



# NEWSLETTER

33rd edition of the Newsletter for: Pleasley, Pleasley Vale  
New Houghton and Stoney Houghton.

The nights are getting lighter but let's not forget the sayings, "March winds doth blow and we shall have snow". "If March comes in like a Lion it goes out like a Lamb", so they say.

## Dates for your Diary.

**Monday March 24th 7pm** The Verney Institute  
Talk by Lavinia Warner on her book and film  
**TENKO.**

Admission is free but by ticket only due to the limit on numbers. **Contact Howard Wright 810486 for tickets.**

**Saturday June 14th Sunday June 15th**  
**Scarecrow Festival.**

**Band Concert WW1 Commemoration.**  
**Saturday 12th July 6pm on the Pleasley Miners' Welfare field,**

**Admission by ticket only** these can be obtained from the Miners' Welfare, District Council Office in Shirebrook or any parish councillor.

The precept 2014/15 year was set at **£73,610**. Due to the financial constraints all councils and our parishioners are going through at the moment with regard to household incomes and budgets, the councillors agreed at the January meeting not only to hold the costs required for the smooth running of the parish but to reduce the amount of precept required without affecting our services to the public.

We have, through our diligence and cost saving measures been able to achieve this for the past 6 years and will continue to strive to ensure the amount we request is used to its maximum advantage for our parish and parishioners.

### **Police Report.**

14 crimes were reported for January and 18 for February.

The Police Representative indicated that 8 of the crimes were related to a limited group of people and that the Police were trying to gather evidence to take action against these people. Your help is needed.

The police need more information if these crimes are to be resolved. Information will be treated in the strictest confidence, if you can help Phone **Pleasley Safer Neighbourhood Policing Team on 101.**



On Thursday 30th January the first phase of the New Houghton development was officially recognised by Kier Partnership Homes by the cutting of the first sod by Chairman Ken Walker. Along with Kier Partnership management, other invited officials attending this ceremony were the Chief Executive Wes Lumley, Leader of the District Council Eion Watts, Chairman of the District Council Cllr Ken Walker, Deputy Leader Cllr Alan Tomlinson also Portfolio Member for Regeneration. Cllr Carl Reid Portfolio Member for Housing. District Council Councillor Ann Syrett also Portfolio Member for Social Inclusion and Parish Council Chairman Howard Wright. Official Sod Cutting. Although this is somewhat of an archaic ceremony it is still carried out. It is believed that it was last performed in Pleasley Parish in the late 19th century when the first sod was cut by a member of the Nightingale family when the then Nightingale Pit (Pleasley Colliery) was sunk.

This development marks the end of the pre-fabs, as we know them. To give them the correct name, pre-fabricated tarran bungalows. Many of you will have fond memories living in these emergency dwellings.

The proposed development will see 48 old, pre-fabricated tarran bungalows on Moorgate Avenue, Meden Avenue, Appleby Road and Occupation Road replaced with 94 properties, of which the council will purchase 20 two-bedroom bungalows, 11 two-bedroom houses and 4 three-bedroom houses and the remaining **59** are expected to be social housing properties.

The bungalows will be restricted to elderly tenants and is likely to start in the spring with a completion date of March 2014.

### TENKO

Between 1981 and 1985, 15 million viewers regularly tuned in to watch one of the most popular drama series of the '80s, the gripping story of women prisoners of the Japanese.



Created by **Lavinia Warner**, a local TV producer and director from **Newboundmill Lane Pleasley**, Tenko told the forgotten real-life story of the women prisoners of the Japanese who for three-and-

a-half years suffered severe privations in barely habitable Sumatran camps.

