church of St Cuthbert's on 12th July for our first service since the start of "Lockdown". It was good to see so many familiar faces, once again. We are now offering regular services in accordance with the rota below. The wearing of face masks is now obligatory during services and compliance with a social distancing of two metres.

As we are now offering regular services and to minimise any risk of cross contamination, we have decided to close the church apart from Sunday.

Services for St Cuthbert's Church Clungunford in the Middle Marches Benefice for September and October 2020 are as follows;

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|----------------|
| Sunday 6 th September | No service | No service |
| Sunday 13 th September | 10.00 am | Family Service |
| Sunday 20 th September | 10.00 am | Morning Prayer |
| Sunday 27 th September | 10.00 am | Morning Prayer |
| Sunday 4 th October | No service | No service |
| Sunday 11 th October | 10.00 am | Family Service |
| Sunday 18 th October | 10.00 am | Morning Prayer |
| Sunday 25 October | 10.00 am | Morning Prayer |

Recent events

Apart from the resumption of Sunday services on 21st July, the funeral of Ruth Cunningham took place at St Cuthbert's. It was a lovely and fitting service for a very special lady. The service was conducted by Ruth's friend, the Reverend Barney Bell. You will find Barney's eulogy to Ruth, elsewhere in the Gunnas Gazette. Under Covid 19 restrictions, attendance at the service was limited to 30 people. It was a sad disappointment

for us that the restrictions also prevented us from ringing the bells in her honour. Bells that for so many years she had delighted in ringing out for us. Although, we were few inside the Church, many of Ruth's friends gathered outside the church, respecting the social distance requirements, to give Ruth a warm and heart felt send off.

A big thanks to our friends from God's Acre, who returned on 11th August to undertake Summer maintenance of the churchyard.

Forthcoming events

125th Anniversary:

In October, we hope to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the renovation of St Cuthbert's, the building of the bell tower and porch, and the installation of our wonderful Binn's organ. As most of you know, all of this was made possible due to the generosity of the Rocke family.

There are many things and many ways that we would have liked to celebrate this event, but we are still not sure what will be permitted under the Covid 19 restrictions in October. We hope to firm up our ideas shortly and then publish the details, maybe, with a separate supplement to *The Gunnas Gazette*.

We shall also publish in this supplement our plans for this year's Harvest Festival service. Currently, it seems unlikely that we will be able to have our accustomed Harvest Supper, either in the Church or the Hall, once again due to the Covid 19 restrictions. But we will give it careful consideration and advise you all, accordingly. We sincerely hope that you will support us in all these endeavours.

Postcard from Africa

Ethiopia – Part I.

Ethiopia is a fascinating country. There, as part of the Horn of Africa in the north-east corner of the continent, it is physically part of Africa but for many centuries it has been socially, culturally and linguistically separate. It has one of the oldest Christian civilisations in the world, tracing its inheritance back to the Queen of Sheba and Solomon and uses a language and script found nowhere else in the world. It is of particular significance to me as it is the country where I first came into contact with Africa, almost 50 years ago to the day. I went there as a volunteer, a 21-year-old arrogant graduate, with no experience of work or life more generally, thinking that I would be able to resolve all of Ethiopia's problems in the two years that I was going to be there. My ignorance was such that I had to go to my old school atlas to find out exactly where Ethiopia was – I was fairly sure that it was in Africa but exactly where? It was only when I discovered that in the past it

had been known as Abyssinia that I remembered their postage stamps that I had collected many years before.

At that time, Ethiopia was ruled by the emperor, Haile Selassie, or to give him his full title, Elect of God, King of Kings, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, His Imperial Majesty..... He was quite well known to British people of my parents' generation as he had spent most of the years of World War II in exile in Britain – some of which time was spent in South Shropshire. Italy had invaded Ethiopia from the north – the region of Eritrea had been an Italian colony since the late nineteenth century and Mussolini decided he would like to annex Ethiopia to his empire.

Haile Selassie had come to power through a series of bloody struggles in the 1920s where he fought against other princes who ruled over different fiefdoms, with the result that Ethiopia became a united country for the first time, under the rule of a single monarch. That monarch ruled the country along feudal lines – the royal family claimed ownership of all land and extracted tithes from the people who tilled it. The tithe was determined as a proportion of the harvest: when the expected harvest was low, the tithe was set low but in good years the proportion of the crop (or its value) went up. Whatever the harvest, ordinary people were overtaxed with large scale poverty the outcome.

