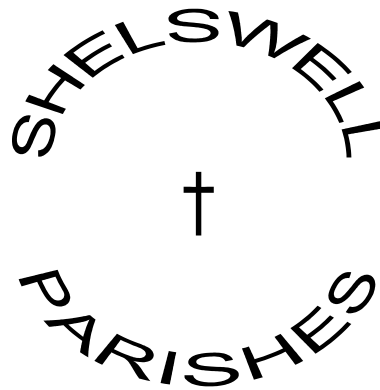


Shelswell News

The magazine of the Shelswell Group of Churches

Cottisford
Fringford
Hardwick
Mixbury
Stoke Lyne



Finmere
Godington
Hethe
Newton Purcell
Stratton Audley



Cox's Orange Pippins ripening this month

***Minister's Letter -
Pithy sayings from the Book of
Proverbs p.3***

***Installation of Revd Claire at
Stratton Audley on 1st September
p.5***

***Wine tasting in Fringford,
Pilgrim Paths walk at Newton
Purcell,
Mixbury Fete,
Ride & Stride in the whole
Benefice,
Newton Purcell Fete and Dog
Show,
Communion and Dinner at Christ
Church,
'Flora's Fringford' Celebrations
- more details inside!***

***Harvest Home 27th September
p.13***

SHELLOWELL BENEFICE MISSION STATEMENT

The Shelswell Family of Churches aims to bring people closer to God and to show the love of Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit to everyone.

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THE PARISHES ARE PART OF THE DEANERY OF BICESTER AND ISLIP AND THE DORCHESTER EPISCOPAL AREA OF THE DIOCESE OF OXFORD

HOLY TRINITY ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, HETHE,

Mass: 4pm Saturday.

Weekday Mass: 9.30am Monday

Priest: Father Craig Davies, Henley House, 12 The Causeway, Bicester, OX26 6AW.

Telephone: 01869 253277

Website: <http://www.holytrinityheth.co.uk/>

SHELLOWELL NEWS

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Deadlines for the October edition of Shelswell News

To Magazine Correspondents: **Midday on Friday 11th September**

Correspondents to Editor: **Midday on Sunday 13th September at editor@shelswellparishes.info**

All articles must be submitted in WORD or LIBRE OFFICE in a format that can be COPIED AND PASTED PLEASE - Many thanks for your cooperation.

www.shelswellparishes.info

SHELLOWELL NEWS ARCHIVE to look up previous issues of the Shelswell News please contact the Benefice office.

MINISTER'S LETTER

How many people ever read the book 'Proverbs' in the Bible? Probably very few. But when I forgot to do something the other day, despite being reminded about it several times by various people, then early one morning the realization dawned upon me with a horrible shock, and I knew I needed to act NOW, these words popped into my mind –

“Go to the ant, you lazybones;
consider its ways and be wise.
 ⁷Without having any chief
 or officer or ruler,
 ⁸it prepares its food in summer
and gathers its sustenance in harvest.
 ⁹How long will you lie there, O lazybones?
When will you rise from your sleep? [from Proverbs Chapter 6]”

A memory from childhood probably, for my problem is procrastination, putting off until tomorrow what I should do today. Someone must have drawn my attention to these verses! I'm a 'last minuter'; unlike the ant in Proverbs who gets on with things so as to be ready in time for the winter.

The sayings in Proverbs, possibly put together around 700 BC or thereabouts, make up a collection of words of insight for learning about wisdom, for gaining instruction in wise dealing, righteousness, justice, and equity. You might not agree with them but they give food for thought. There are many pithy and amusing sayings:

“Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes,
so are the lazy to their employers.” [Chapter 10, verse 26]

“Like a gold ring in a pig's snout
is a beautiful woman without good sense.” [Chapter 11, verse 6]

Proverbs is the sort of book you can 'dip into' which makes it very readable, unlike other books in the Bible which can be hard going. Despite being written so long ago the ideas it has to offer are largely as relevant today as they were thousands of years ago. Human beings don't change much. Maybe this summer you might find time to read a few verses of Proverbs every now and then, savour them, reflect on them, and be wiser for it.

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;
fools despise wisdom and instruction.” [Chapter 1, verse 7]

Penny Wood LLM



BIBLE READINGS



Sunday 6 th September	14 th Sunday after Trinity	Ezekiel 33 v7-11 Romans 13 v8-end Matthew 18 v15-20
Sunday 13 th September	15 th Sunday after Trinity	Genesis 50 v15-21 Romans 14 v1-12 Matthew 18 v21-35
Sunday 20 th September	16 th Sunday after Trinity	Jonah 3 v10 – 4 v11 Philippians 1 v21-end Matthew 20 v1-16
Sunday 27 th September	17 th Sunday after Trinity	Ezekiel 18 v1-4 and 25-end Philippians 2 v1-13 Matthew 21 v23-32

(Note: Alternative readings may be used at Harvest celebrations)

CATHEDRAL WORSHIP ON 30th SEPTEMBER

You are warmly invited to a Corporate Communion at Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford on the evening of Wednesday 30 September. The service will be preceded by tea and a talk by the Reverend Canon Professor William Whyte, Professor of Social and Architectural History, and will be followed by dinner in the Great Hall.

Christ Church holds the right of presentation for some eighty livings across the country and is extending an invitation to the congregations of them all for an evening of collective worship, fellowship and hospitality. There will be a small charge of £17.50 towards the cost of dinner but the afternoon and evening are otherwise free of charge.

Becky Adams is kindly liaising with Christ Church. Please contact her on by Sunday 6 September if you wish to join the trip. Contact details are on the inside front cover under "Benefice Administrator."

MIDWEEK HOLY COMMUNION AND SOUP LUNCH



The next service will be in October as Stoke Lyne Church is being used for elections on the first Thursday in September



FROM REVEREND DR CLAIRE MAXIM

Dear New Friends,

I hope I'm allowed to call you that, even though as I write I haven't met many of you. I am very much looking forward to hearing your stories and all about this patch of Oxfordshire.

I was born in Wales and lived briefly in Scotland before growing up in south Warwickshire, and most of my extended family are around the Midlands. I spent twenty years working for PowerGen (now EON) in all sorts of roles connected with large power stations, and enjoy solving knotty problems. I have a degree in electrical engineering, and despite this, I am blessed with an ability to crash phones, computers, software packages and websites in many unusual ways. So far I've only met one other person who has crashed a Kindle, but I'm sure there's a support group somewhere! I am competent at knitting and sewing, and love history of people and of landscapes. I enjoy painting, although I don't encourage other people to see my results, and I delight in photography. I bake good bread and cake, but my pastry is best used for brickwork.

I'm moving into the Rectory with Lily the Cat, and hope to be welcoming my daughter, son, daughter in law, granddaughter and friends in various combinations in the coming years.

I was ordained in 2010, and have since been in Hampshire, Wiltshire, Warwickshire, and Northumberland. They have all contained their joys and challenges, and I am very much looking forward to being among you all, and learning about the joys and challenges here. God is eternal, clergy are temporary, and I am looking forward to joining in with God's work in the Shelswell Benefice and beyond.

If you see me, please say hello and introduce yourself! With prayers for us all in the transitions of new beginnings

Claire

THE SHELSWELL BENEFICE



You are invited to the Institution by the Bishop of Dorchester
and Induction and Installation by the Associate Archdeacon of Dorchester
of

The Revd Dr Claire Maxim
as Rector of the Shelswell Benefice

on Tuesday 1st September at 7.30 pm
in the Church of St Mary and St Edburga, Stratton Audley

Refreshments in the Church after the service.

Any queries to Becky
Tel: 07928 990569 Email: admin@shelswellparishes.info

FRIDAY 4th SEPTEMBER 2026

Spanish Wine Tasting Evening

Welcome from 7.15 with start at 7.30pm -
we recommend eating an early supper

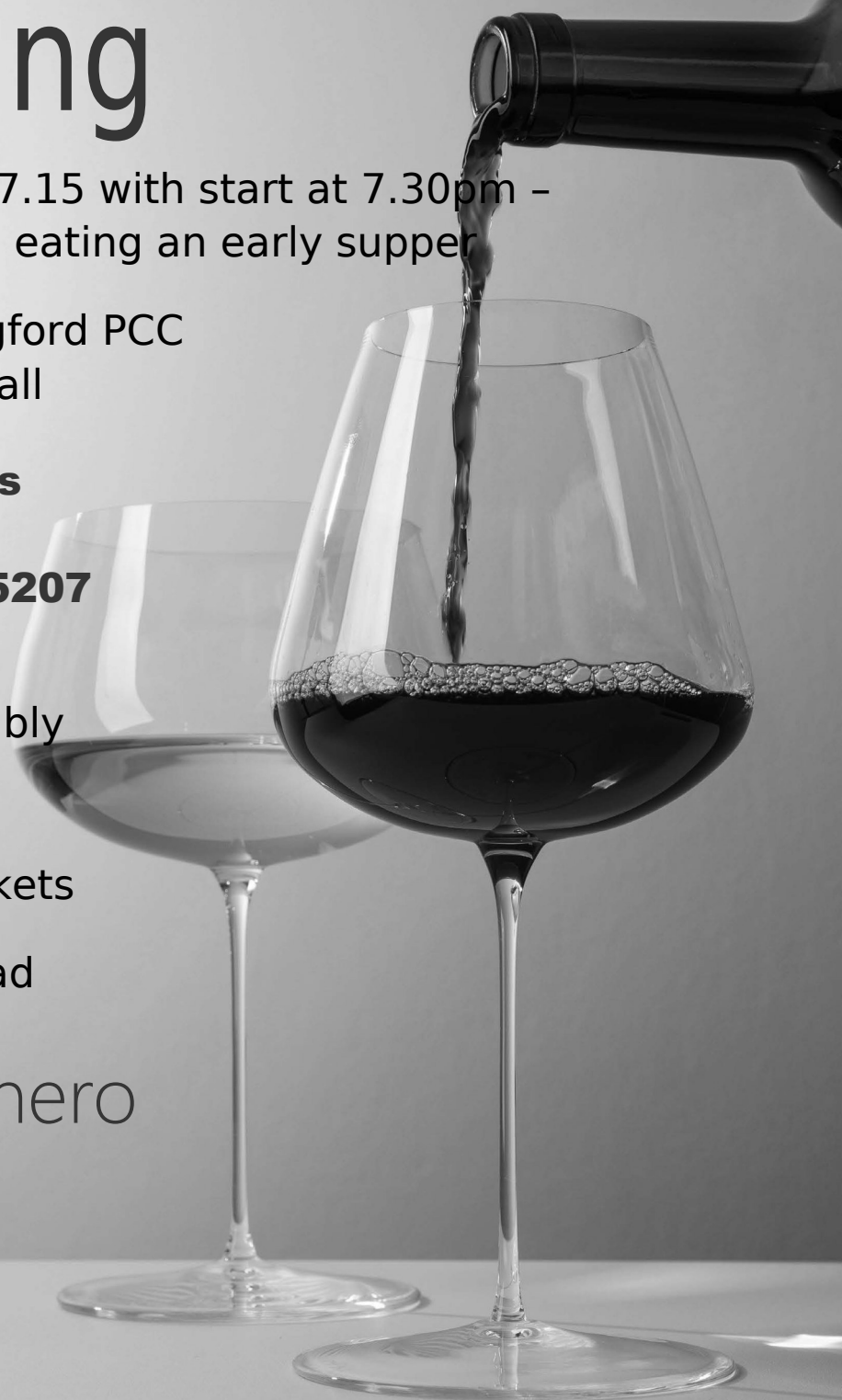
Hosted by Fringford PCC
in the Village Hall

**Only 36 tickets
available -
call 07867 515207**

Your chance to
taste 8 reasonably
priced wines,
all available in
local supermarkets

Cost ~~£~~15 per head

¡Salud, dinero
y amor!