Lavinia will be giving a talk on this epic adventure drama in the Verney Institute Newboundmill Lane on **Monday March the 24<sup>th</sup> at 6-15pm.**

**Admission is free but by ticket only due to the limit on numbers. Contact Howard Wright 810486 for tickets**

Founded by CEO Pleasley Author, Film Producer and Director, **LAVINIA WARNER**, creator of the acclaimed drama series **TENKO**, With A Degree in History & Psychology, Lavinia first joined LWT's drama department as a PA, moving on to be a Researcher at Thames TV mainly on This is Your Life, and soon after became a freelance Producer/Director at the BBC. There, she made programmes within the Features, Current Affairs and Drama departments, including:

**Lord Mountbatten: A Man of Our Times; Lizzie An Amazon Adventure; A Life with Crime; Private Lives; Women in Captivity;** as well as **Tenko**. Shortly after the launch of Channel 4 in the early 80's, **Lavinia** set up Warner Sisters and was among the very first tranche of independent commissions with her critically acclaimed **Jailed by the British**, programmes. Her next C4 production, **GI Brides**, A Documentary for C4 narrated by Maureen Lipman, on the WW2 brides swept off their feet by the Yanks, won the Broadcasting Press Guild Award and BAFTA nomination for Best Documentary. Soon after, she optioned Robert Harris' book **Selling Hitler**, sold it to ITV, and executive produced the series.

When her next drama **Wish Me Luck** gained 14 million viewers and was re-commissioned for a further two series, her future as a leading Independent was assured. After 5 years building up Warner Sisters Productions, **Lavinia** asked Jane Wellesley to join her in 1988, and a successful, partnership ensued. They created a new branch of the company (WS Film & TV), and while Wellesley produced such hits as drama

**A Village Affair** and comedy series **Dressing for Breakfast**.

Warner was producing high-profile series such as **Dangerous Lady** and **The Jump** big co-productions such as **The Bite** and **Do or Die**. Anne-Marie Casey helped introduce the company to feature film production, making **Jilting Joe**, among others.

Warner Sisters has been a successful Independent company for 30 years, producing countless drama series, factual documentaries, comedy series, films and international co-productions, and is still re-inventing itself. Notable drama successes in recent years have included **The Take** in 2009 and **The Runaway** in 2011, both of which have seen **Lavinia** as Executive Producer.

Their productions have won international awards and consistently high viewing figures. Created by **Lavinia Warner** (together with writer, Jill Hyem), she also co-produced Series 1. **Lavinia** has a particular talent for bringing true-life stories to the screen, but also creates original pieces too. Well-known for stories with strong female roles, her interests are diverse and she's been responsible for a wide variety of productions. For a relatively small company, Warner Sisters' successes have been numerous, and the accent is on popular, high-quality programming.

**Lavinia** was Consultant to Hollywood director Bruce Beresford on his feature film, **Paradise Road**, starring Glenn Close and Cate Blanchett. **Lavinia's** – soon to be republished – book **Women Beyond the Wire** (written with John Sandilands) was the prime source material for the film.

Lavinia's Mother Cllr Eileen Warner was a Pleasley Parish Councillor in the 1970s. Her Grandfather John Warner, builder, was prime mover in the building of the Verney Institute which opened in 1906. Starting this in September 1905, he had a team of 15 builders and craftsmen who contributed their knowledge and craft in building this Pleasley Public Library and Parish Room.

Architects were Messrs Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker.

**Builder John Warner.**

**Workmen** were, John HOLBROOK Warner, Frederick Warner, Aaron Warner, Joseph William Hickling, Thomas Redfern, John Price, George Fish, Thomas Randall, Ernest Randall, George Day, George Fogg, George Lincoln, Charles Morley, George Saxton and Henry Rouse.

### THIS ROOM IS FOR HIRE

We have two Village Halls with rooms and kitchens to hire for meetings, events and children's parties of various sorts.

Contact the caretakers.

New Houghton: Laretta, 01623-811390

Pleasley: Phillip 01623-810732.

**What do you know about Pleasley?** Following on from November Newsletter 31.

For those who have forgotten and wish to be reminded contact johnwright828@btinternet.com who will send you the first edition. This script will probably stretch over several issues, so save them to read as an item if you so wish.

The Domesday Book - compiled in 1085-6 is one of the few historical records whose name is familiar to most people in this country. It is our earliest public record, the foundation document of the national archives and a legal document that is still valid as evidence of title to land.

