

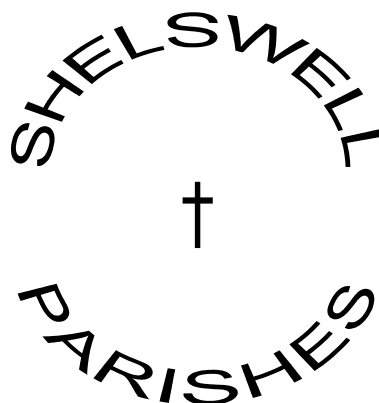


# Shelswell News

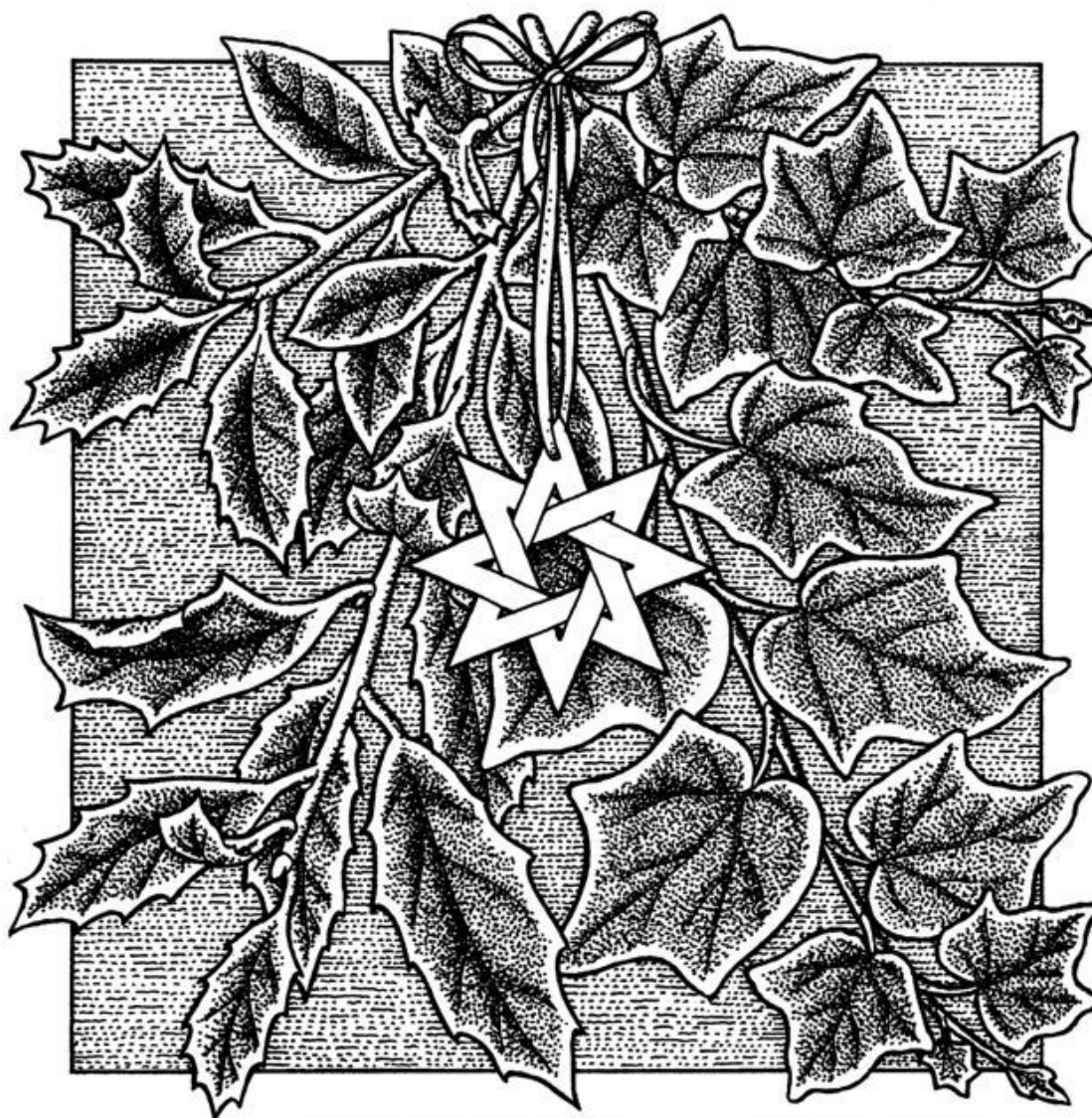
The magazine of the Shelswell Group of Churches