MIXBURY VILLAGE

CHURCH FETE

SATURDAY
5TH SEPTEMBER 2026
• 12-4 AT CASTLE FIELD •

HOOK
A DUCK

COCONUT
SHY

RING
TOSS

LUCKY
DIP

TOMBOLA
★
RAFFLE
★
CAKES



TRADITIONAL GAMES & STALLS
FOR FAMILY FUN

Bicester and Islip Deanery

Pilgrim Paths

Newton Purcell Circular Walk



Sunday 6th September

Distance: 5 miles

You are warmly invited to join Bicester and Islip Deanery's tenth Pilgrim Paths walk.

Starting at The Church of St. Michael and All Angels, Newton Purcell at **2.00pm**.

There will be refreshments and a short service at Newton Purcell at the end of the walk.

Further information from the Pilgrim Paths Team:

bicislip.pilgrimpaths@gmail.com

Follow us at:

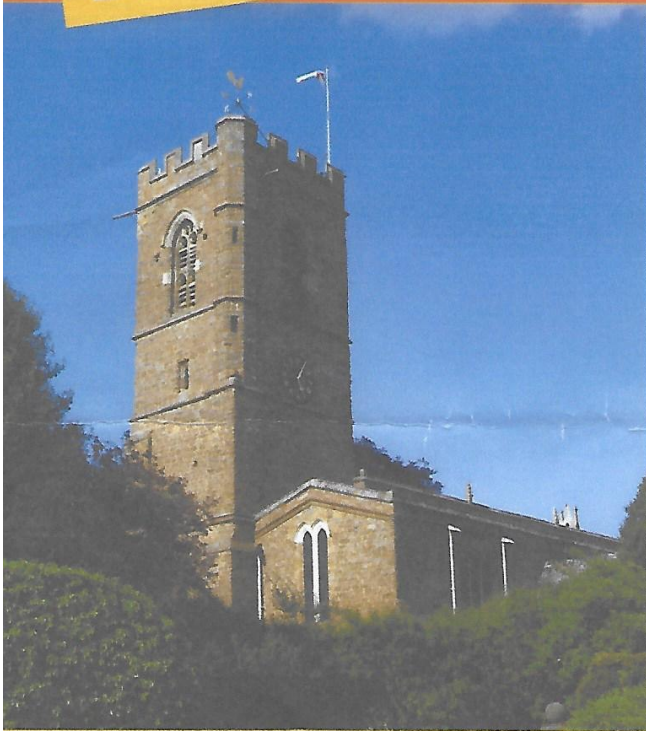
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1310223859871650>

12TH
SEPT
2026

RIDE+STRIDE

for Churches

Many of the churches and chapels in Oxfordshire will be open.



Help preserve the history on your doorstep by raising funds for Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust.

All funds raised go to OHCT and 50% can be passed on to a church or chapel of your choice.

join us

Many ways to take part, cycling, walking, horse riding, bell-ringing, with a mobility aid or contact us to check out your plan!

Sign up with our online fund-raising partners GoodHub.

Email: rideandstride@ohct.org.uk



Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust
Supporting Oxfordshire's Churches since 1964

For full details including sponsorship forms, link to and list of churches www.ohct.org.uk/ride-stride

Newton Purcell

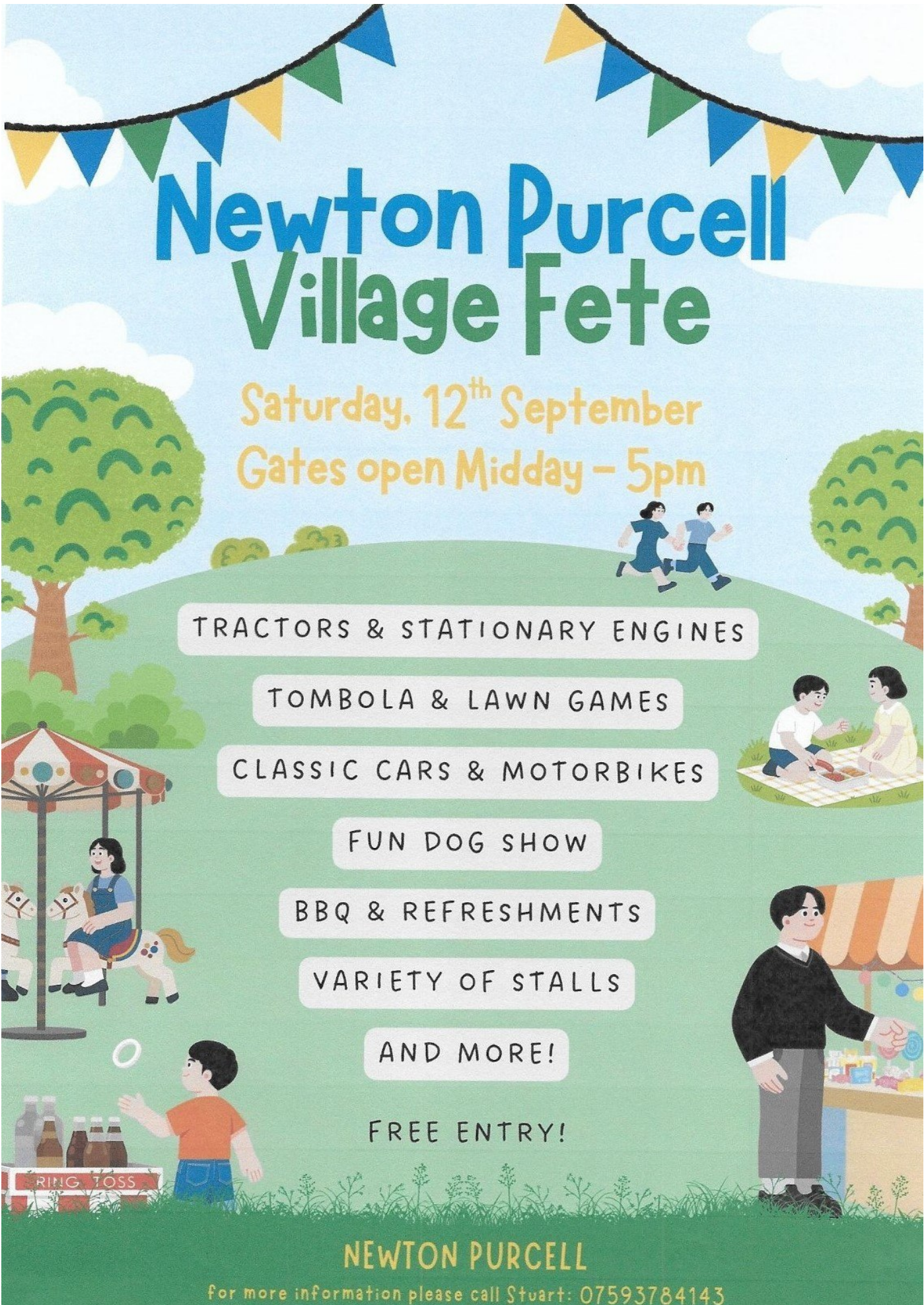


Saturday, 12th September
From 2pm

-
- 🐾 Pawfect Puppy (under 12 months)
 - 🐾 Best Rescue
 - 🐾 Cutest Crossbreed
 - 🐾 Gorgeous Girl
 - 🐾 Handsome Hound (boy dogs only)
 - 🐾 Golden Oldie (over 7 years)
 - 🐾 Best Trick
 - 🐾 Best in Show (1st place from the categories)

£2 per entry

£5 for 3 entries

A colorful illustration of a village fete. At the top, a string of blue, yellow, and green triangular bunting hangs against a light blue sky with white clouds. The title 'Newton Purcell Village Fete' is written in large, stylized blue and green letters. Below the title, the date and time 'Saturday, 12th September' and 'Gates open Midday - 5pm' are written in orange. The background features rolling green hills, two large green trees, and various fete activities: a boy and girl running on a hill, a boy and girl sitting on a picnic blanket, a girl on a carousel horse, a boy juggling, and a man at a stall. The text of the activities is in white boxes. At the bottom, the name 'NEWTON PURCELL' is in yellow, and contact information is in green.

Newton Purcell Village Fete

Saturday, 12th September
Gates open Midday – 5pm

TRACTORS & STATIONARY ENGINES

TOMBOLA & LAWN GAMES

CLASSIC CARS & MOTORBIKES

FUN DOG SHOW

BBQ & REFRESHMENTS

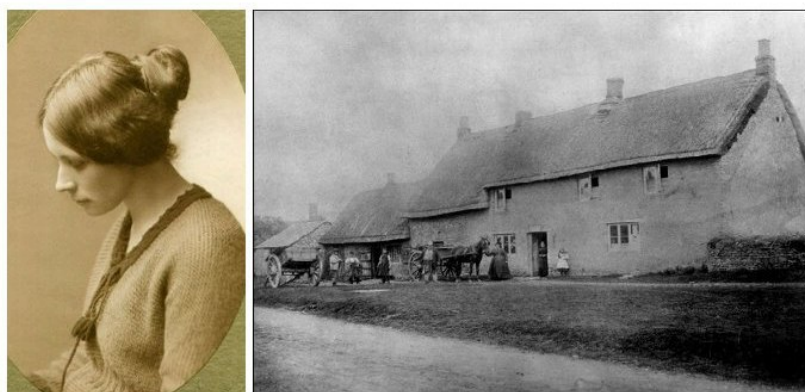
VARIETY OF STALLS

AND MORE!

FREE ENTRY!

NEWTON PURCELL

for more information please call Stuart: 07593784143



'FLORA'S FRINGFORD'

SATURDAY 19th

September

A day celebrating 150 years of Flora Thompson, famous local author of *Lark Rise to Candleford*

Flora Thompson was born in 1876 in nearby Juniper Hill. In 1891 aged 14, she came to Fringford and worked as an assistant at the village Post Office.