Based on the Domesday survey of 1085-6, which was drawn up on the orders of King William I, it describes in remarkable detail, the landholdings and resources of late 11th-century England, demonstrating the power of the government machine in the first century of the new Millennium, and its deep thirst for information.

Providing definitive proof of rights to land and obligations to tax and military service, its 913 pages and two million Latin words describe more than 13,000 places in England and parts of Wales. Nicknamed the 'Domesday' Book by the native English, after God's final Day of Judgement,

"At the time of the Domesday Book (1086) the manor (landed estate) of Pleasley was part of that of Glapwell the population was almost certain to have been below a hundred.

This would grow, but the effect of the Black Death in 1347-8 would be probably to almost halve it again, so that by Henry V11 it would most likely little exceed a hundred. Its best days were probably around 1300."

The Black Death of 1347 should not be confused with the Great Plague also called the Black Death in 1665. See article on Great Plague page 4.

During the Great Plague Church Services were not held in Pleasley Church they were held in the "Service Field" in the open air, a field Opposite the Church to avoid people being close to each other. "

The Industrial Revolution around 1750 would probably have been a time of growth of population.

The forges were at work in the Vale about Cromwell's time (1650) but it would be the stocking making trade and improvements in agriculture which would raise the population, which still remained relatively small however until the sinking of the coal mines mid-Victorian days.

In 1676 Pleasley had 174 people over sixteen, which would give a total population of about 244, taken mechanically. In 1789 there were 82 houses, and in 1811, 87. These houses would mean a few at Stoney Houghton and the rest not fairly equally divided between Pleasley and Shirebrook.

The population actually fell in the "Hungry Forties" At that time the farmer and farm labourer at Newbound Mill Farm with other men used to sit up in the corn barn at nights with a loaded blunderbuss to stop the hungry stocking-frame workers from stealing the corn.

Census Returns for the following years.

**1801** - 473. **1811** - 527. **1821** - 529.

**1831** - 611. **1841** - 679. **1851** - 654.

**1861** - 613. **1871** - 700. **1881** - 1152. (By then about 515 at Pleasley the rest at Shirebrook and Houghton)

**1891** - 1499. **1901** - 8488 Shirebrook was then taken out of Pleasley census.

**1911** - 2416. **1921** - 2510. **1931** - 2638.

The Lord of Glapwell Manor before 1086 was Lord Leuric, a Saxon who lived in the Manor at Wandeslie. The lord of Houghton was Swain Cilt (Swain the younger). Neither lived in Pleasley parish.

At the Conquest, Houghton fell into the hands of Walter de Aincort of Blankney in Lincolnshire, and Glapwell, fell to Serlo, styled "de Pleasley", because he lived in Pleasley.

This family is now represented by Willoughby de Eresby in Lincolnshire. There were four generations of the family of de Pleasley.

The first Shirebrook name known is that of Robert Wardson about 1160-80. Between 1200 —1300 we find the names of a number of old Pleasley parishioners in, Nicholas de Lowes, Alexander de Lowes, the de Glapwells (named Willoughby) Robert le Hunt, Hugh Stob (Stubbs) Geoffrey de Hokerton (Houghton) are but a few. A little later (1272-1307) came Thomas and John de Schirebrok, Hugh Stufyn of Stuffynwood, Hugh de Rodmerthwayt, (Radmanthwaite).



In 1783 flax was grown in Pleasley. For the linen trade, to encourage which the government then offered a subsidy on the crop, of 4d a stone.

4d being 4 pence. There were grown 206 stones at Common Close in Pleasley by John Wood of Mansfield, plus 52 stones at Longman Nook. The Churchwardens who signed his claim were William Dean (Dane) and Thomas Turner.