Cottisford  
Fringford  
Hardwick  
Mixbury  
Stoke Lyne



Finnmere  
Godington  
Hethe  
Newton Purcell  
Stratton Audley



*Your complete  
guide to  
Christmas in  
Shelswell!*

*All the Carol &  
Christmas  
Services  
- Back Page and  
Villages*

*Sam the Curate  
on the meaning  
of Christmas  
p.3*

*Christmas  
Market,  
Quiz Night,  
Phoenix Singers  
Concert,  
Christmas Cheer  
Family Afternoon  
p. 5 -8*

## 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.

### MINISTRY TEAM

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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 January 2025 edition of Shelswell News**

To Magazine Correspondents: **Midday on Friday 6th December**

Correspondents to Editor: **Midday on Sunday 8th December at [editor@shelswellparishes.info](mailto: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](http://www.shelswellparishes.info)**

**SHELLOWELL NEWS ARCHIVE.** to look up previous issues of the Shelswell News. Please go to the Benefice website and look at the Archive. If the issue you want to refer to is not there please contact the Benefice office .

## Minister's Letter

In Victor Hugo's novel, *Les Misérables*, Jean Valjean steals bread to feed his starving nephews and nieces. He is caught and sent to prison, serving a total of 19 years after repeatedly trying to escape. On his release, he is given a yellow passport, which marks him as an ex-convict making him unwelcome wherever he goes. Only the kind Bishop Myriel of Digne trusts him enough to take him in and give him food and a bed to sleep in.

But Valjean betrays this trust, compounding his own dire situation, when he repays the hospitality of by stealing some valuable silverware. To his great surprise, the bishop, instead of accusing Valjean, covers for him, telling the police that he gave him the treasure as a gift – and even adds two silver candlesticks, urging Valjean to use them to become an honest man.



This extraordinary act of grace transforms Valjean. He repents of his criminal life to become a man of integrity and generosity, dedicating his life to helping others. He even becomes a devoted guardian to the orphaned Cosette. What was stolen as loot is turned into a gift, marking a profound turning point in Valjean's life. The bishop's undeserved kindness offers Jean a new beginning: it gives him life!

In a similar way, the gift God gave us at Christmas, His Son Jesus Christ, gives *us* life. His love, with no strings attached, means we no longer need to feel guilty and burdened by doubt and anxiety, but are forgiven and free to flourish.

So, as we approach the festive season, let's give thanks for the love God showed us in giving us his life-giving Son, and be inspired to offer life-giving generosity, not only to our friends and families, but also to the poor and vulnerable in our communities.

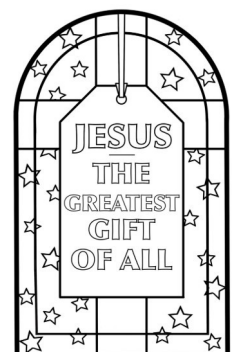
As Jesus said in John 10 verse 10, 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.'

***Sam Mortimer, Curate***

### ***A Christmas Prayer Poem***

Loving Father,  
 Help us remember the birth of Jesus,  
 that we may share in the song of the angels,  
 the gladness of the shepherds,  
 and worship of the wise men.  
 Close the door of hate  
 and open the door of love all over the world.  
 Let kindness come with every gift  
 and good desires with every greeting.  
 Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings,  
 and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.  
 May the Christmas morning  
 make us happy to be thy children,  
 and Christmas evening bring us to our beds  
 with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven,  
 for Jesus' sake. Amen.

***Robert Louis Stevenson***



## BIBLE READINGS



Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup> December	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent	Jeremiah 33 v14-16 1 Thessalonians 3 v9-end Luke 21 v25-36
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> December	2nd Sunday of Advent	Malachi 3 v1-4 Philippians 1 v3-11 Luke 3 v1-6
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> December	3rd Sunday of Advent	Zephaniah 3 v14-end Philippians 4 v4-7 Luke 3 v7-18
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> December	4th Sunday of Advent	Micah 5 v2-5a Hebrews 10 v5-10 Luke 1 v39-45 [46-55]
Wednesday 25th December (and at Midnight Services on Christmas Eve)	Christmas Day	Isaiah 9 v2-7 Titus 2 v11-14 Luke 2 v1-14 [15-20]  or Isaiah 62 v6-end Titus 3 v4-7 Luke 2 v[1-7] 8-20  or Isaiah 52 v7-10 Hebrews 1 v1-4 [5-12] John 1 v1-14
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> December	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of Christmas	1 Samuel 2 v18-20 and 26 Colossians 3 v12-17 Luke 2 v41-end