After writing articles and short stories for many decades, she published *Lark Rise* in 1939 followed by *Over to Candleford*, and in 1943, towards the end of her life, completed *Candleford Green*.

This event will mark her anniversary with an exhibition, photographic display, videos, lace making and spinning & weaving demonstrations, and a guided historical walk.

Visit the beautiful village church for a rare opportunity to view the processional banner of the Fringford Oddfellows Friendly Society.

Free event with donations welcome.

Exhibition & photographic display

**1.00 Guided walk
"meeting" the real residents who inspired 'Candleford Green' characters**

Short films & Audio Visuals to view

3.00 Q&A with local author and historian Martin Greenwood

Candleford Café for tea & cake

FRINGFORD VILLAGE HALL

The Green
Fringford
OX27 8DY

Saturday 19th September

11am to 4pm

A Harvest Home Celebration

Sunday 27th September

11am

Tile House Farm, Fimmere MK18 4AS

Harvest Festival followed by a wonderful harvest lunch!

(a big thank you to Peter and Buzzy Lepper for hosting again this year)



There is no charge for the lunch and no need to book - it would give us an idea of how many to cater for if you could let us know that you plan to come by emailing admin@shelswellparishes.info or phone/WhatsApp 07928 990569 (the number for the benefice office) but even if you don't do that, you can still stay for lunch!!

Any donations given will be divided between a charity to be selected by the Lepper family and the Girls' Primary School which we help to support in Wulu Diocese, South Sudan.

There will be some craft and toys available.

We will be in a well-ventilated barn— please dress appropriately!

There should be adequate parking at the farm.

There will also be individual parish Harvest Festivals in two of the churches in the benefice:

Sunday 11th October

11am Mixbury

11.30am Newton Purcell

Feel free to come along to both the joint benefice event and one in your own parish as well!



SAVE THE DATE! SHELSWELL BY THE SEA

Advance warning – the next 'Shelswell by the Sea' event will be on 12th and 13th October. Please let Penny Wood know if you would like to attend. You can come for the whole time, one day, or just a few hours.

penelope.wood@btopenworld.com 01869-277310

FLORA THOMPSON 150th ANNIVERSARY

LIVING AT LARK RISE

Twenty-two years ago my husband and I took early retirement from teaching and moved south to be nearer to our children and grandchildren. We both knew the trilogy 'Lark Rise to Candleford'; my husband had even studied it with adolescent boys when he taught at a local grammar school. Although we took the house for its large garden rather than for its literary links, we knew it would be interesting to live in a part of the country so well-documented by a nostalgic author. We were right.

Flora Thompson, née Timms, was not actually born in our cottage, but, we think, in the house of her mother's sister – quite a common practice in the 1870s. However, it was her home until she moved to Fringford at the age of 14 to work in the post office, and 'Lark Rise', the first of her famous trilogy, is based, (sometimes loosely, at others with pin-sharp accuracy), on those fourteen years.

In earlier times than ours, the house was known informally as 'The End House'. As there are only two houses - ours and 'Queenie's' – in the row, it is believed that there must have been other dwellings which have now disappeared. Originally, Lark Rise Cottage, which is the house name we chose, was built of the local rubble (undressed stone) and was a one up-one down, with a thatched roof. Now it has a slated roof, and at some point in the past the owners painted it white. A kitchen/dining room, downstairs bedroom, bathroom and hall were built on at various points in its history. Flora might recognise the bedroom and living room, the viciously twisting staircase and the fireplace which still had ham-smoking hooks in it when we arrived, but not the rest.



Flora Thompson as a young woman

Outside, the iron railings a few feet from the back door which feature in many photos of the house, are long gone, and the garden must have seen many changes in the 150 years since Flora's birth. We still have fruit trees – apples, pears, damsons, plums, greengages and mulberries. At the end of summer we are grateful for the extra produce – though not as dependent on it as the Timms family must have been. Every family in Juniper Hill (the real name of Lark Rise) was entitled to an allotment from a law passed to compensate for the enclosure of common land. Mr. Timms must have cultivated his, albeit with little enthusiasm, as he reputedly thought himself a cut above his neighbours! He was a stonemason and walked several miles into Brackley and back every day for work. Few people now do that walk on a regular basis, as the A43 is a roaring racetrack and the route through the fields no great alternative in wet weather.

The allotments are still on the edge of the hamlet, supporting fruit trees, vegetables, hens and bees, even, from time to time, sheep. This part of Oxfordshire was notorious for having the lowest agricultural wages in the country, but many of the current inhabitants are professionals and the average standard of living would no doubt seem very high to Flora's contemporaries. Whereas families of six and above were once crammed into tiny cottages, larger properties with all mod cons now often house one retired couple. When houses were bursting at the seams it was the practice to send out at least one child to the house of grandparents to ease sleeping arrangements.

Entertainment as described in 'Lark Rise to Candleford' was usually home-made, from singing in the pub (now a private house) to May Queen and harvest feasts. The wealth of tv, radio, cinema, not to mention WhatsApp and Tik Tok would be unimaginable to children who might get to see one lantern-slide show a year. Many people would lament the fading of community spirit which affluence has brought. In Juniper

Hill and its mother village Cottisford, though, there are still annual picnics and bonfires on the playing field, coffee mornings and Snowdrop Sundays, so a sense of togetherness has not altogether vanished.

Flora and her siblings went to school in Cottisford. At the bottom of the garden of Lark Rise Cottage is the field referred to as Lark Rise in old maps, and it was across this field that the children would walk as an alternative to the lanes. Across this field was the 'bier path', where people who had died in Juniper Hill would be carried for burial in Cottisford churchyard. Mr and Mrs Timms, Flora's parents, are buried there, and, no doubt, any siblings who died at an early age. We do not know their exact location, just that they are there, somewhere, under the snowdrops and celandines.

Over the pew which may have been the Timms' usual seat on a Sunday there is a memorial plaque to war dead of the village and its hamlet, and it includes the name of Flora's brother Edwin, (Edmund in the trilogy), who died in the First World War. Another brother who served in that conflict was Frank, who emigrated to Australia post-war with his wife, and made a success of fruit farming. The lane leading to their farm is called Timms Lane. We have corresponded with one of his nephews – and it was interesting to realise that there are still echoes of Flora and her family, not just in Juniper Hill, Cottisford and Fringford and, from later in her life, Hampshire.

The house in Cottisford called The Old School is where Flora and her siblings were educated. It has been modernised and added to considerably, but the main schoolroom still has a high beamed ceiling. Flora left at 14 to work in the post office at Fringford, whereas some pupils would have left at 12 if they could pass the Labour exam. Nowadays children continue in education to 18 and there are far more employment options available if employees can travel to neighbouring towns.

When we arrived here in 2004 the roads were mostly good. Now they are so full of holes and trenches that slalom driving has become the norm on some stretches. The unmade roads that thread between the majority of houses in Juniper Hill still become miniature canals in persistent wet weather. No wonder many women wore pattens in Flora's childhood to keep their skirts out of the mire!

We have found over our years here, that interest in the life and works of Flora Thompson is very much alive. We have entertained study groups, local historians, authors, actors and film makers. People have come from Malaysia, Japan, Canada and South America, as well as from all parts of Britain, to see where she once lived. One lady had translated 'Lark Rise to Candleford' into Japanese and left us a copy of the book! On one occasion we put up a marquee for a book launch for Martin Greenwood, author of several books on the local area, who has regularly taken parties of enthusiasts on walks around spots connected with Flora. He, along with Ted and Joan Flaxman, researched many aspects of her life and produced a number of useful books on the subject. Christine Bloxham, Gillian Lindsay and Owen Smith, other writers about Flora have visited several times. When interest was stimulated by the tv adaptation of the trilogy several members of the cast visited and we were interviewed for radio, television and local newspapers.

What a pity that Flora Thompson never knew how enduring her writings would be, but then, as a reputedly shy and retiring person, she might not have enjoyed so much publicity. Were she, by some miracle of time travel, to visit Juniper Hill and Cottisford, there is much that would surprise her, but she would still find a hamlet and its mother village like islands in a sea of wheat, rapeseed and field beans and fields noisy with larks in the summer.

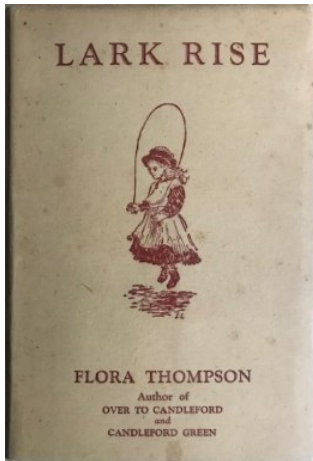
Judith Harvey, February 2026

FLORA THOMPSON'S LITERARY ACHIEVEMENT

Fringford in the 19th century is now forever associated with Flora Thompson's *Lark Rise to Candleford*. It was originally published by Oxford University Press (OUP) as three separate books; *Lark Rise* (1939), *Over to Candleford* (1941) and *Candleford Green* (1943) and as a trilogy in 1945.

In the books, *Laura* (Flora herself) recalls her childhood in the hamlet of *Lark Rise* (Juniper Hill) and at school in *Fordlow* (Cottisford) before moving to *Candleford Green* (Fringford), where she worked in the sub-post office from 1891 to 1897.

It is a vivid picture of village life at the end of the 19th century and uniquely, it was written by a 'child of poverty' who was able to avoid any sense of bitterness against the squire and his class. In many respects village life had changed very little in the decades before 1876 when Flora was born. Deference to those above you was the norm and 'every member of the community knew his or her place and few wished to change it.' It was a defining moment just before the agricultural depressions of the 1870s and 1890s and before the impact of major changes in health, housing and education.



Dustjacket of an early edition of Lark Rise

It was most unusual for the OUP to publish such works as they did not deal in fiction. The initial run of 5,000 copies of the *Lark Rise* trilogy in 1945 was sold prior to publication. The book also received a magnificent testimonial from the publisher Sir Humphrey Milford. He considered that the two most important books he had published in his twenty two years at the Press were Arnold Toynbee's *Study of History* and Flora Thompson's *Lark Rise to Candleford*.

Keith Dewhurst's play *Lark Rise* has been staged many times since the 1970s. Later it was made into a long-running BBC series from 2008 to 2010. This has contributed to a significant rise in the number of visitors to Fringford and what may now be called *Lark Rise Country*. Despite Flora's fame there had never been any memorial to her years in the village, 1891-97. Not before time on 4th July 2010 at a special service in Fringford church, Linda Bassett (*Queenie* in the BBC series) unveiled a commemorative plaque.

Martin Greenwood

The series of articles by Martin Greenwood about Fringford characters of the 1890s (see Shelswell News March 2026 - September 2026) is now available from the author as a booklet.

..o..O. ROUND THE BENEFICE IN JULY AND AUGUST .O..o..