Geographically, the country is also fascinating and a land of contrast and diversity. In the Simian Mountains, in the north of the country, the highest peak, Ras Dashan, is the third highest mountain in Africa. In the Danakil depression, in the east, the land drops down to more than 125 meters (410ft) below sea level and experiences some of the highest temperatures on earth. Nevertheless, the Afar people manage to live there, making a living by mining and processing salt which, historically, was transported by camel train right across the continent to West Africa. Salt used to be almost as valuable as gold. The Blue Nile starts in Lake Tana in the west and runs through a gorge that some people say is as magnificent as the Grand Canyon.

One of the most difficult challenges for me to adjust to all those years ago was the Ethiopian food. Everything, meat and vegetables, is prepared with generous amounts of some of the hottest chilli pepper you are likely to come across. These dishes are served on a large, soft pancake made from the fermented flour of a grain called *teff*, a cereal unique to Ethiopia. It has been described as having the appearance and texture of carpet underlay and I don't suppose anyone has tried eating underlay to be able to take the comparison further. It is very sour, quite unlike anything I had eaten before. I had only ever eaten the mildest of curries before and this food was a real shock to my system. After my first big meal, at a baptismal feast, I spent the following three days in the smallest room in my house and vowed never to touch the stuff again. I managed to maintain this pledge for a few months, but as European food was in rather short supply, I eventually relented and even began to enjoy it. By the time I left, I was eating nothing but *injera* (the

pancake) and *wot* (the accompanying dishes). My mouth is watering now, just thinking about it.

And on that note, I will bring this chapter to a close. I thought that I would be able to cover Ethiopia in a single **Postcard** but too many memories have come back to me. I will pick up from here next time.

Rob Rees

In the Garden

A wild and windy day in Clungunford and I'm glad I'm indoors writing this, not outside cutting the grass as I was yesterday.

Cutting the area of grass I allow to grow to its full height and seed, is one of the jobs I do every year about this time. Sometimes the grass has been broken down by the rain and is difficult to cut. I expected that to be the case this year, after the amount of rain we've had in the past few days, but the grass, mostly Perennial Ryegrass, had withstood the rain and was standing upright.

I suspect it might be because of the high temperatures coupled with a dry period we had a month or two ago. So hot and dry, was it then in fact, that a dwarf apple tree, newly planted this year and hidden by the tall grass, would have succumbed to one or other or both, if I hadn't noticed its leaves shrivelling up and watered it in time to save it.

I first became interested in grasses and their uses when I was studying for the National Diploma in Turf culture many years ago and carried on that interest when I came to live here.

The dominant grass in the sward I allow to grow to seeding is Perennial Ryegrass, which, when I was on the parks department staff, we used to use as general purpose sports turf, but in agriculture it has long been grown as a fodder crop for hay making and grazing.

Common Bent and Creeping Fescue, also growing amongst the grasses in this garden, were used for fine sports turf, because you could cut them very short on a regular basis without harming them and fescues are particularly drought resistant.

Neither have much of a use in Agriculture, though. Sheep's Fescue, however, a tufted grass closely related to creeping red, is sometimes grown on hill pastures to feed highland sheep.

Crested Dogs Tail, present in this garden as well, was used in sports turf because it produces a grass with an abundance of leaves and is drought resistant. Traits also invaluable when sowing permanent sheep pastures, which is what it is often used for in agriculture.

Cocksfoot, another grass present amongst those in this garden, was one which we, as groundsman, used to produce a general purpose sports field turf. In agriculture it has long been used for grazing and hay making.

In the garden, trying not to get blown away into oblivion by the wild winds, look out for the small orange red flowers, followed by inflated fruit pods occurring on and off throughout the summer, of *Eccremocarpus scaber*, the Chilean Glory Flower. Not

supposed to be hardy in this area, but the one in my garden has survived several years now.

Brian Taylor

Nursing Notes

Here are some more ancient remedies which I would not advise anyone to try at home!

In 1597 - a cure for laryngitis :-

Laye a thynne peece of rawe Beefe, to the forehead of them that have lost their voyce, and let it lye thereto all nyght unremoved; and it wyll helpe them presently, or at the least within three or fowre several applications.

1695 - how to settle your stomach:-

The Oyl of Wormwood by Decoction, Oyl of Quinces, and Oyl of Mastich, are reckoned by Authors the three Stomach Oyls, for outward Use, to strengthen the Stomach in Vomiting, etc. two or three drops of the Chymical Oyl, is convenient in a Dose of Stomach Pills, in crapulent Cases, and after a drunken Debauch, to prevent Surfeiting, by cleansing the Stomach of filth and ill Humours.

1697 - how to cure stomach pain:-

If you apply a living duck, the feathers being pulled off behind, to the Stomach, it will ease the Pain of the Cholick.