At the time of writing this, the Flintham family still resided in Pleasley so did the Reasons, one of whom was there in Elizabeth's reign. One hundred years ago the principal Pleasley surnames were, Cooke, Crookes, Dean, Merrill, Wright, Clarke, Johnson, Dodsley, Revell, Reason, Sadler, Wilson, Smith, **Bowmer**, Farnsworth, Bennett, Milner, Haslam and Belfield. Several of these are now (or were recently) at New Houghton or Stoney Houghton. The "**White Swan**" was kept by John Naylor and the "**Nag's Head**" by John Belfield then after Thomas Belfield.

That concludes the extracts from history of Pleasley which will carry on in next newsletter. An additional interesting topic concerning the Plague is this rhyming poem which many of you will know without realizing the significance of the words.

**"Ring-a-ring of roses,  
A pocketful of posies,  
Attischo, Attischo,  
We all fall down."**

The first line in the poem refers to red (rings) circular blotches that were found on the skin, resembling a rose. These could also develop into large pus filled sacs found primarily under the armpits and in the groin. These were very painful to the sufferer.

The second line refers to the belief that the plague was spread by a cloud of poisonous gas that was colourless (known as a miasma). This miasma could only be stopped, so it was believed, if you carried flowers with you as the smell of the flowers would overpower the germs carried by the miasma.

A victim's breath started to go off as the disease got worse. The flowers' perfume would have covered up this unpleasantness. The final symptom was a sneezing fit (Attischo) that was promptly followed by death, when you all fell down, (Dead).

**Work for Yourself scheme.** For people with a health condition or disability which limits work opportunities and who are considering self-employment.



## Work for Yourself

"I feel much better now that I know that I am capable of working."

### Want to get back to work?

Health condition/disability holding you back?  
Thought about self-employment?

"I'm sitting in my new smart office - it's really uplifting!"

### Work for yourself offers:

Choice – what you do, where and when.  
Control – take charge of your future.

"The project does such a good job, offers great support and advice."

### We offer:

Straightforward and practical help.  
Professional Business Advice.  
Support to find funding.  
Regular contact from your own Adviser.

### Free if you:

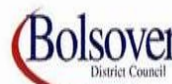
Live in Bolsover District or Chesterfield Borough; and  
Have a long-term health condition or disability; and  
Are interested in work.

### Contact Theresa:

0845 459 2547 or 07446 366391

[theresa@disabilitydynamics.co.uk](mailto:theresa@disabilitydynamics.co.uk)

[www.businessability.co.uk](http://www.businessability.co.uk)





### James Hickman & Dan Cassidy

A full house at The Verney on March 8th enjoyed a performance of great variety with guitar and fiddle in harmony from two accomplished musicians.

This was the fourth concert to be held in conjunction with Live and Local.

James (guitar) is from Shrewsbury but Dan (fiddle) hails from Washington DC although he now lives in Iceland.

The audience was led through a mixture of bluegrass, swing, folk, traditional Irish tune and jazz with strong vocals and versatile musicality.

Between numbers, many of which can be found on their CD "Severn Street", James and Dan talked about their joint careers with dry wit and humour.

### Chairman's Column.

We recently received an e mail from a parishioner voicing concerns about our omission of the list of parish councillors in our January news letter. This was an unfortunate oversight. Complaints and mistakes are inevitable but we do our best, we are not tabloid journalists. However, it does endorse the fact that the newsletter is delivered to that particular area. The exercise of producing the newsletter, is for the Parish Council to be in close contact with our parishioners, who welcome the newsletter. It is quite easy to forget an insertion when there is so much news to report, you run short of room and time is short for publication, and as the old saying goes you cannot please all the people all of the time.

It is not taken for granted that everyone knows how or where to contact a parish councillor, even though the majority of our parishioners do know. Newcomers do not. All matters relating to council business are available on our web site. The web site covers all past newsletters and all parish council meetings, minutes and agendas.

For other local matters that are not our responsibility, it would be advisable to contact those organizations concerned. The suggestion of offering the newsletter by email is not practical, not feasible and not humanly possible, there are over 1000 properties in our parish and not everyone has or can use a computer. The Parish Council would encourage those that have access to a computer to read our web site. [www.pleasleyparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.pleasleyparishcouncil.org.uk) and would like to thank all those readers who appreciate the newsletter.