FOOD FOR THOUGHT SERVICE ON 19th JULY

On Sunday, the 19th July we met for breakfast at 10.00 am. There was a variety of items to choose from and after we had made our selection we made our way to the tables set up for the service, where we could browse the leaflets and other information put out for us. The service was led by Ali, who welcomed us all.

Rena read a piece from John Chapter 4 Verses 1 to 42 known by the title "The Samaritan woman at Jacob's well". Jesus was travelling with his disciples from Judea towards Galilee; the fastest route would take them directly through Samaria. It wasn't that simple, Jesus was a Jew, and Jews and Samaritans were enemies, they hated each other. That didn't deter Jesus, he carried on to Jacob's Well and as he sat there a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink" and she replied "How can you ask me for a drink? Jews don't associate with Samaritans." He said to her "if you knew the gift of God and asked him he would have given you living water." The woman said, "The well is very deep, where can you get this living water?" Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks the water from the well will be thirsty again, but with the water I give them, they will never be thirsty again. Indeed the water I give them, will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming and drawing water." You can read this fascinating story in John Chapter 4 Verses 10 to 15.

Prayers were then read by different members of the congregation. Flora wasn't with us to play the organ so we had to rely on YouTube for the hymns. Ali then said prayers for all the churches in our Benefice and for people known to us. Special prayers were said for the family of the late Ronald Reynold and also for the extended family of the late Pat Cherry. We ended the service with the Lord's prayer.

Thank you to Ali for leading the service and to all who prepared the breakfast.

Rena Andrews

CONNECT SERVICE ON 2nd AUGUST

Kelly began the service by welcoming our guest speaker, Dennis Niziol, Police Chaplain for Bicester and retired Pentecostal minister. The reading was Matthew 14: 13-21, the miracle of the five loaves and two fishes.

Dennis' talk was an inspirational combination of the Gospel reading and his own life story. He managed to weave them both together in a way that made the listener feel at ease and thirsty to hear more. Dennis accompanied 3 of the 4 songs with his guitar, which made them really come alive and made a refreshing change.

After the service refreshments were served, tea, coffee and delicious cake from Flora and Michelle. Dennis was presented with a thank you Victoria sponge. He then managed to circulate and have a chat with everyone before leaving. Thank you, Dennis.

If you would like to know about Connect, then why not come along to our next service and find out.

**Next Connect Service: Sunday 6th September, 10.45am
Stoke Lyne Church**

Ali Miller

MIDWEEK COMMUNION AND LUNCH ON 6th AUGUST

Everyone helped to lay the tables for lunch before going to the chairs set for the service at the front of the church. The Reverend Liz Welters officiated and began by welcoming all. She followed this by prayers for those across the world who are suffering in many ways. there are so many challenges, be it drought, starvation, earthquakes, wars and famines and now terrible fires across Europe where people are losing their lives and their homes. She also prayed for King Charles and family, our government, people who have been bereaved, also those known to us who are ill and suffering, and also the family of the late Pat Cherry of this village that they may find comfort in prayer.

We had a reading from the Old Testament Daniel chapter 7. 9- 10 and 13-14 read by Ali Miller on Daniel's Vision. This was followed by the Gospel reading Luke chapter 9. 28-36 read by Rena Andrews on the Transfiguration. Liz then gave a reflection on both readings.

Liz then prepared the table for communion, assisted by Ali. The Midweek Communion service is a lovely service for those who are unable to stay for the long communion services.

We then moved to the tables set for a lovely salad lunch with various choices of meats fish cheese and eggs with rolls and different chutneys etc. followed by a choice of puddings.

Thankyou Liz for keeping the Midweek Communion, also thank you to those who prepared food and helped with clearing away. There will be no Midweek Communion and Soup Lunch in September due to the church being used as a polling station for the local county council election on 3rd September.

Rena Andrews

REGISTRY

Funeral

Jeffrey Raymond Wakefield

14th May 1931 - 22nd July 2026

St Mary and St Edburga, Stratton Audley

Jeff, as he was known to family and friends, moved to Stratton Audley with his wife Audrey soon after the millennium. In no time at all they became popular members of the community and regular members of the congregation at the village church, Jeff joining the roster of regular readers.

Jeff was born in Nottingham in May 1931 and while still at primary school inherited a violin from a professional musician in the family who was emigrating to Australia. He received “sixpenny” lessons from a local teacher and quickly showed exceptional talent for music and a natural aptitude for the instrument.

In his late teens he won a scholarship to the Royal College of Music in London, a course of study interrupted by National Service in the Royal Signals. After basic training he joined the regimental orchestra as leader, an experience that laid the foundation for his long and distinguished career in the London Symphony and BBC Symphony Orchestras. It was at the BBC that he met, fell in love with and eventually married Audrey.



Jeff and Audrey Wakefield

They were inseparable, gave generously of their time and talent, and as evidenced by the many tributes following Jeff's death, were particularly welcoming to and supportive of young musicians.

Jeff died peacefully on 22 July 2026 at Launton Grange Care Home.



CLUB NEWS



SHELSWELL WI



August saw the members of Shelswell meet a local speaker Janine Kilroe. Janine's talk The History and Future of British Piers was very interesting and enhanced with her beautiful photography. Janine has a host of talks and we look forward to welcoming her back in the future. This month instead of our usual swap table we collected items for the Bicester Hygiene Bank. Our monthly walk was around the canal and fields between Lower Heyford and Steeple Aston.

Unfortunately due to a local by-election we have had to change both the date and the speaker for our September meeting. We will now be meeting on Thursday 10 September in Fringford village hall and our speaker will be Neil Jacobs from 3B's Radio. Our original speaker has been rearranged for next years programme.

In October we return to our usual slot and welcome back Gillian Cane who will be presenting her talk - A Girls Life in The Army.

Shelswell WI provides a varied programme which covers all aspects and our monthly meetings are enhanced with coffee meet ups and monthly walks. Alongside our local activities we also have all the trips, courses, lectures and online learning provided by both our local federation and national. Why not come and join us we would love to meet you. For more information contact Sandra Bickmore at sandrambickmore@gmail.com

SHELSWELL READING GROUP

The Shelswell Reading group is a great opportunity to read a variety of books, from best sellers to classics and everything in between. If you are not sure about joining, why not come along for a meeting to meet the group and see what we are about. No need to have read the book for that month - just come along and meet all of us and listen in. If you are interested, please let Jane Birnage know - janebirnage@icloud.com 07770 220605.

Our next meetings are:

- Monday 21st September, 7.30 pm (Venue TBC)
- Wednesday 21st October (Venue TBC)

Our next book is '**Yesteryear**' by Caro Claire Burke

The **Colony** by Annika Norlin certainly provided us with lots of discussion and themes. It was a very unusual book, extremely well translated from Norwegian. Each character was well drawn, flawed and believable, especially Joseph and their backstories were well crafted and interesting. The burnout descriptions resonated with many of the group, and the descriptions of the forest and lakes were compelling. There were themes of control, love, revenge and escape. Each character seemed to have run away from something and initially found solace in the Colony. It was clear however that the Colony was not sustainable (although we were surprised it lasted 17 years), and whilst the reference to ant colonies, with each person/group having a specific role was interesting, it was clear that a human colony, isolated from the world, with emotions such as jealousy, lust, control, would fail.

There were questions – was it a cult? How could it really have sustained itself for so long without a doctor etc? How did the authorities not find it? How did the mother really die? How did breakdown of social norms affect the people – and the value or otherwise of social norms... And each question prompted great discussions and revelations. Whilst it took some of us a while to get into it (the book started a little slowly, with multiple characters to get to grips with), it picked up the pace and was a good overall read (9/10 rating from some of us).

Other books discussed:

Fairytale – Stephen King
 Atalanta – Jennifer Saint
 Fourth Wing Series by Rebecca Yarros
 Agrippa - Robert Harris
 The Great Fire – Shirley Hazard



To watch:

The Oddessy - Film
 Sheep Detectives – Amazon Prime

Jane Birnage

SHELSWELL POETRY APPRECIATION GROUP

The theme for August was Magic. We began with the words to the song ***The Ghosts' High Noon*** from The Gilbert (1836-1911) and Sullivan comic opera Ruddigore, and also read the trio from Act 2 of ***The Sorcerer***, by the same writers.

The Listeners by Walter De La Mare (1873-56) is a schoolroom favourite but adults too can enjoy his creation of unease in the reader. This was followed by the poem ***La Belle Dame Sans Merci*** by John Keats (1795-1821) which appealed through its sombre Romanticism. ***The Lady of Shalott*** by Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-92) was inspired by an Arthurian legend and involves a deadly curse. Both poems were a reaction to the 'modern world' of their time and a product of the huge interest which many 19th century writers took in an imagined past.

Magic to Do by Stephen Schwarz (extant) is a song from the musical Pippin, a historical fantasy. Another poem by an American, Chris Tusa (extant) is ***Marie Laveau Talks About Magic***. She was a woman who was known as the Voodoo Queen of New Orleans and Tusa gives her a wry, cynical voice. Another enchantress, Circe, who turned Odysseus's men into animals, is given human longings by Hilda Doolittle (1886-1961) in ***Circe***.

Wilfred Owen (1893-1918) is most famous for his war poems, but a less well-known one, ***A New Heaven*** seems to be invoking the power of magic in creating dignity in death, and this poem foreshadows his ***Anthem for Doomed Youth***.

Perhaps the darkest poem on the subject of magic was ***The Hare as Witch Animal*** by David Harsent (extant). He takes on the persona of a witch's familiar – a hare, which escapes the fate of the witch herself. Anne Sexton (1928-74) finds an affinity with witches in herself in ***Her Kind***, whereas the woman in ***Love and Black Magic*** by Robert Graves (1895-1985), a sorcerer's apprentice, is ready to renounce her powers in return for human love. William Shakespeare (1564-1616) may not have actually written the witches' chant from Act 3 of ***Macbeth***, but whichever colleague he entrusted it to came up with a disgusting recipe for an evil spell!

The Wind on the Hills by Dora Stigerson (1866-1918) warns us that the 'hills of Erin' are a dangerous place, peopled as they are by inhabitants of a magical world, and **The Witch** by Mary Elizabeth Coleridge (1861-1907) takes on the voice of someone who took in a creature from a nether world and lived to regret it. The magical qualities of nature are explored in **Bluebells** by David Wood (extant) and **Nature's Spell** by Maya Anthony (extant) and entwined with the narrative in **Magic** by Louis Untermeyer (1885-1977) and **The Fairies** by William Allingham (1824-89). In this poem the Irish countryside harbours malevolent creatures whose magic is hostile to humans.