1739 - how to cure cramps:-

For the Cramp. Take of rosemary - leaves, and chop them very small, and sew them in fine linen, and make them into garters, and wear them night and day.

1780's - how to cure mental illness :-

Believed to be caused by bad circulation to the brain, an American doctor "twirled" patients from ropes suspended from the ceiling for hours on end. He also invented the "tranquilizer chair", which restrained patient's hands and feet and covered his head with a wooden box. believing that pain and suffering were curative, the doctor beat, starved, and verbally abused his patients. He cut them with knives and kept the wounds open for months or years, to facilitate "permanent discharge from the brain" known as a strong advocate for humane treatment of the mentally ill, his likeness still adorns the seal of the American Psychiatric Association.

1800's - cures using leeches:-

Bloodletting reached its peak during this time. We visualise leeches clinging to limbs & torso, but doctors often applied them to other more sensitive areas.

Leeches were tied off with silk thread, lowered down the patient's throat and then reeled in like a fish.

Leeches were applied to the vagina to relieve uterine disease, sexual excitement, and "exasperation" in general. British gentry had their wives leeches every two weeks.

A "jet of blood" would spurt when a leech grabbed onto the wrong vein, and even the smoothest insertion risked a miscarriage.

The textbooks also spoke of leeches getting "lost" inside a woman, causing highly strung females to become "hysterical". But eventually, doctors were certain, "the leech is sure to find its way out"

1835 cure for soreness:-

To remove great stiffness or soreness after a hard day's ride or hunt. On going to bed, order a pan with bright glowing coals, throw a handful of brown sugar over them, with or without a few juniper berries; have your bed well warmed and fumigated with this sweet-scented steam from the sugar, which, instead of allowing to escape, you should creep into, whilst yet quite warm. All the soreness will have left your bones by the next morning.

Early 1900's cure for depression:-

Your psychiatrist would produce a ten-inch-long ice pick, saying he has a cure for your depression. He would say "I'm going to jam this into your eye socket, then put it into your brain using this mallet over here. Then, I'll wiggle it around so that it shreds part of your brain. Then you won't be depressed anymore. Just lie still".

Lobotomies were a popular fad for the first half of the twentieth century and were floated as a "cure" for pretty much any mental issue, from conditions as serious as schizophrenia, to something as mild as depression or anxiety. Thousands of lobotomies were performed before somebody figured out that driving a spike into the brain probably was not the answer to all of life's problems! *Sister B*

P.S. A patient asked "what is the death rate at this hospital?"

The nurse replied "Same as everywhere else - one per person"

Extreme August follows quiet July

After the four hot days from 23 to 27 June, July was mild with light rains and no exceptional weather, but with a dry spell from the 28th, with high temperatures on the 30th and 31st. This warm, dry weather continued into August, becoming increasingly hot from the 7th to 12th, reaching 29°C on 7th and 11th and 31°C on the 12th, at Hopton Heath (but hotter in south-east England where some of the hottest ever England temperatures were recorded).

The heat-wave came to a dramatic end with a spectacular lightning display seen on the night of 11-12th and then, after a very hot day on the 12th, very dramatic thunderstorms with heavy hail and even ice-shards, lightning strikes and extreme wind squalls, leading to many severely damaged trees. These thunderstorms lasted throughout the evening of the 12th and first part of the night.

The thunderstorm marked a change in air-mass, with Atlantic storms now crossing the country, with cooler

weather and near continuous rains and very low pressure, more typical of autumn than August. This depression was the remains of an early season Atlantic hurricane which, very unusually for this time of year, crossed the Atlantic Ocean towards the British Isles. I have now recorded the wettest August period at Hopton Heath since at least 2007, a total of 149mm from 12th to the 21st.

Is summer over? When I write this we still have ten days left of August and we have yet to have our summer holiday in Wales!

Then back to normal or given coronavirus, perhaps not! *Mike Tucker* 21 August 2020

Help to get online for the over 65s

Do you feel a little lost using technology? Need help using the internet? Do you feel nervous about using a computer or frustrated about left behind as everything seems to be online these days?

Getting to grips with the internet can really help you in later life. Being online means you can keep in touch and see your friends and family, you can save money and grab a bargain or two, get shopping delivered and better manage your health and finances. Research shows that there are more people age 65+ in Shropshire who are not online than in other parts of the UK – which means older people are missing out.

Shropshire Council is supporting people aged 65+ to get online and learn how to use technology safely through a project called **Digital Skills for Shropshire Citizens**. The project links local support to people who want help to learn how to use their laptops, mobile phones or tablets and get the most out of the internet. Learning slowly, taking small steps and having the time to practise are keys to success.