Pleasley Parish Council has allotments vacant on Meden Ave and Crompton St contact Brian Carmall Clerk to the Council. 01246-273239.

The Terrace Lane recreation ground new development will be officially opened during the Easter Holidays in April, this will be confirmed. The weather has been a problem of late. Although we cannot grumble, we are lucky. Our thoughts must be with those have suffered through the terrible storms and floods and have lost everything.

Your Parish Councillors are.

**Howard Wright (Chairman) 810486**  
**[johnwright828@btinternet.com](mailto:johnwright828@btinternet.com)**

Ian Allen 810346

Pauline Bowmer (Vice Chair) 811492

Val Douglas 811761

Derek Gelsthorpe 810830

Mick Gamble 810035

Jackie Jones 811207

Neil Jordan 811615

Thomas Kirkham 07734274848

Paul Seston 811994

Parish Clerk Brian Carnall 01246-273239

53 Malvern Rd Chesterfield S40 4DX

[brian\\_carnall@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:brian_carnall@yahoo.co.uk)

Your two elected district Councillors are  
[pauline.bowmer@bolsover.gov.uk](mailto:pauline.bowmer@bolsover.gov.uk) and  
[ann.syrett@bolsover.gov.uk](mailto:ann.syrett@bolsover.gov.uk)

County Councillor Marian Stockdale  
 01629-580000 Ex 6058 Home No 742146  
 Mobile 07764229549 Email  
[marian.stockdale@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:marian.stockdale@derbyshire.gov.uk)



**NEIGHBOURHOOD ALERT.**

Derbyshire police and Derbyshire County Council Trading Standards officers raided a shop in Victoria Street, Shirebrook on Tuesday, January 14. More than 7,000 cigarettes and 94 pouches of hand rolling tobacco were seized as well as a number of bottles of suspected illicit vodka. A specially trained sniffer dog helped find the products at the premises. A man 29 and woman 32-year-old have been arrested and released on bail.

A theft from vehicle occurred on Florence Close, Pleasley, overnight between Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> and Friday 24<sup>th</sup> January. The offender entered a vehicle parked on the drive by unknown means. A search was made and a sat-nav and loose change were taken.

Derbyshire County Council Trading Standards are warning residents about a telephone scam regarding bogus telephone calls. Trading Standards have received information from a local consumer confirming that they had received a cold call via telephone from a male stating that he was undertaking a Demographic Survey on behalf of the Derbyshire County Council Social care.

The male knew the name and address of the consumer which led the consumer to believe it was a genuine caller. The caller asked a diverse range of questions such as, are you a home owner; who lives at the property; do you have a television; what make is the television etc.

Derbyshire County Council has confirmed that there are no surveys being undertaken.

Trading Standards would urge residents not to respond to cold callers, and not to give any information/ bank details in response to such calls.

**An outbuilding burglary occurred at a field off Newboundmill Lane, Pleasley, overnight between Friday 7<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> February.** The offender broke a chain on the field gate and entered an unlocked outbuilding. At this time an energizer unit is known to have been taken. If you have any information or saw anything suspicious contact the **Pleasley Safer Neighbourhood Policing Team on 101**, quoting crime number **5499/14**.

Beware Impostor 'CAB' cold callers Impostors claiming to be from the CAB (Citizens Advice Bureau) are cold calling people in Derbyshire offering to help with payment protection insurance (PPI).

It appears that Derbyshire residents are being targeted.

Emma Hagger, Chief Officer of Derbyshire's Citizens' Advice Bureau said: "We would like to stress that no genuine CAB adviser, or anyone connected with the CAB service, would ever phone or text someone out of the blue. If you are cold called or get a text from someone saying that they are from the Citizens Advice Bureau and asking you about PPI it is almost certainly a scam. Make sure you do not give or confirm any personal information and report the call immediately 08454 04 05 06."