If you would like to join us contact me on 01869 811994 or at judith.harvey@live.co.uk

Judith Harvey

REPORTS FROM THE PARISHES

Cottisford and Juniper Hill

St Mary the Virgin

CHURCHWARDEN: Charles Jackson, Cottisford House, Cottisford
TREASURER: David Barnes

Tel 01280 848247
Tel 07856822030

PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Flora Skinner
MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Sandra Bickmore, Thatch End, Juniper Hill

Tel: 01869 277366
sandrambickmore@gmail.com

CHURCH SERVICES

Tuesday 1st September 7.30 pm Induction and Installation of Revd Dr Claire Maxim as our new Rector, St Mary and St Edburga, Stratton Audley
Sunday 6th September 9.15 am Holy Communion (CW)
Sunday 20th September 10.45 am Holy Communion (BCP)

COTTISFORD AND JUNIPER HILL SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Our next event will be Wine and Nibbles on Friday 18 September 7-9pm in Cottisford Church. Look out for the posters and posts on social media to find out more.

Coming up in the autumn a coffee morning - watch this space.

We hope that you are all enjoying your summer.

Finmere

St Michael and All Angels

CHURCHWARDEN: Michelle Myers, 4 White Houses, Mere Road, Finmere
TREASURER: Peter Goss, 6 Stable Close Finmere
PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Katherine Grimston, The Old Rectory, Finmere
MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Paul Nash Email: paan63@yahoo.co.uk

Tel: 07927 393657
Tel: 07941 322 840
Tel: 01280 848364
Tel 01280 848268

CHURCH SERVICES

Tuesday 1st September 7.30 pm Induction and Installation of Revd Dr Claire Maxim as our new Rector, St Mary and St Edburga, Stratton Audley
Sunday 20th September 9.15 am Holy Communion
Sunday 27th September 11 am Harvest Home with lunch at Tile Farm, Finmere

Finmere Village Hall



The village hall is available for hire. Facilities include AV system with a new projector and larger screen, plus sound system. Fitted kitchen, Meeting room, Patio doors onto the children's play area and enlarged storage spaces for regular users. WiFi facilities are available. For all hall booking enquiries, please visit www.myfinmere.com/villagehall



Allotments

At the time of writing, there does not seem to much rain in the forecast. The more considered 'desirable' plants are being kept alive through frequent watering and some are being left to fend for themselves.

It seems as though the rabbit population is getting increasingly desperate for food and are now attacking anything remotely green. There is possibly a relevant paragraph in the Finmere Poor's Plot deeds (circa 1600s) that would indicate that rabbits have long been a problem. The para states as follows

'... provided also that if any conies [rabbits] shall burrow in the said plot, andor his wardens shall not upon a week's notice destroy the burrows and kill the conies'

Not quite sure if the mentioned 'weeks notice' is to be given to the rabbits, but if so, then that all sounds a bit 'Watership Down' !!



On a more positive note, we also welcome some new allotment holders, meaning that all plots are now taken.

Our waiting list is open., please visit www.myfinmere.com/poorsplot and select the enquiry link.

Jean



THE (FINMERE) FIRKIN

the village pop up pub

FIRST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH

Come and catch up with friends and neighbours. Families welcome!

**Licensed bar
and food van**

**FINMERE VILLAGE HALL
6-10PM**

Save the date



They've performed on the West End, on Broadway
and on Britain's Got Talent.

They've toured Japan, the US, China and India.

And now ... they're coming to Finmere!

OUT OF THE BLUE

WILL BE PERFORMING AT FINMERE CHURCH
ON SATURDAY 17TH OCTOBER IN THE EVENING.

Refreshments afterwards in the Village Hall.

More information coming soon!



Please come along and support Finmere's Tuesday Teas

If you are at home in the day, please pop into the Village Hall, 2nd Tuesday of the month

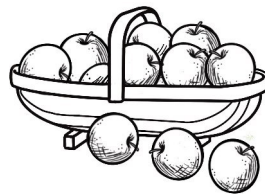
Tuesday 8th September
2 - 4 pm

Everyone welcome – no charge

We would love to grow the numbers so please bring a friend!

If you need transport, please contact Jo (07974 740312) or Katherine (07770 804025)

If anyone would like to help out, we need help serving refreshments, setting out tables, providing lifts and BAKING CAKES! Your baking costs can be reimbursed - No need to volunteer every month, just help when you can...



Some Finmere related links:

Finmere facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/finmereandlittletingewick/>

Shelswell Parishes website at – www.shelswellparishes.info/finmere

Finmere Parish Council website at – www.finmerepc.org

Village hall news at – www.myfinmere.com

Finmere Poor's Plot – www.myfinmere.com/poorsplot

Old Finmere history website – www.myfinmere.com/history

Finmere on Wikipedia - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finmereipedia>

Finmere Primary School - www.finmere.oxon.sch.uk

Fringford

St Michael and All Angels

CHURCHWARDEN: Max Todd 5, The Manor, Fringford
 TREASURER: Christina McCullagh, 5 Crosslands, Fringford
 PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER Penny Wood, as below
 MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Penny Wood, 8 Crosslands, Fringford
 VILLAGE HALL CORRESPONDENT: Christine Underwood
 WEBSITE www.fringford.info

Tel 07936 760684
 Tel 07867 515207

Tel 01869 277310
 Tel 01869 278949

ST MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS, SERVICES & EVENTS

SERVICES

- Tuesday 1st September 7.30 pm Induction and Installation of Revd Dr Claire Maxim as our new Rector, St Mary and St Edburga, Stratton Audley
- Sunday 6 September – 10.45am Morning Service
- Sunday 9 September – 6.00pm Evening Communion
- Sunday 20 September – 10.45 **Book of Common Prayer Matins**, marking the **'Flora's Fringford'** event – a service with which Flora would have been very familiar.
- Sunday 27 September – 11.00am – **Joint Benefice Harvest Home Celebration**, with lunch, at Tile House Farm, Finmere MK18 4AS.

To find out the times and places of other services on Sundays, please check the back cover of the *Shelswell News*, the Benefice website www.shelswellparishes.info, the noticeboard at the church, or ring the Benefice office (07928 990569). You will always be welcome in our other parishes.

LOOKING AHEAD - FUTURE EVENTS

Spanish Wine-tasting Evening on Friday 4 September – see the poster on page 6.

Ride and Stride for Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust (poster on page 9). This event will be on **Saturday 12 September**. Would you get sponsored to cycle, or walk, for OHCT and your local parish church? For information, and forms, contact Penny [penelope.wood@btopenworld.com]

"Flora's Fringford" (see side bar) event on Saturday 19th September when there will be events in Fringford Village Hall and Cottisford Church to mark 150 years since the birth of Flora Thompson.

Greetings Cards

Packs of greeting cards (6 cards for £3) available for purchase. They feature 6 photographs of the church both in and outside. Ring Christina McCullagh on 07867 515207.

Fringford Church 100 Club

Numbers cost £3 a month (£36 annually) Payment by BACS, cheque or cash. Draw each month for 50% of the income divided amongst 3 winners: at the moment 1st prize £71, 2nd £42, 3rd £28. You can still sign up to the 100 Club. Contact Christina McCullagh to register - **07867 515207**. The draw takes place monthly at the Village Coffee Morning.

Exhibition & photographic display

1.00 Guided walk "meeting" the real residents who inspired 'Candleford Green' characters

Short films & Audio Visuals to view

3.00 Q&A with local author and historian Martin Greenwood

Candleford Café for tea & cake

FRINGFORD VILLAGE HALL

The Green
 Fringford
 OX27 8DY

Saturday 19th September

11am to 4pm

Little Lambs Babies & Toddler Group

Every Wednesday during term time in Stratton Audley Church. Times are: from 10.00am to 11.30am. Not **usually** during holidays and half term. Just come along. If you need information in the meantime, email admin@shelswellparishes.info

FRINGFORD VILLAGE COFFEE MORNING

Village Coffee Mornings usually take place on the third Monday of each month. In September we will meet on Monday 21st. Drop by for a coffee/tea and a chat any time between 10.30 am and 12 noon, in the Chinnery Room at the Village Hall. Contact Penny on 277310 if you want more information.



COME & JOIN US AT 'SEWCIAL'

We enjoy any type of craft and a natter getting together to relax and enjoy each other's company.

Some of us knit, crochet, embroider, quilt, sew.

Please come and join us for tea and chat too, crafts not essential.

We get together once a month,
either on a Wednesday evening at 7 – 9pm
or Sunday afternoon at 3 – 5pm
We meet in the Chinnery Room or the Fringford Village Hall.

Our next sessions for 2026 are:

Wednesday September 16th

Sunday October 18th

Wednesday November 18th

Sunday December 13th

Everyone welcome

No need to book – just come and join us!

If you would like information, please email Irene ireneethomas@btinternet.com

Regular Activities held in Fringford Village Hall

To find out more or book a place, please contact the hirer direct.	
Weekly Activities	Monthly Activities
FS Dance Wednesday (term time) After school classes BALLET • TAP • MODERN • STREET leah.fsd@gmail.com or 07885827592	Village Coffee Morning All ages welcome Third Monday in the month - Chinnery Room Drop in anytime between 10.30 am and noon Penny Wood 01869 277310
Parish Council Meeting All villagers welcome Third Monday in the month 7.45pm Contact 01844 237766 or fringford.parishclerk@gmail.com	New! Table Tennis 4 All All welcome Monday evening 7 – 8.30pm Contact Tony Marshall tony.marshall18@gmail.com 07966522667
Just Puppies Puppy Training Tuesday evening, Sunday afternoon – various classes Contact Kerri 07720 891489 www.justpuppies.training	Fringford Yoga Wednesday morning 9.30am – 11am Carolyn White 07763 817078
Shelswell WI First Thursday of the month 7.30pm Contact Sandra Bickmore 07961 828571	Fringford Sewcial Sew and Chat! All welcome Monthly Wednesday from 7pm Or Sunday from 3pm Contact Irene at ireneethomas@btinternet.com
Pilates Thursday at 10.00am natashaflowerspilates@gmail.com or 07545 525820	Village Hall Team Meeting Please contact for dates Open meetings – all welcome fringford.hall@gmail.com or 07936 879175
To book the hall for your own event, please go to www.fringford.info/village hall , how to book Here you will find all the information you will need to book on-line. For any other queries please phone or text 07936 879175 or email: fringford.hall@gmail.com	

Hardwick St Mary the Virgin

CHURCHWARDEN: David Barnes
 TREASURER: David Barnes
 PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Flora Skinner
 MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Maddi Bindon, 8 Hardwick

Tel 07856822030
 Tel 07856822030
 Tel: 01869 277366
 Tel 07769774144

CHURCH SERVICES

Tuesday 1st September 7.30 pm Induction and Installation of Revd Dr Claire Maxim as our new Rector, St Mary and St Edburga, Stratton Audley
 Sunday 4th October 9.15 am Holy Communion

Pilgrim Pathways

Why not walk the Hethe to Hardwick to Cottisford to Hethe "Pilgrim Pathway". This 4-mile circular route takes in the C of E churches of each of these villages as well as Holy Trinity, Hethe's RC church. You can start and end your walk at any point on the route, which takes in some glorious North Oxfordshire countryside. Pick up a free brochure outlining the route from any of the churches or contact David Barnes (07856822030), who can send you one.