**Start Your Festive Season  
with a very Informal  
Service Celebrating  
Advent Sunday**

Food For Thought

December 1<sup>st</sup> 2024

Light Breakfast From 10.00

Followed by

Informal Worship at 10.30

At

St Peter's Church, Stoke Lyne

**Everyone welcome**







**MIDWEEK HOLY COMMUNION  
AND SOUP LUNCH  
Thursday 5th December  
12 noon  
Stoke Lyne Church**

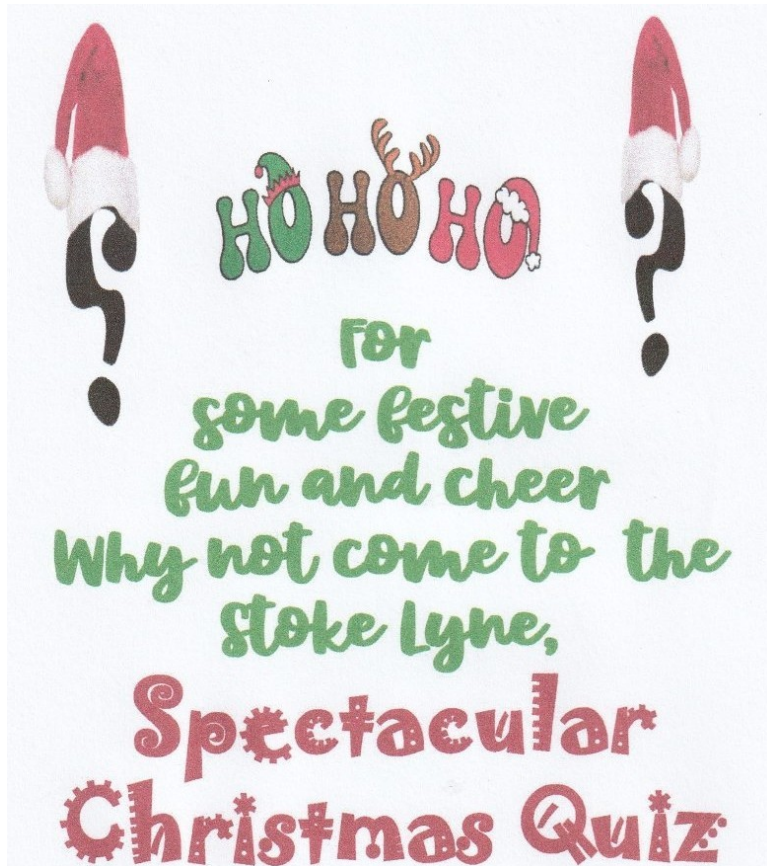


**If you would like a lift then please contact Alice on 01280 848192 or  
[rector@shelswellparishes.info](mailto:rector@shelswellparishes.info)**

**The Old School, Newton Purcell  
SATURDAY 30TH NOVEMBER  
10AM - 6PM ENTRY FREE**

**LIMITED EDITION CHRISTMAS CARDS,  
CANDLES, FLOWERS & GIFTS**

**Get in the Christmas spirit !  
Mulled wine and Mince Pies**



**7th December**

**6.30 pm for 7 pm start**

**St Peter's Church OX27 8SB**

**£12 pp to include Supper**

**Please let us know you are coming, and any dietary requirements**

**Bar available**

**Teams of 6 max **STRICTLY!****

**Contacts:**

**Ali [alisonjanemiller@icloud.com](mailto:alisonjanemiller@icloud.com)**

**Kelly [kholdenwhite@icloud.com](mailto:kholdenwhite@icloud.com)**



**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December, 4:00 pm**  
**Finmere Village Hall**



An informal and uplifting church service designed for everyone, whether you're new to church or looking for a fresh start. Experience a welcoming community, engaging discussions, and spiritual renewal in a relaxed atmosphere. No matter where you are on your faith journey, there's a place for you here. All welcome.



THE PHOENIX SINGERS

Friday December 13<sup>th</sup>

# Carols by Candlelight

With Readings

St Michael's and All Angels  
Newton Purcell

7.30pm

Doors open 7.15

Musical Director  
Peter McMullin





**An afternoon of Christmas  
cheer for all the family!**

**SATURDAY 14th DECEMBER 2024**

(Not Sunday, as previously advertised)

**4.00pm – 6.00pm**

Join us at **St Peter's church, Stoke Lyne** for a warming Mulled wine, beer, spiced sausage rolls and festive activities for all ages.