**Police are warning residents about a scam where fraudsters con people to obtain their bank account details and debit cards.**

The fraudster has called the victim and pretended to work for the bank, telling the victim there has been fraudulent activity on their account. They ask the victim for their PIN then tell them a courier will call at their house to collect their debit cards. To advise the victim to ring their bank to clarify the call is genuine but do not hang up, leaving the phone line open. When the victim dials their bank, they are actually speaking to another fraudster on the same line, who then confirms the fraudulent transactions on their account is genuine. A genuine courier firm, employed by the scammers, then call at the victim's house to collect the cards. The victims, who are all elderly, later discover that money has been withdrawn from their accounts.

**General Information.**

**BABES** - a friendly breastfeeding drop in session, every Tuesday 2—3pm at Pleasley Hill Children's Centre Woburn Lane. Pregnant Mums, Dads and siblings also welcome. Help, support and information on all aspects of breastfeeding. For enquiries please contact the centre on 01623-819940. If this venture is a success and the momentum is achieved with the new group it is hoped to hold a similar class in the Verney Institute, Newboundmill Lane.

There is now **Pauline's Fruit and Veg Stall** weather permitting, every Tuesday to Friday from 8-30 to 4pm Saturdays 8-30 to 1pm On the forecourt of New Houghton's Working Men's Club.

**Pleasley Parish Council  
Annual Scarecrow Festival  
Saturday and Sunday JUNE 14th and 15th**

**Follow the trail with the route map costing **£1**. Tea or coffee & light refreshment is included with tea token on the route map.**

**Proceeds to Derbyshire R.N.I.B Royal National Institute for the Blind**

**Your voting slip and tea token will be on the reverse .**

**This event is sponsored by.**

**MAURICE HILL TRANSPORT Ltd**

**Wolsey Drive Kirkby-in-Ashfield Notts NG17 7JR 01623-721200**

**GLAPWELL NURSERIES Bolsover Road Glapwell 01623-812191**



**WORLD WAR 1 COMMEMORATION CONCERT**

**Organized by Bolsover District Council**

To celebrate this memorable occasion  
Pleasley Parish Council welcomes you to  
a **BAND CONCERT** on the  
**Miners' Welfare Field** in the parish of Pleasley  
**Saturday July 12th 6pm**



By kind permission of Pleasley Miners' Welfare.  
Toilets and drink available in the Miners' Welfare.  
Bring your own chairs or rugs to sit on and enjoy a party in  
the park. Listen and sing-a-long to the bands of

**Shirebrook Miners' Welfare Unison Brass Band and  
Pleasley Miners' Welfare Brass Band.**

**ADMISSION BY TICKET ONLY**

Tickets obtainable from Pleasley Miners Welfare, Bolsover  
District office in Shirebrook and **any Parish Councillor**



**PLEASLEY PARISH SCARECROW FESTIVAL**

**I WISH TO ENTER IN THE SCARECROW FESTIVAL FOR PLEASLEY  
PARISH ON JUNE 14TH & 15TH 2014**

**Name: .....Telephone: .....**

**Address: .....**

**Please tear along the dotted line and return to "Scarecrow" Verney Institute, Newboundmill  
Lane Pleasley NG19 7PL or Cllr Howard Wright 59 Newboundmill Lane. ASAP & BEFORE  
5thMay**

**Profits will go to the R.N.I.B. Royal National Institute for the Blind**

**SIX Prizes will be awarded, to be judged by the public by voting for the best scarecrow £75  
Second £50 the next four £25 each**

## COMPETITION TIME

THIS WORDSEARCH IS:

20 Doctors Fact and Fiction

Closing date.

NAME .....

Address .....

Tel No .....

SPOCK ZHIVAGO  
WHO BARNARDO  
PATEL DOLITTLE  
JEKYLL KILDARE  
WATSON HOLLIDAY  
MARTIN SYN  
LECTER CRIPPEN  
FLEMING JENNER  
LISTER PASTEUR  
FU MANCHU  
STRANGELOVE

The winner of January  
Wordsearch was  
Mrs Hackman of Pleasley  
who received a £10 Garden  
voucher for Glapwell Nurseries  
from Cllr Howard Wright  
Chairman of Pleasley Parish  
Council.