Hardwick Church guidebook

The guidebook for Hardwick church and the parish of Hardwick with Tusmore is available to collect from the church or contact David Barnes (07856822030), who can send one to you. This 44-page booklet has over 20 colour photos and provides a fascinating insight into the features and history of Hardwick church, the village and the Tusmore Estate. We ask that you make a minimum donation of £5 to church funds.

Hethe St Edmund and St George

CHURCHWARDEN: Flora Skinner, Fox Hollow, 2 Hardwick Road, Hethe
 TREASURER: Mike Green, Greenhill Cottage, Main Street, Hethe
 PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Flora Skinner as above
 MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Mike Green as above
 WEBSITE: www.hethe.org

Tel 01869 277366
 Tel 01869 278166
 Tel 01869 278166

If you have any news or a village event to publicise, please send the details to me, where possible with a photo, and if suitable I will add them to next month's news and include them on the village web site.

ST EDMUND & ST GEORGE CHURCH



“All churches need friends,
and they are out there ready to be made”

Church Services and Events

Good news - the church is now open for everyone to look around our historic place of worship and take time for quiet prayer and contemplation. The varied selection of books is now easier to access, so please take a look and help yourself to any which you wish to read.

“Churches have an amazing story to tell. They are some of our most beautiful and historically important places – they literally hold the history of this country. Just as importantly they are there day-in day-out, providing vital help to local people and communities and are available whenever they are needed.”

Canon Ann Easter

From the National Churches Trust Annual Review 2025-2026

The five yearly inspection has been completed by our Church Architect and at the time of writing this article we were awaiting the results.

Services are listed on the back page but remember that you will always be welcome at services in any of the other churches in the benefice, or if you are away from the village, you can find a nearby service through the web site <https://www.achurchnearyou.com>.

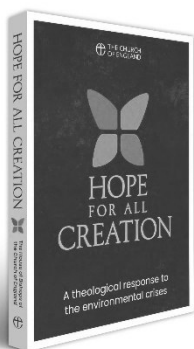
Ride & Stride. Saturday 12th September.

“Ride + Stride is the single largest source of income for many Historic Churches Trusts enabling them to make Grants to places of Christian worship. Taking place on the 2nd Saturday of September the funds raised can be split between the nominated Trust and the participants chosen church or chapel.”

Our church will be greeting those taking part, so we hope to see you then - there could be cake available to sustain you on your travels! If you would like to take the opportunity to help the church, we need more volunteers to meet and greet, in hourly sessions. Please let Mike know if you are available.



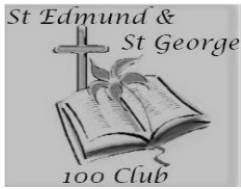
Hope for all Creation



A new landmark teaching document was endorsed by General Synod in July, that sets out a theological response to the environmental crises. The document argues that care for creation is not an optional concern but a core part of Christian discipleship and mission. It presents environmental action as an expression of hope rooted in God's purposes for creation.

For more information go to <https://mailchi.mp/oxford.anglican.org/care-for-creation>

Did you know that in April 2026 for the first time wind and solar generated more electricity than gas worldwide? A reason to celebrate!



St Edmund & St George 100 Club

Results of the 93rd draw

1st Prize No 14 Hamish McCorquodale
2nd Prize No 50 Nicky Beddall
3rd Prize No 57 Frazer Morgan

Many thanks to our members,
Hethe PCC

Welcome to the new members of the 100 Club and congratulations to the winners in the last draw. If you would like to join, or request additional numbers, please contact Helen Pritchard.

The next regular PCC Meeting is on Wednesday 14th October starting at 1.30pm at Old Montague Barn, The Green.

Scan our QR Code if you wish to contribute to the cost of running and maintaining the church. Alternatively, there are copies of the Parish Giving Scheme Gift Form in the church or go to the Parish Giving web site at <https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/hethe-st-edmund-st-george-bicester/>.



HETHE COMMUNITY ACTIVITY



The village now has a kick wall on the playing field which has been 100% funded by the National Lottery.

Please encourage any children to use the kick wall - not the village hall!

Hethe and District Darby & Joan Club

Meeting at Hethe Village Hall on the third Tuesday of the month, 2-4pm
and
holding a Bingo Night at Hethe Village Hall every third Saturday of the month, 7.30pm

Membership £15 p.a.
New members welcome.

Contact: Sheila Heydon 07455 185201



Hethe Community Coffee Morning's Macmillan Fund Raiser

**Monday September 14th 10-12 noon
at the Village Hall**

Cake & Produce Stall, Games and Raffle
plus the Hethe 100 Club draw.



Parish Council. The next meeting of the council will take place on Tuesday 13th October, starting at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Pop-up Pub. Friday 4th September in the Village Hall, from 7.00 to 10.00pm. Everyone welcome. Bring your own drinks of choice, snacks, and games!

Local Bus Service



Monday to Saturday - pick up at Hethe War Memorial at 07.39, 10.54, 13.42 and 15.42. Last bus departs Bicester at 17.50 to arrive in Hethe at 18.12. Note that this service does not operate on Bank Holidays.

For **Village Hall bookings**, please contact Flora, the Village Hall Booking Secretary, on 01869 277366 fjskinner@hotmail.co.uk.



The Hardwick Road Allotments. The contact for the allotments is Yvonne Thomas, 3 Wilson Way, Caversfield, OX27 8FB, tel 243536 or 07773065890. The agents are Carter Jonas for the Oxford Diocese.

Keep up to date with what is happening in the village through:

Our village web site (courtesy of the Parish Council): <https://www.hethe.org/>

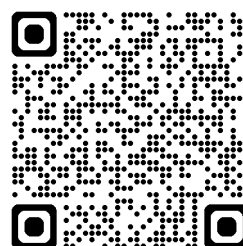
Facebook Pages:

Community Spirit of the Hethens

Hethe Community

Hethe Allotments

The Next Door App - <https://nextdoor.co.uk/>



Mixbury All Saints

CHURCHWARDENS: Martin Ayres, Northwell Farm, Finmere
Alec Howard, Middlestead, Mixbury
TREASURER: David Mitchell. 2 Town Farm, Mixbury
PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER Anna Howard
MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Sue Goodman

Tel 07899 792552
Tel 01280 848295
Tel 01280 847769
Tel 01280 848295
Tel 01280 848002

pasgoodman551@gmail.com

If you have any news articles for the Parish Magazine please do not forget to let your Magazine Correspondent know in good time – deadline dates are normally found on the inside cover of the Shelswell News. Sue Goodman; email: pasgoodman551@gmail.com or telephone: 01280 848002.

CHURCH SERVICES

Tuesday 1st September 7.30 pm Induction and Installation of Revd Dr Claire Maxim as our new Rector, St Mary and St Edburga, Stratton Audley
Sunday 13th September 9.15 am Mixbury Half Hour

MIXBURY CHURCH FLOWER ROTA

September	Philippa Brown
October	Morag Westworth
	Harvest festival – everyone
November	Fi Bairstow
December	Carol service and Christmas - everyone
Reserve	Sam Lockwood

Thank you to everyone for doing church flowers. It's much appreciated.

If anyone wishes to be added or removed from the list, please get in touch with Eryl on 07840 464541.



MIXBURY CHURCH CLEANING ROTA 2026

As ever, a big thank you to the team of cleaning volunteers who keep the church clean and tidy.

We are still looking for someone new to step up and take on the admin for this necessary and important role.

This message goes out to the wider Mixbury community and not just those who currently give of their time. It would be particularly appropriate if someone new to the village and / or from the younger generation were to volunteer. Anyone prepared to take on this role, please let the Churchwarden know.

If anyone else would like to help with cleaning, we would be very grateful for extra volunteers. This would help to lighten the load on otherwise busy people. The job only requires a couple of hours simple cleaning in your allotted month, and if you can find a partner or join a group of two to make groups of three, it can be a pleasant way to involve yourself in the village and familiarise yourself with our beautiful church.

SEPTEMBER Giovanna Holdcroft and Tanya Howroyd
OCTOBER Emma Bray and Viv Williams
NOVEMBER Alison Bailey, Pam Burrill and Jules Channon
DECEMBER Gail Bellingham, Mel Soar & Sue Bosher

JUNE ROSEMARY BODDINGTON (FORMERLY SLOUGH) 20.9.1929 TO 14.06.2026



The funeral was held on Monday 20th July 2026 at Banbury Crematorium, attended by neighbours, friends and family of June Boddington who had lived in the village since 1978. June had three children (Martin, Robin and Judith), 8 grandchildren, 9 great grandchildren and 3 great great grandchildren!

Martin and Robin gave the following wonderful eulogy and insight into the character of June at her funeral:

"Mum had a long and mostly happy life. She was with us for nearly 97 years, half of it spent in the forever home she loved, having bought it with Dad (Ron) back in 1978 - And despite a couple of hospital visits in May & June, she died peacefully at home, something that was very important to her.

In March 1978, they moved to a new house in Mixbury, on the edge of Oxfordshire, not too far from Dad's office in Aylesbury, but trauma followed with Dad's fatal car accident in July the same year. Mum, at 48, was absolutely distraught to lose the love of her life, and her distress was worsened as her friends were mostly in the Northchurch/Berkhamsted area. But her incredible resilience helped her to stay in Mixbury, make new friends and build a new life. We were delighted when a few years later she found love again and in June 1983 she married John Boddington an old school friend of both Mum and Dad. John moved into Mixbury with Mum and they bought a fabulous holiday cottage near to where they'd honeymooned in Chagford on Dartmoor. As our family grew we had many great holidays there, some with Mum and John showing us the new walks and places discovered. And of course there were the inevitable games in the evenings.

She had a great life with John, many holidays together, bridge together, and building new friends in Mixbury, Brackley and the surrounding area. Sadly she was widowed again with John's passing in 2001. So her resilience was needed once more. She decided to sell the Dartmoor cottage but to stay in Mixbury.

Now 71 she grew old ungraciously... she hated getting old. She tried to deny it until one summer a few years later, she was out doing her front garden when she heard some children chatting & walking down the lane in front of the house. As the children saw her one said shush a minute, there's an old lady who will hear. She was mortified, stopped her gardening, came in and called me to regale the story!! (Anyone know who they were?)

And for many years she refused to tell people that she was a great grandma! But old she got and kept many of her established interests, dogs, bridge, she always had a book on the go, and she still loved many more Christmases with the inevitable onslaught of party games! She was always up for learning new games and was frustratingly lucky, winning far too often and sometimes when she didn't really know how or why! Despite her earlier reticence to admit to the ageing process she became really proud to boast of being a great great grandma!

She was supported by many of the fabulous community spirited people of Mixbury who helped her remain in the home that she loved. She got older still & her mobility failing, Home Instead stepped in with their fabulous team of carers. She did try a care home a couple of times, but they were not for her... she just kept complaining they were full of old people! She and we can't thank her Mixbury friends and her Home Instead care team enough for their friendship, help and support.