**Wear your most outrageous Christmas jumper to enter the competition.  
Raffle to win a luxury hamper and other Christmas goodies!**

**Hook the reindeer, Santa's face game, pin the tail on the little donkey**

**GUESS THE WEIGHT AND WIN A  
TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS CAKE WORTH £40!  
GUESS HOW MANY CHOCOLATES IN THE JAR  
AND WIN THE LOT!**

**Delicious treats and refreshments!**

**Tea and cakes, including Janey's famous gluten free Tangerine Christmas special!  
Christmas Ale from renowned Oxford Brewery (formerly Shotover Brewery)  
accompanied by our equally renowned spicy sausage rolls!  
Warming Mulled wine, homemade and deliciously spicy!**

**Everybody welcome, bring your friends and family!**





Shelswell Youth Group will be called

# C. H. A. T. (w. b.)

Christians having a talk (with biscuits)

11 - 18 years old? | Interested in matters of faith? | How to live as a Christian in your day-to-day life? | How to make sense of things?

Our next session will be a

## Christmas Special!

Food & drink | Games | Lots of fun!

Friday 20th December  
6:30 – 8:00 pm  
10c St Michael's Close, Fringford, OX27 8DW  
(home of Father Alex and his family)

For more information, contact Rev Sam Mortimer ([curate@shelswellparishes.info](mailto:curate@shelswellparishes.info)) or Father Alex ([amahlava@gmail.com](mailto:amahlava@gmail.com))




SAVE THE DATE IN *January*

Food for Thought celebrating Epiphany  
5th January 10 am Stoke Lyne



Plough Sunday  
26th January 11 am Grange Farm, Godington



## Lighthouse Shelswell needs your help!

It's exhausting, it uses a week of your holiday, but it is **FABULOUS FUN!**



**Lighthouse Shelswell hosted 60 children in 2024.  
At the moment we will only be able to take 30  
children in 2025.**

**We need:**

**Two more age group leaders – ideal opportunity  
for a teacher / teaching assistant  
(whether currently working, taking a break or  
retired)**

With the help of an adult helper and a couple of teenage helpers, you would lead a group of about 15 children of similar age (4 – 5s, 6 – 7s, 8 – 9s, 10 plus) throughout the week as they enjoy thinking about some stories from the Bible, doing some craft and drama. The Lighthouse organisation provides detailed guidance to the different sessions each day, though you would probably need to tweak these for your particular group. There would be good support in doing this from the other age group leaders.

Some experience of working with children in some capacity would be enormously helpful!

As well as the week itself, you will need to attend one planning session with the other leaders, and a training session on a Sunday afternoon shortly before the Lighthouse week. Anything else will be done by email.

Please contact Alice to discuss further or to register an interest!

It was a wonderful week and brilliant fun to be part of such a friendly group of volunteers, to renew friendships and get to know everyone better. Thank you all! It was a joy to watch the children having a great time, building friendships and enjoying all the activities. Looking forward Lighthouse 2025 already!!

### Administrator

Are you good with emails and data bases? You would not need to attend the Lighthouse week, and would have little direct contact with children. Your task would be managing the applications from both volunteers and children via the Lighthouse data base. Most of the year there is little to do – your work would start in February and pick up pace as Lighthouse approaches. In the couple of weeks before Lighthouse, you might be doing about 15 minutes a day. (Alice has managed it to date, alongside her other duties, and if you are good with data bases, it would probably be much quicker!!).

Full training and support would be given from the Lighthouse organisation.



**We don't want to have to  
turn children away!**

Alice Goodall  
01280 848192  
[alicegoodall313@gmail.com](mailto:alicegoodall313@gmail.com)



**TWYFORD**  
village stores

Groceries □ Fruit & Veg □ Local Produce  
Frozen Food □ Off Licence □ Dry Cleaning  
Hot Drinks  
Hot Pies & Pastries □ Sandwiches & Paninis  
Newspapers & Magazines

Opening Hours	Shop	Cafe
Mon–Fri	7am–5pm	9am–2.30pm
Sat	8am–1pm	9am–12noon
Sun	8am–1pm	9am–12noon

(CLOSED CHRISTMAS DAY, BOXING DAY, & NEW YEAR'S DAY)

Owned and run by village volunteers for  
the local community.