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| A | P | D | C | J | E | N | N | E | R | U | A |
| T | A | R | R | E | E | M | A | R | T | I | N |
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Many of the items are general information from District and Local Council bulletins, news cuttings and newsletters and information from various council periodicals and public information from health magazines and the internet. They are obtained from sources believed to be reliable, but accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Plagiarism is not intended. We also reserve the right to edit where necessary and retain the right to print or not.



**GARDENERS' PAGE**

March is the month when things really start to move in the growing season. In fact the start of the year used to be Lady Day, the Feast of the Annunciation, 25th March until 1752 in Britain when we adopted the Gregorian calendar and started our year on the 1st January. From an agricultural viewpoint, it would have made sense to have stuck with the old system, starting the year on the spring equinox, in link with the seasons.

The winter hasn't been a severe winter, you might think this is a benefit, but the problem is that a good cold frost kills off a lot of the slugs, snails and other pests in the garden.

So it's going to be another year where the slug is the biggest enemy. If you keep hens or better still ducks, they will clean up the slugs and snails. Ducks especially love slugs but never run poultry on a plot where you have used slug pellets within the last couple of weeks.

The worst case for gardeners has to be where we get a run of good spring weather and then a real cold snap descends. It's surprising how a few lengths of horticultural fleece can save the day if you have them available. T

he main problem with fleece is the wind blowing it away. There is an answer, fill some plastic 2 litre milk cartons with sand or soil and use them as bricks to hold it down they are smoother than bricks.

If the weather is cold but otherwise reasonable, you can steal some time and start early by cloching and fleecing. Although cloches have been around for many years, nowadays we can get cheap polythene tunnel cloches and even cheaper fleece.

Place the cloche or fleece a week or two before planting and the soil will have warmed up nicely as well as being dry and easy to work.

Water well into the drill prior to sowing and replacing the cloche.

Do remember to water weekly or more frequently in sunny weather under cloches. Plant out your onion and shallot sets. If growing onions from seed started earlier in the year under cover these can also go out now.

You can also sow onion sets, thinning to the eventual spacing. Cloching will help them establish and also stop pigeons from pulling them up. March is the right time to establish an asparagus bed if you are starting from crowns.

Do make sure you get it in the right position as it will be there permanently.

Mid March should let you start planting out those potatoes you've had chitting. If you want some really early potatoes, start some in a black polythene sack in the greenhouse or tunnel. Punch drainage holes in the sack and use a multi-purpose compost.

Staying with root crops, you can plant Jerusalem artichoke tubers now. Be aware that getting them all up at harvest time is very difficult and any tubers left in the ground will grow—so effectively a permanent bed.

Here is a list you could sow. Beetroot, Broad Beans, Early Peas (but they may do best started in a gutter in the greenhouse then slipped into a trench or in seed trays) Brussels sprouts – early varieties like Peer Gynt will be ready in September, Leeks, Lettuce, Radish, Parsnips, Spinach, Early Turnips. One interesting thing is some people think they are turnips when really they are Swedes which have a blue shade. We rarely see turnips, which is a much smaller vegetable and not blue.

**Fruit Planting & Pruning**

There is still time to finish planting bare rooted fruit trees and bushes, especially raspberries and other cane fruits. Early this month you can still prune apple and pear trees while they are still dormant.

There is also time to prune gooseberries and currants. With currants shorten the sideshoots to just one bud and remove old stems from the centre of the bushes. They will benefit from some compost spread around the base as well or some general purpose fertiliser like fish, blood & bone. Trees will appreciate some wood ash spreading under them.

**Vegetable & Fruit Growing Guide**

By April spring should be well and truly underway, the soil warming up nicely and everything growing away. Don't be complacent though, it's been known for a cold snap with snow to strike even in the sunny south of England. Keep an eye on the weather forecasts and a hand on the horticultural fleece and insulation materials.