Mum was a force of nature, but we usually witnessed the much softer, more sensitive Mum than the rather resolute one. She showed extraordinary resilience after losing Dad, then John & many other times since. She was determined, social, she was interested in people, what was going on in their lives and what made them tick. She loved a party and enjoyed the organising & hosting. She doted on children and dogs, having 5 in her time at Mixbury. She enjoyed being the centre of life & for us, life without her is going to be a lot less fun.

Martin, Robin and Judith"

MIXBURY POP UP PUB NIGHTS

The Mixbury Pop Up Pub has been a tradition in the village for many years now and is a lovely way to socialise and make friends. The hosts provide the venue, glasses and a few nibbles and the guests arrive with their own drinks. If you are interested in hosting a pub night please contact Tanya –

BOOK EXCHANGE

Looking for something to read during the summer – there is a large collection of second hand books in the church for villagers to borrow and replace with any book they may have read.

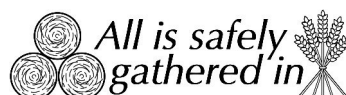
MIXBURY DROP IN TEA/COFFEE/CHAT

Courtesy of Anna at Swallows Nursery Mixbury Ladies can now meet every Tuesday in the coffee shop at the Nursery. 2- 4pm. All welcome – and you don't have to knit or crochet, just come along and chat! You will find us next to the wood burner corner! Swallows not only sell lovely plants but coffee and cake too.....!

SEPTEMBER by Lucy Maud Montgomery

Lo! a ripe sheaf of many golden days
Gleaned by the year in autumn's harvest ways,
With here and there, blood-tinted as an ember,
Some crimson poppy of a late delight
Atoning in its splendour for the flight
Of summer blooms and joys
This is September.

Montgomery (1874-1942) is best-known for her classic novel for children, *Anne of Green Gables*, set in Montgomery's own country of Canada (on Prince Edward Island). But Montgomery was also a poet, and in this short poem about September (quoted above in its entirety) she pays tribute to the 'late delight' of the month.





Newton Purcell St Michael and All Angels

CHURCHWARDEN: Ann von Maltzahn, Home Farm Shelswell Park
 CHURCHWARDEN: Stuart Hinton
 TREASURER: Fai Li
 PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER Flora Skinner
 MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Ann von Maltzahn

Tel 01280 848680
 Tel: 07593 784143
 Tel: 07725 009838
 Tel: 01869 277366
 Tel 01280 848680

Services:-

Tuesday 1st September 7.30 pm Induction and Installation of Revd Dr Claire Maxim as our new Rector, St Mary and St Edburga, Stratton Audley
 Sunday 6th September - 5.00 pm Refreshments at the Old School followed at 5.30 pm by Pilgrim Paths Service at the Church (see below)

Pilgrims Paths Walk:-

Bicester and Islip Deanery will be holding a walk from Newton Purcell on Sunday 6th September starting at the Church at 2.00 p.m.

The walk will go via the Church in Fringford where there will be a short talk on the history of the Church and then return to The Old School in Newton for refreshments at 5.00 p.m. after which there will be another short talk on the history of our Church and a short service.

All are welcome to join the walk, enjoy the refreshments and stay for the talk and Church service.

Bicester and Islip Deanery

Pilgrim Paths

Newton Purcell Circular Walk



Sunday 6th September

Distance: 5 miles

You are warmly invited to join Bicester and Islip Deanery's tenth Pilgrim Paths walk.

Starting at The Church of St. Michael and All Angels, Newton Purcell at **2.00pm.**

There will be refreshments and a short service at Newton Purcell at the end of the walk.

Further information from the Pilgrim Paths Team:
bicislip.pilgrimpaths@gmail.com

Follow us at:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1310223859871650>

Bonus Ball Lotto:-

Our recent lucky winner was Louis von Maltzahn.

Summer Fete:-

We are all looking forward to our Village Fete on Saturday 12th September which will run from 12.00 noon to 5.00 p.m. when the Prize Raffle will be drawn!

It will be a great day out for all the family and a Fun Dog Show so do come along.

If you are able to help on the day it's still not too late to let us know and just a reminder, we still need Tombola prizes, plants, produce and Cakes.

Please contact Stuart Hinton on 07593 784143 with your offers of help and details of what you may be able to provide. Plants, produce and cakes can be delivered on the day.

Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust Annual Ride & Stride:-

This years Ride & Stride coincides with our Village Fete so we encourage all who may be taking part to come to Newton to enjoy that too!

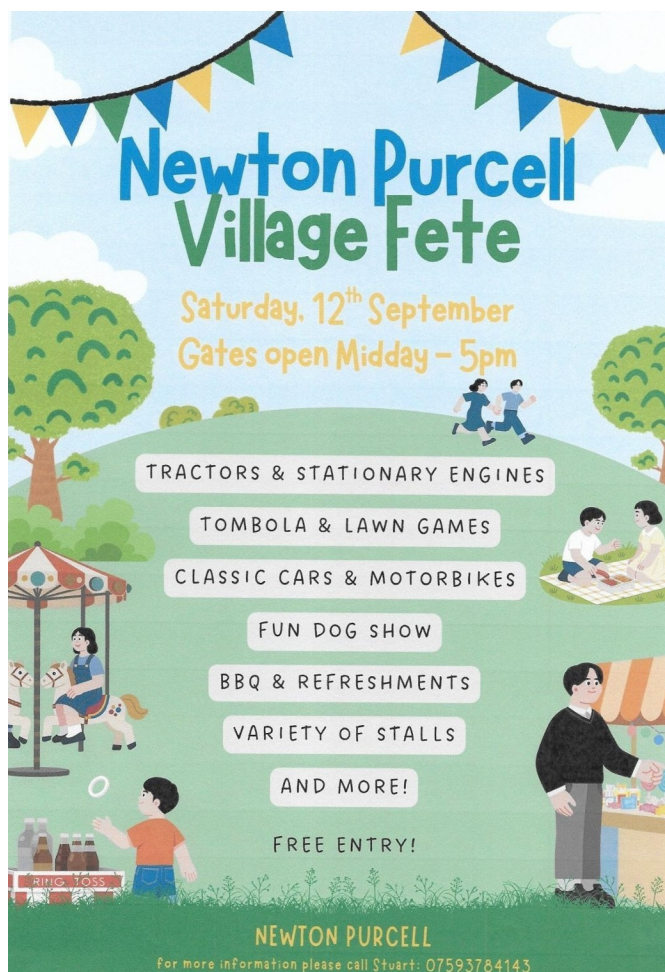
If you would like to raise money through sponsorship for the church or chapel of your choice see the link on the flyer overleaf for all details.

The Trust is an excellent organisation and they are, through their work, able to offer grants to all churches and chapels in need.

Dates for Your Diary:-

Harvest Festival & Lunch - **Sunday 11th October**

Christmas Concert - **Monday 14th December**





12TH SEPT 2026

RIDE + STRIDE
for Churches

Many of the churches and chapels in Oxfordshire will be open.

Help preserve the history on your doorstep by raising funds for Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust.

All funds raised go to OHCT and 50% can be passed on to a church or chapel of your choice.

join us

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Sign up with our online fund-raising partners GoodHub.

Email: rideandstride@ohct.org.uk

For full details including sponsorship forms, link to and list of churches www.ohct.org.uk/ride-stride

Stoke Lyne St Peter's

CHURCHWARDEN: Christopher Poole

CHURCHWARDEN: James Holden-White

TREASURER: Janey Poole

PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER Emma Brown

MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Rena Andrews

PARISH ROOM BOOKINGS : Kelly and James Holden-White

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renaandrews820@gmail.com

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Submissions for the Magazine: If anyone has any items for the magazine please email them to magazine correspondent Rena (renaandrews820@gmail.com) copied to her assistant Brenda (brendahazel104@gmail.com) . The deadline is the second or third Friday of the month depending on the way the days fall – see inside the front cover of each issue.

St Peter's Church Stoke Lyne Services

Tuesday 1st September 7.30 pm Induction and Installation of Revd Dr Claire Maxim as our new Rector, St Mary and St Edburga, Stratton Audley

Sunday 6th September 10.45 am 'Connect' Informal Worship

Sunday 20th September 10.00 am Food for Thought

On page 16 you can read about last month's "Food for Thought" and Midweek Communion and Lunch services. Note that there is no Midweek Communion in September.

Flower Duty for September

Caroline Cooke

Thank you to Rena

The PCC got together to thank Rena for 25 (ish) years of service as a member. Rena has given so much time and energy to her role, guiding decisions on services, village events and works to the Church and Churchyard. Although Rena has decided to step back from her role, we know we will still bend her ear when we need her calm and sensible approach to PCC matters.

We celebrated with champagne and nibbles and Chris said a few words, as did Rena.



Kelly Holden White

Ride and Stride -12th September 2026

It is that time again and I am planning to cycle between churches this year (better check my bike is in good order!) If you too would like to walk or cycle, please let me know and I can pass on a sponsorship form. I would be most grateful of sponsorship and money raised is split between St Peter's Church and the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust (OHCT) who have supported us with work to the Church. Please drop me an email if you can support: kholdenwhite@icloud.com

Kelly Holden-White

Memories of Pat Cherry

9th March 1934 - 17th July 2026



Above left: Pat at the Stoke Lyne Diggers Barbecue, 2015. Above Right: Pat celebrating her 90th birthday at St Peter's Church.

-o-O-o-

Pat was incredibly supportive of our little family, from when the children were born, baptised and toddling around church, to when they began to have more of a voice in church (she would reassure us that their noise was nothing to worry about and that she was pleased to see children in church, being themselves).

Pat was happy to attend more modern services, even though she probably preferred more traditional services, and brought her wisdom and in depth knowledge of the Bible to them. We would enjoy listening to Pat and learning from her. Pat was an incredibly important part of our Church, supporting the young (and the not so young) to learn about God.

Her years of generosity to the village and to people far and wide continue to be felt. She collected clothes and blankets for the Oxford Night Shelter for many years, reminding us all of the simple comforts we have that others don't.

Thank you, Pat.

Kelly Holden-White

-o-O-o-

I first met Pat 27 years ago when we made a rather dramatic entrance in our first visit to St Peter's church. We had enquired about having our baby, Grace baptised and the then Rector Ricky Yates suggested we go along to the monthly Family Service, so we did. On entering the church I managed to trip and fall down the steps inside the door unfortunately I had Grace in my arms she hit her head and I had a large gash on my elbow so off to hospital we went!

Before we left I vividly remember a lady who gave us a warm welcome and was very kind to us, the last thing she said was "you will come back again" which of course we did. I later found out the lady's name was Pat and it was the start of a lovely friendship. Over the past 27 years Pat has been such a spiritual inspiration to me and showed me the light on my sometimes rocky journey in Faith. Most of all Pat was a dear friend who I will miss terribly but I know will always be in my heart.