**Happy Christmas to all our  
friends & customers.**

**We'd love to see you over the  
festive period for a coffee and  
mince pie.**

*If you would like to volunteer  
please pop in or call 01296  
738013.*



## Shelswell-by-the-Sea, 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024

The venue this time was at Finmere Village Hall. This is a beautiful village hall. We were fewer in numbers on the Monday. The tables were set out with different activities: we had newspapers on one, a jigsaw puzzle on another and different crafts on a further one – or you could just sit and chat. On arrival you could have tea or coffee with a cake or biscuits. Some ladies were knitting, sewing, crocheting etc.

We had a young policewoman visit who had come to give us a talk on fraud and scams. This was her first time giving a talk. What she had to say was very interesting as there are so many people being scammed on the telephone or on the internet. If these calls are from a telephone number you don't recognise or they are asking you to hold, don't do it. The same on the internet if you are being contacted by an email you don't recognise. Always be very wary and keep alert as there are so many scammers about wanting your money. She handed out some leaflets on fraud prevention and who you can contact. She also gave out little bells you can attach to your purse, so that if someone tries to steal it, the bells will alert you.

Penny then gave us a talk on St Frideswide, Abbess of Oxford. She was born around 650 AD and was the daughter of a sub-king of Mercia named Dida of Eynsham whose lands occupied western Oxfordshire and the upper reaches of the River Thames.

*“There was of old in the city of Oxford a monastery of nuns in which rests the most holy virgin Frideswide. The daughter of a king, she spurned the marriage-bed of a king, dedicating her entire person to the Lord Christ. But when her intended had applied himself rigorously to wooing the virgin, having spent his prayers and blandishments in vain, he planned to carry her off by force.*

*When Frideswide heard of this, she decided to flee into the woods. But neither could this hiding place keep her hidden from her suitor, nor could her coldness of heart deter him, for she who fled was pursued.*

*When the young man's madness became plain, the virgin went further on through secret paths, protected by God, and entered Oxford at dead of night. But by morning her persistent lover had hurried there too, and the girl began to despair of escape; too tired to go any further, she prayed to God to protect her and to punish her persecutor. When he and his companions entered the city gate, a blow sent from heaven struck him and became blind. Realising then the sinfulness of his persistence, he sent messengers to beg Frideswide to pray for him, and with the same suddenness with which he lost his sight he received it again. Hence the kings of England have been afraid to enter that town and stay there because they think it is unfavourable to them, and they have all shrunk from putting this to the test.*

*So there in Oxford, the woman, secure in the victory of her virginity, founded a monastery and ended her days there, obedient to her eternal Bridegroom's call.”*

This is only a small piece of Frideswide history, in fuller versions of the legend, Frideswide is said to have travelled to Bampton and Binsey. Whilst at Binsey, Frideswide brought forth a spring of healing water. Known locally as Treacle Well, it is said to heal those who drink from it or pray there. The well still stands in the grounds of Binsey's St Margaret's Church and is dedicated to Frideswide.

Lunch was then served, with sherry or fruit juice. There was a choice of two different hot casseroles with rice or vegetables followed by a choice of puddings. In the afternoon there was tea/coffee with cake for those who wanted it.

On Day 2 we had more people join us for lunch as Finmere have a lunch day once a month which coincided with our Shelswell-by-the-Sea. Thank you to the Ministry Team and their volunteers for all their hard work in putting these two days on. Thank you also to the Finmere Lunch Club for joining us and also thank you to the people who kindly gave lifts

Rena Andrews

## Celebration of 50 years of ministry

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> November saw well over 100 people gathered in the barn at Waterloo Farm to celebrate Penny Wood's 50 years of service as a Lay Reader / Licensed Lay Minister. Penny was 28 years old when she was licensed as a reader in a service on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1974 at St Micheal the Evangelist and St Michael and All Angels, in Hyde Park Crescent, London. Although men were being licensed as readers from 1866, it was only in 1969 that women were permitted to train to become licensed Readers. And so the female reader was still a rare item when Penny was licensed, just five years later. Even nowadays, when more women than men are licensed, only about 10 % of them go into training when they are under 40. So as a 28 year old woman, Penny was in many ways a pioneer, although she would probably deny this.

Since then, Penny has served faithfully. At the celebration were two men who used to be in her youth group in London – they related how Penny took the group on holidays – to France! For the last 44 years or so she has served within the Shelswell Benefice. As part of her ministry, she has led services week by week, conducted funerals, organised the Children's Holiday Week, the Shelswell Benefice Choir, and Shelswell by the Sea, served on Fringford PCC and generally contributed to church and village life. We felt that this was something that we definitely needed to thank God for and to celebrate.