The weeds won't be slow and it's time to sharpen your hoe. A sharp hoe is the best friend a gardener can have. Just slide it back and forth slightly below the surface of the soil and you'll stop the weed seedlings in their tracks.

There's an old saying "Hoe when you can't see a weed and you'll never see a weed" which is very true. Hoeing keeps the top soil broken up so in times of drought water cannot get to the surface by capillary action and evaporate. When it does rain a hoed surface will prevent the precious water running off and ensure it goes down to where it's wanted.

**Things to Sow in April**

Beet-root Peas Broad Beans Broccoli Brussels Sprouts Cabbage Cauliflower Kale Leeks Spinach

**"A warm January; a cold May." Welsh Proverb**

**"Ne'er cast a clout till May be out" English Proverb.**

Covering your carrots with a fleece and ensuring the edges are buried will stop the carrot root fly from gaining entry to lay eggs by your carrots. The eggs hatch in larvae that burrow into the carrot root, killing the plant or at least ruining the crop.

Easter, a variable feast that usually falls in early April is the traditional potato planting time. If you have a comfrey bed and it has sprung back, the first cut laid in the trench under the potatoes will provide nutrition to get them off to a good start.

On the subject of comfrey, if you make a comfrey tea it will help you to a great crop to use it on your potatoes. Many novice growers wonder why they have small crops of potatoes and most often this is just down to lack of food for this hungry crop.

**Excerpt from Daily Health.**

**Soy's Blood Pressure Benefits**

"If you could control high blood pressure with a dietary change instead of drugs.

**Blood pressure buster?**

Soy contains isoflavones, which prompt the release of nitric oxide and nitric oxide helps dilate blood vessels.

According to the latest research results from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), an intake of more than 2.5 mg of isoflavones can drop systolic blood pressure by more than 5 points. For someone who's borderline hypertensive, that difference could be significant. Sadly, isoflavones are not abundant in a normal diet. In order to really power-up your isoflavones intake you'll have to drink an 8-ounce glass of soymilk

which will provide 22 mg of isoflavones. If you want a super-boost, nothing comes close to soybeans. A 3.5-ounce serving of roasted soybeans delivers about 130 mg of isoflavones.

Gobble a handful of soybeans and wash it down with a tall glass of soymilk. You'll be master of your hypertension domain!

Clearly, this is good news for anyone who suffers from high blood pressure. However, before you stock up on soy there are a few things you need to know.

The NIH study makes no mention of the fact that there are two types of soy: Fermented soy (**the good stuff**) and unfermented soy (**the bad stuff**)...

It goes without saying that the health benefit of soy depends on the type of soy you consume. Fermented soy products include Natto, Miso, Tempeh and fermented tofu and soymilk.

Miso, a fermented or probiotic form of soybean, is particularly rich in the isoflavone aglycones, genistein and daidzein, which are believed to be cancer chemo-preventatives (agents used to lower the risk of developing cancer).

Natto has similar health benefits, according to research conducted by a Japanese scientist who found natto had the highest fibrinolytic activity among 200 foods produced worldwide. About 15 years ago, the same scientist discovered an enzyme produced in the fermentation process, natto-kinase, a powerful agent contained in the sticky part of natto that dissolves blood clots that lead to heart attacks, strokes and senility.

Natto also contains vitamin K2 and isophrabon, which help to prevent diseases such as osteoporosis and breast cancer, and help slow down the ageing process.

Unfermented soy products – like fresh green soybeans, nuts, sprouts, soy milk (unfermented) and tofu (unfermented) – contain high levels of phytic acid (phytate) which has anti-nutritive properties and has been shown in a number of studies to BLOCK the absorption of vital nutrients such as calcium. Phytic acid also BINDS with certain other nutrients, including iron, and inhibits their absorption. Bottom-line: Know your good soy from your bad soy. It all comes down to reading the label. If the label doesn't indicate whether it is fermented or unfermented, expect the worst... If soy is too much for you to stomach, then there's another dietary change that can work wonders for blood pressure control. As an added bonus, you'll also reduce your risk of cancer, heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Sugar is toxic when consumed in large amounts."