Ali Miller

-o-O-o-

Pat was a churchwarden at St Peter's for a number of years as well as serving on the Stoke Lyne Parochial Church Council (PCC). Over the years she contributed many items to the Benefice magazine.

Family Services: This was one of Pat's favourite services, being involved with children. A typical one was the family service on 5th January 2003 which she wrote about under the heading "Generous Giving". At these services the children got very involved by taking gifts to the altar and the Revd. Ricky Yates would play his guitar with the children by his feet and singing to his music. That Sunday the talk was about Simon House in Oxford which was a shelter for the homeless and those with drink and drug abuse problems. At the service gifts of toiletries, tinned food and clothing were given and a collection was raised of £118.72 plus store vouchers value at £48.

Christian Aid: This was another of Pat's favourite charities. She used to organise bring and buy sales and coffee mornings. One coffee morning in May 2000 raised £52 for Christian Aid Work with children. That was a lot of money in 26 years ago. She received a lovely letter of thanks from Christian aid which stated that children were the most vulnerable in society and that deprivations and poverty hurt them the most.

The Posada As Pat explained "Posada originated in South America and has been popular over here. It gives us pause amidst all the bustle of the preparation for the 25th to think of the real meaning of Christmas. It is also meant as a delight for the children." Pat was responsible for Stoke Lyne's Posada consisting of homemade figures of Mary and Joseph which would "find overnight lodgings in homes in Stoke Lyne and Bainton as they 'journey to Bethlehem'". "Many people place the figures in the window with a special light." Although this had to be suspended in 2020 during the Covid pandemic when they remained in Pat's front window, they resumed their travels in 2021 and Pat wrote. "In Advent Mary and Joseph travelled through Stoke Lyne starting at Church Farm and finishing in the Church on Christmas Eve. They managed the journey without help of an itinerary for they "knew their way round Stoke Lyne". Many thanks to those who gave them lodgings for a night."

St Peter's Fun Day: the 2009 St Peter's Fun Day, which Pat together with Ali wrote about for the magazine, was a village highlight. It coincided with the opening of the village play park by Jane Warde-Aldam cutting a red ribbon. Pete Collins provided the music and "Villagers had come out in force to join in the fun, including the coconut shy, children's races, jousting, chicken races and many other events." "The church had been specially decorated celebrating the theme of St Peter's life by Pam Adams and Pat Cherry." "The day finished with a lovely evening service led by Pat Cherry. Many villagers read lessons about St Peter whose ministry helped to bring us Christianity."

In September 2021 (during the pandemic) I persuaded her to write this article about the church silver:

"St Peter's Church Find Some years ago, the banks were clearing their safe deposit boxes and so it happened that members of the PCC together with the church warden Jane Warde-Aldam and the treasurer Christopher Warde-Aldam gathered around a mystery box sent from the bank. Inside we found a silver Communion Cup and Paten Cover dated 1637 and a Flagon circa 1800 and Plate circa 1800.

What a find! How could we store them safely? It was decided to copy other churches and ask Christ Church Cathedral, our diocesan church to keep them on permanent loan. Jane Warde-Aldam undertook the task of arranging this, but being unable to continue, asked me as the other church warden to continue. I phoned the Cathedral office with our request only to be told that the cathedral could no longer take in any communion vessels. Consternation!

I then explained that communion vessels from Stratton Audley had recently been accepted and that Stoke Lyne was in the same benefice, so thankfully they changed their minds.

It was arranged that we should take our treasures to the cathedral. The person at the other end of the line was most concerned about their safety. He even told us we could drive into Tom Quad. Apparently, the story goes, a churchman on bringing in his church's box, got off the bus outside the cathedral and remembering he had left his box on the back seat ran after the disappearing bus all the way to Gloucester Green bus station before retrieving it. My sister Jean and I took the communion vessels to the cathedral.

The recipient was grateful and showed us around rooms, including a choir room, which are set in thick walls of the old priory chapter house. An unexpected treat. The story carries on. The communion vessels were returned to St Peter's church on the occasion of the Bishop of Dorchester's special service. On this occasion security measures were intensified — the communion vessels having been previously insured as well. They were returned safely to Christ Church cathedral where they will now be on display." (*Pat Cherry*)

Travel: Pat was a great reader and when I visited her she would show me all the travel books about where she would like to visit. She used to go Christian hotels about twice a year and one that she liked was Brunel Manor which she wrote about in 2009. It was on a site chosen by Brunel the great engineer and provided a Christian atmosphere for all activities. Pat enjoyed eating in the dining room, often having hilarious conversations and seeing the wonderful views down the glade towards Torbay. There were lots of activities you could try like calligraphy, card making and creative writing. There were also outings, talks and lovely walks. Pat loved to be with people and children of all ages.

Finally I thought I would bring in a little piece of humour about Pat enjoying herself. This is a photo of Pat and myself with Rex taken at a Spanish night, displaying our Spanish fans. Pat and I also had Spanish shawls round our middle. We jigged around to some Spanish music. Shows how the silver surfers can enjoy themselves!



Rena Andrews

Stoke Lyne information:

Stoke Lyne Village Facebook group:	https://www.facebook.com/groups/StokeLyneVillage
Village Email & WhatsApp Group:	Contact: philelliot2002@yahoo.co.uk
Stoke Lyne Diggers (Allotments):	Contact: pippa.elliott@yahoo.co.uk
Stoke Lyne Parish Council:	https://stokelyne.org/
Stoke Lyne Stories:	https://stokelynestories.webador.co.uk/
Victoria County History:	https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol6/pp312-323

Stratton Audley and Godington

St Mary and St Edburga; Holy Trinity

CHURCHWARDEN: Sarah Noujaim, 15 Cavendish Place, Stratton Audley

CHURCHWARDEN: Penny Oakey, Grange Farm, Godington

TREASURER: Fai Li

PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Maxine Ling

MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Vacant (Stratton Audley)

MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Sylvia List (Godington)

Tel 07941 273145

Tel 01869 278778

Tel 07725 009838

editor@shelswellparishes.info

CHURCH SERVICES

Tuesday 1st September 7.30 pm Induction and Installation of Revd Dr Claire Maxim as our new Rector, St Mary and St Edburga, Stratton Audley

Sunday 6th September 6.00 pm Compline at Godington

Sunday 13th September 10.45 am Morning Service at Stratton Audley

FOODBANK

Please don't forget the foodbank donation point in the church porch in Stratton Audley, supporting Bicester Foodbank! Thank you to everyone who donates. Particularly appreciated are tinned fruit, veg, soup and fish also coffee and hot chocolate.

If you are in need or would like more information, please contact Becky on 07928 990569 (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 9.00 am – 1.00 pm) or by email admin@shelswellparishes.info

GODINGTON CHURCH

The Church is open for private prayer and contemplation 10 am - 6pm every day.



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Stratton Audley Church

Wednesdays 10am - 11.30am

(Term Time)

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The Last Word

"Nobody can fight properly and boldly for the faith if he clings to a fear of being stripped of earthly possessions." – *St Peter Damian*

1st SEPTEMBER - SAINT DRITHELM, WHO HAD A NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE

Drithelm was a wealthy, married man who lived in Cunningham (now in Ayrshire, then part of Northumbria) in the 7th century when he fell ill and apparently died. His family gathered round to mourn him, but some hours later, he revived and sat up, causing panic among the mourners. Drithelm himself was deeply shaken by a vision of the afterlife that he had seen during a near death experience.

Drithelm then went to pray in the village church until daylight. He reviewed the priorities of his life in the light of what he had seen while 'dead'. Next day he divided his wealth into three: giving one third to his wife, one third to his sons, and the remainder to the poor. He became a monk and went to live at Melrose, where he spent his time in prayer, fasting and contemplation of Jesus.

Drithelm's vision of the after-life is first recorded example of its kind from England. The Venerable Bede wrote an account of it in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, completed in about 731 AD.

Drithelm was much admired for his commitment to the spiritual life. After he became a monk, as well as fasting, praying and labouring, it is said that he used to stand in the cold waters of the Tweed for hours, reciting Psalms.

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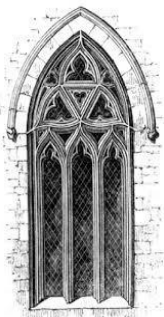
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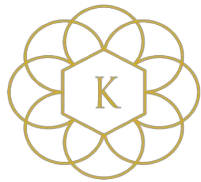
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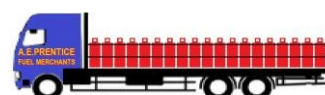
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# SHELSWELL GROUP SERVICES: SEPTEMBER 2026

CW: 'Common Worship' modern language service      BCP: 'Book of Common Prayer' traditional language service

| DATE     | 6 <sup>th</sup> September<br>14 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity                                             | 13 <sup>th</sup> September<br>15 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity                | 20 <sup>th</sup> September<br>16 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity                                                                                                                | 27 <sup>th</sup> September<br>17 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity                                               | 4 <sup>th</sup> October<br>18 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity                                  |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ALTAR    | Green                                                                                                          | Green                                                                              | Green                                                                                                                                                                              | Green                                                                                                             | Green                                                                                             |
| 8.00 am  |                                                                                                                |                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                   |
| 9.15 am  | Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>COTTISFORD<br>CM/AM                                                       | Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>HETHE<br>CM/AM<br><br>Mixbury Half Hour<br>PW | 9.15am<br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>FINMERE<br>CM/AM                                                                                                                    | 10am<br>'Food for Thought'<br>STOKE LYNE<br>Lay-led                                                               | Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>HARDWICK                                                     |
| 10.45 am | 10.45am<br>'Connect' Informal Worship<br>STOKE LYNE<br>AM<br><br>10.45am<br>Morning Service<br>FRINGFORD<br>PW | Morning Service<br>STRATTON AUDLEY<br>CM                                           | 10.45am<br>Holy Communion<br>(BCP)<br>COTTISFORD<br>LW<br><br>10.45am<br>Matins (BCP)<br>Marking the 150 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary<br>of Flora Thompson's Birth<br>FRINGFORD<br>PW | 11am<br>Joint Benefice<br>Harvest Home Celebration<br>with lunch<br>at<br>Tile House Farm,<br>Finnere<br>MK18 4AS | 10.45am<br>'Connect' Informal Worship<br>VENUE TBC<br><br>10.45am<br>Morning Service<br>FRINGFORD |
| 6.00 pm  | 6pm<br>Compline<br>GODINGTON<br>PW                                                                             | Evening Communion<br>FRINGFORD<br>CM/AM                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                   | Compline<br>STRATTON AUDLEY                                                                       |

AM: Revd Alex Mahlava      CM: Revd Dr Claire Maxim      LW: Revd Liz Welters      PW: Mrs Penny Wood (LLM)