We shared in a wonderful communion service. As well as lots of people from the Benefice, many old friends of Penny's had come specially for the occasion, including some folk who had been there at her licensing in 1974.

At the beginning, the Shelswell Choir of 9 singers began to sing the introit, 'Jesu tawa pano' – (Jesus, we are here). Gradually a further seven people, who had all been members of the choir in the past, emerged from their seats and came to join them. Penny was so focused on her music that she was mostly unaware of our attempt at a flash mob until the end of the piece! The augmented choir gave a wonderful lead to our singing throughout the service.



*Our preacher Helen Paynter*

Becky Adams read our first reading, Psalm 84, and Penny herself read the gospel reading, Luke 9: 51 – 62. Then we listened to an excellent sermon given by Helen Paynter who had travelled from Bristol, via a few days in the Cotswolds, with her husband Stephen to be with us. Helen is Director of Theological Education, Tutor in Biblical Studies, and Executive Director of the Centre for the Study of Bible and Violence at the Bristol Baptist College. Among other things, Helen has produced a series of YouTube videos providing a 'Tour of the Bible' which Penny watched during lockdown and found very helpful. So we were delighted when she agreed to come and preach.

Helen spoke of how there was no teleportation in the Christian journey – it is often just a matter of putting one foot in front of the other. Helen explained that psalm 84 was sung by pilgrims on their journey to Jerusalem, and how although much of their journey was through inhospitable land God provided companions along the way, small oases for refreshment and a vision of what they were travelling to. Penny couldn't know

The 'secret' anthem – a version of psalm 16 set to music by John L. Bell

Keep me, Lord, for in your keeping  
I have found security,  
and, rejoicing in your presence,  
know and own my destiny.  
You, my Lord, my cup, my portion,  
plot my lifeline, chart my days;  
well content with where you place me,  
all your providence I praise.

I shall bless the Lord for giving  
sound advice for broad daylight;  
wisdom for my inmost being  
God communicates by night.  
So I set the Lord before me  
holding fast to each command;  
disregarding what dares shake me,  
God I keep at my right hand.

Therefore body, mind and spirit  
in serenity abound;  
death and hell can never menace  
those whose faith in God is found.  
You, O gracious Lord, will show me  
paths to all you have in store:  
in your presence, in your purpose,  
pleasures last for evermore.



what the journey would entail when she said ‘yes’ to God’s call to be a Reader. But she had continued ploughing straight ahead with her eyes on Christ.

After the sermon, the choir sang an anthem that they had been preparing in secret to sing for Penny: Keep me Lord. It had taken much planning and considerable ingenuity to arrange practises without Penny becoming aware. The words were very appropriate, and Penny was visibly moved by their gift of song. Then our intercessions were led by Liz Welters.

Before the final blessing, Penny was given various gifts. Brenda Stocker presented a garden voucher with thanks from Shelswell by the Sea, David Barnes presented some flowers and chocolate from the Choir, and David Taylor wheeled in an e-bike which was a gift from all of us, together with a cheque that will allow Penny to choose something nice that she would like.

And then we turned to partying. Whilst people enjoyed a drink and chat at the other end of the barn, tables were put out, food was brought in and the feasting began. Huge thanks to the Taylor family who hosted us all so competently. They gave every appearance of ease which disguised the amount of preparation that must have taken place! After enjoying a wonderful array of puddings provided by various people from across the Benefice, Penny cut into a most beautiful celebratory cake made by Julie Wright from Fringford – decorated with shells (as in Shelswell) it was topped with a large ‘50’ and an open Bible. And not only did it look brilliant, it tasted wonderful too!



Thank you Penny for everything you do!  
Happy cycling!



Dear Everyone in the Benefice,

Thank you for coming on 3 November to celebrate my 50 years as a Lay Reader, I had a wonderful day. It was lovely to see so many people from the past and the present, to worship all together, and to 'feast' together. And it was a feast thanks to Phillippa Taylor for the first course, and all of you for the second!

And thank you for amazing gifts - when that electric bike rolled up I was speechless! However, after some instruction from a friend of Jessica's, I am now heading out beyond Fringford confident that I can go further, and still have enough power to get home.

All in all it was such a memorable day, and I am very grateful to you all for making it so special.

With love, Penny

### Foodbank at Christmas

Bicester Foodbank in Wesley Lane, Bicester distributes emergency food parcels to local people in crisis. The Foodbank is part of The Trossel Trust and is run in partnership with local churches, including ours in Shelswell Benefice. Over half the food they give out is donated by the public.