If you'd like more information about this service, please contact Andrea Miller, Shropshire Council's Digital Champion Lead on 01743 254834 (available Tues, Weds & Fri) or email andrea.miller@shropshire.gov.uk

Please note: Due to the COVID 19 virus, learning and support opportunities are temporarily on hold. Please get in touch to register your interest in this project as soon as possible so that when services reopen you can get the help you need. *Andrea Miller August 2020*

The Slow Ladies

September 14th to 18th I suggest we meet one day during that week and go somewhere different for a change (with picnic). Nescliffe Hills is one suggestion so far. If you have more ideas please let me know and also give a date when you CANNOT go in that week.

We will think about walking in October nearer the time but hope we can continue meeting and walking!

Please let me know if you are coming on any of our walks. We are always pleased to welcome new faces and feet to our walking group. *Pauline Mattison* 01588 660596

BOOKING FOR FRIDAY DRINKS AT THE GUNNAS BAR.

In order to comply with the Covid 19 Regulations it is **ESSENTIAL** that you book in advance.

Please contact Elizabeth Lyster:

Mobile: 07843 488 663

E mail: lystere@btoopenworld.com

Elizabeth will need the following information:

- Your full name
- Your telephone number
- Your address

This will be retained for Track and Trace purposes.

Rules for Bar Nights

To minimise the risk of infection the following measures will be in place when the bar is open:

- no more than 30 people will be allowed to sit inside the hall and should observe social distancing.
- indoor interactions should be limited to two different households sitting together at any one time.
- outdoor interactions should be limited to six different individuals from different households sitting together.
- booking in advance is required, and contact details will be kept for 21 days for track-and-trace-purposes
- if more than 30 attend, then we will be able to sell drinks to take out and be consumed outside, eg up on the playing field
- drinks will be served at the tables, there will be no ordering at the bar
- ONLY contactless payments will be accepted
- a one-way system will be in operation
- windows and doors will remain open for ventilation
- the toilets by the car park will be in use on a one-in-one-out basis
- additional cleaning materials will be available

Table tennis

Table tennis will shortly re-start on the Village Hall on Thursdays from 2.30 to 4.30. Because of restrictions there will be a maximum of six players. Booking is essential. Please call David Wilkinson on 01588 660847

**CLUNGUNFORD
VILLAGE HALL**

**Friday Bar Nights
7.30pm - 10pm**



BAR OPEN

First Friday of
the month



**4th September
2nd October
6th November
4th December
2020**

**LIMITED CAPACITY
SO PLEASE BOOK...**

*Please contact Elizabeth Lyster:
Mobile: 07843 488 663
E mail: lystere@btopenworld.com
Contact details will be retained for
Track and Trace purposes.*

*COVID-19 safety measures
will be in place. See
clungunford.com for
details.*

RUTH MARY CUNNINGHAM

Died Sunday 21st June 2020 aged 77

An address given at her Funeral in Clungunford Church by Rev Barney Bell on Tuesday 21st July 2020

Ruth was a Lincolnshire lass, the daughter of Millie and Arthur Templeman, and she was born on this day, the 21st of July 1942. She grew up and went to school in the village of Dorrington, which is where she met her lifelong friend Margaret. High School followed in Sleaford.

Ruth loved reading, and murder mysteries were her favourite, especially Cadfael (a good Shropshire connection). So, not surprisingly, she chose to become a librarian. She worked in Lincoln Library then went to Library School in Loughborough – where she met her lifelong friend Rhian.

She moved to Shropshire to take up her first job, in Ludlow Library, then worked on the mobile library, which she loved. There were always sweets under the desk, so I'm told her children loved the mobile library too!

It wasn't just a case of lending other authors' books to people. Ruth had many gifts and talents, and she loved to write: she wrote many short stories and poems throughout her life.

When she went on holiday to Scotland with her Ludlow landlady, she met her lifelong friends Margaret and George, who inspired her great love of walking.

I've always pictured Ruth mainly in South Shropshire, or in her beloved Wales. But she signed up for VSO, and spent two wonderful years as a librarian in Fiji where she met her close friends Val and Reg. In fact, she was a great traveller, going at various times with friends or her family to Switzerland, Greece, Austria, New Zealand, America, and Sark, among other places.

When she returned from Fiji, Ruth worked briefly in Telford before a job became available in Bishop's Castle Library.

She'd met her future husband Philip at a classical concert before she went to Fiji and they renewed their relationship when she returned. Philip always joked about how they met, saying that when he tried to kiss her, she knocked him over the head with a library book. Standard librarian practice, presumably. Despite the rebuff (perhaps the book was a romantic novel), Ruth married Philip in 1975, and their very happy marriage produced their three much-loved children, Alys, Louise, and Simon.