A network of local referrers can issue a voucher if you are in need (Rev. Alice is a referrer). This could be for all kinds of reasons, such as being made redundant or facing an unexpected large bill while on a low income. Once issued with a referral voucher, local residents can exchange this for an emergency food parcel consisting of a minimum of three days of non-perishable food. Advice to help people out of a crisis is also there if necessary. 2075 people, including 902 children, were helped in the Bicester area in 2023/4.

Foodbank collection points are in most of our churches, so please don't forget the Foodbank this Christmas if you can afford an extra item or two! Tins of fruit, vegetables, tomatoes, meat, fish and soup are always welcome, as are coffee and hot chocolate. They have enough pasta and breakfast cereal, but these items would be nice to have for families in need at Christmas: Christmas pudding, biscuits/shortbread, mince pies, custard, cranberry sauce, stuffing, gravy mix

### News from South Sudan

Please keep **Bishop Zachariah** and the Wulu Diocese in your thoughts and prayers

- For efforts to provide food and materials to help displaced people.
- For Bishop Zachariah and local leaders as they implement the outcomes of a workshop held in November. This aimed to:
  - Assess the impact of flooding on farmers and cattle keepers in the area.
  - Find out why there is conflict between farmers and cattle keepers (competing for the same resources)
  - Train community leaders in conflict resolution to facilitate discussion between conflicting parties.
  - Encourage sustainable agricultural and livestock practices that reduce vulnerability to flooding.
- For the school, as desks & doors were ruined in fighting between two communities. Some houses, the market and a hotel were also destroyed.



A family affected by flooding



A Group Discussion

*The cost of the workshop has been funded by anonymous donors in the Shelswell Benefice.*

After generous donations at Harvest, totalling £330, the next payment for the Teachers' Incentive Scheme will be sent at the beginning of 2025.



## REGISTRY

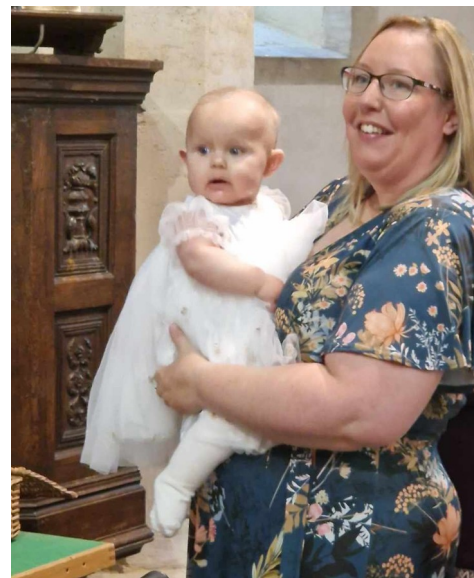
### Baptism

#### Pippa Margaret Celia BLAKE

St Michael and All Angels, Fringford

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Pippa was just seven months old, daughter of Emily Blake. Emily, who works as a midwife, lives with Pippa in Aylesbury, but the Blake family have long standing links with Fringford – Emily's gran was Margaret Crawford, who lived on the Green in Fringford most of her life. Her dad grew up in the village and was a member of the cricket team for many years. Margaret was married in the church, as were Emily's parents, and Emily and her brother were christened there before the family moved to Bicester. So it seemed very right and proper that Pippa be christened in St Michael and All Angels too. Hence Pippa's friends and family were all gathered together at the church at 1 pm on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> October for her special day.



#### A poem by Ms Moem

My baby you will always be,  
No matter where you are.  
You're like a little piece of me  
Whether near or far.  
I counted all your tiny toes  
When you were fresh and new.  
Words can't explain how proud I was  
That I'll been given you.  
Your tiny little newborn face  
I couldn't have loved more,  
And though your face was new to me  
T'was like we'd met before.  
And so each day your grew and grew  
As I looked proudly on,  
Until one day I looked and saw  
Your baby days were gone.  
But once my baby, you will stay  
That way for all my days.  
My baby you will always be,  
And I'll love you always.

We started our service by lighting the Easter candle and singing 'Sing hosanna.' Our Bible reading, read by Claire Mansfield, was Ephesians 3. 14 – 21, that wonderful prayer that we should both understand and know from our own experience what is the height and breadth and depth of Christ's love for us and be filled with the fulness of God. Grandma Celia read a poem that she had chosen about the relationship between a mother and her baby: My baby you will always be. And then we made baptingles to help us think about baptism. We lit our baptingles and sang 'He's got the whole world in his hands'.