The family lived at Walcott Hall near Lydbury North until Alys was one, then they moved to Bedstone, where they lived for many years, at Laundry Cottage and then Rectory Cottage. While the children were young, Ruth came to work part time as a librarian at Bedstone College, where Philip worked as a music teacher and mechanic. It was at the College that Ruth met her good friend Janet.

Philip was a bellringer, and he taught Ruth to ring, introducing her to a hobby she enjoyed throughout the rest of her life, ringing with many friends here in Clungunford and at Leintwardine.

Ruth went on to work as librarian at Bridgnorth College in 1998 and then moved to a post at Shrewsbury College. The family had moved to Paigles in Beckjay in 1995 – 'paigles' is an Anglo-Saxon name for cowslip. Ruth kept up her links with Bedstone. She was an active member of the Bedstone W.I. for many years, where she bravely entered many flower arranging competitions, and where she met her special friends

Florence and Shirley. Ruth, along with Philip and her family, was a staunch supporter of Bedstone Church, and a key member of the P.C.C. She was also a valued supporter of church and village events in the village hall.

Living at Beckjay, she became a close friend of her neighbour and walking partner Mary. She actually belonged to three walking groups around the area (making several more friends thorough them), and even her unhappy disagreement with a stile, when she broke her leg, failed to deter her from getting back on her feet and putting her walking boots on again.

Ruth and Philip and their family went on many holidays to the Llŷn Peninsula in North Wales in their caravan, from which Alys and Louise and Simon have many happy memories of playing on the beach, going for beautiful walks, and memorable trips to Bardsey Island. More recently, Ruth and Louise have continued to go to the Llŷn every year, and they introduced Bailey to it last year, which they all loved. It has been a very special place – lle arbennig iawn – for the whole family. Ruth had a great love for all things Welsh, and for the Welsh language; and she joined Welsh classes with her ringing friend Nita to learn it.

Philip's sudden and very upsetting, but not entirely unexpected death in August, 2001 was a very great blow and sadness to his family. (It's hard to believe it was so long ago, our memories of Philip are so vivid and clear.) But Ruth showed amazing strength, and made a new life for herself. She continued to work until she retired in 2007 when she was 65, having made many good friends through her work. Louise, Simon and Katy, George and Margaret all climbed Ben Nevis to mark her retirement.

Last year, Ruth made the momentous move from Shropshire to Scotland to be nearer Louise, Russell and Bailey. Being what her children rightly called 'her amazing self', she settled straight into the community, joined the walking group, helped with Riding for the Disabled, and became involved with the local church. As you'd expect, she made lots of friends during her ten months living in Scotland. It has been a very special and very good time.

She settled well into her lovely bungalow, and she saw lots of Louise and Russell and Bailey, going on days out or for coffee or breakfast, which was made so much easier by not having six hours of driving from Shropshire to see her family. She also took the train to visit Simon and Katie, and their girls Tessa and Aimee.

But then came the shadow of illness. Being Ruth, she refused to give in to it, and everyone said how lovely she was to look after and how stoically she coped with everything.

Her death has taken away a loving mum and grandmother, a loyal friend, and a lovely person, of whom we were all immensely fond.

We're all thankful for Ruth, and for everything that she was: she was such a naturally genuine, kind, positive and loving person, a truly good woman with no trace of unkindness. Although she was very modest and self-effacing about her abilities and achievements, Ruth always persevered and stuck at whatever she did, whether it was ringing, or learning Welsh, or walking. She was, quietly but effectively, a very strong person and a firm and loving influence for good in the lives of many people: and she lived her Christian faith to the full in so many ways.

Her many close or lifelong friendships say it all: she could relate easily to all sorts of people, who recognised her sincerity and valued her good company and her openness. She made friends easily, and her friendships, once made, continued, constant and unwavering. Her loyal and generous friendship was a treasure enjoyed by so many people, and she will be hugely and widely missed by all of us.

Most of all, her family will miss her more than we can ever know. She was a wonderful and loving wife, and a marvellous and supportive mother. She encouraged all her three children in their dreams, staying up until 3 a.m. to help them finish assignments, even when she herself had to get up at 6.00 to go to work; editing university work to ensure the spelling and grammar were correct; and being a willing taxi to all the events to which the children wanted to go.

More recently, she has been a brilliant grandmother, who so enjoyed her grandchildren, and was so loved by them.

Her family have so many wonderful memories to cherish, to help them to remember and talk about her, so that she will live on in their hearts until they meet again. They are all very much in our thoughts and prayers now, and in the days and weeks ahead.