Then we all moved to the font for the baptism itself. Pippa took it all in her stride, seeming to read along with Alice. Pippa has five godparents: Clare Cook, Claire Mansfield, Sara Philo, Stephen Philo and Marie Thumwood.

After she had been baptised we wrote our own prayers for Pippa, which were collected

and presented to her in a little box. Our final hymn was 'This little light of mine'. Then we gave her a baptism candle with the encouragement to shine light out into the world, and a children's Bible.

After photos, the christening party retired to the village hall for further celebrations.

We pray for Pippa as she starts her Christian journey – may she come to know the truth and wonder of that Ephesians prayer for herself as she grows up.



## Wedding

**Henry George WAKEFIELD and Alice Camilla BROWN**

St Mary and St Edburga, Stratton Audley

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2024



Henry and Camilla actually met 15 years ago whilst on holiday with their families in Kenya. They got chatting and a connection was made. Then they met again whilst at university in Durham. Their relationship grew and blossomed, and in January, whilst they were out for a winter walk in Stoke Lyne, Henry proposed and Camilla said 'yes'. Although the couple live in London, where Henry works as a Corporate Finance Advisor and Camilla as Head of Production, Camilla lived in Stoke Lyne from when she was 12 years of age until the point at which she left home. Her parents Hugo and Emma Brown still live there. However the couple needed all the space they could get in order to fit all their invited guests in, so they opted to hold their marriage service in Stratton Audley.

The music for the wedding was provided by the singer Jasmine Faulkner and the organist Tim Morris. Tim was one of Henry's teachers from Radley School. So at the start of the service Henry was at the front of the church with his two best men, Freddie and Tom. The bridesmaids processed up to the choir stalls and sat down. Then the organist struck up and Jasmine started to sing to Johann Pachelbel's Canon in D major. She indicates that the church doors should be opened, and Camilla entered on her father's arm. Jasmine also sang whilst the marriage document was signed and as the newly weds were leaving the church to Handel's 'La Rejouissance'.

Henry and Camilla had chosen four hymns for their service: 'I vow to thee, my country', 'Be thou my vision', 'Lord of the Dance' and 'Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord'. They had three readings – the Bible reading from Colossians 3: 12 – 17, 'He's not perfect' by Bob Marley, and 'Paths and Journeys' from Far from the Madding Crowd by Thomas Hardy.

After the service there were bells and photographs, and then everyone returned to Camilla's parents' house in Stoke Lyne where the reception was taking place in an enormous marquee in the garden.

Our best wishes go to Camilla and Henry as they embark on their married life together – may their marriage be life long, life enhancing and a blessing to them, their families and those around them.

### He's Not Perfect by Bob Marley

He's not perfect. You aren't either, and the two of you will never be perfect. But if he can make you laugh at least once, causes you to think twice, and if he admits to being human and making mistakes, hold onto him and give him the most you can. He isn't going to quote poetry, he's not thinking about you every moment, but he will give you a part of him that he knows you could break.

Don't hurt him, don't change him, and don't expect for more than he can give. Don't analyse. Smile when he makes you happy, yell when he makes you mad, and miss him when he's not there. Love hard when there is love to be had. Because perfect men don't exist, but there's always one man that is perfect for you.





## Funerals

### **Iris Annie Lilian WHITE**

28 June 1928 – 11 September 2024

St Michael & All Angels, Fringford

Iris died at home, peacefully in her sleep. For a number of years she had lived at the annex to Forge Mill House in Fringford close to her son and his family. Those of us who knew her from Shelswell by the Sea and village coffee mornings remember her with affection, and do not forget her knitting skills, love of scrabble, and aptitude for 'jigsawing'. Her funeral took place on the 27<sup>th</sup> September and she was buried with her husband. The family wrote this tribute to Iris:

"Iris sadly passed away on 11<sup>th</sup> September at home in Fringford aged 96. She was a devoted wife, mother, grandmother and great grandmother and will be very much missed. Her ability to always see the good in everything and everyone was a constant source of inspiration to her family. She was evacuated during the war to Cornwall where she developed a love of the countryside and wildlife, particularly birds. This was an enduring source of comfort throughout her life and particularly in her later years.

She had a very wry sense of humour and always surprised us by her insightful and funny observations on life. She didn't take life too seriously and was never dragged down by things happening around her.



She became a bit of a speed queen whenever she got on a mobility scooter and fearlessly went everywhere at top speed making us run after her! She showed us her love through cooking and baking and always had time for those around her.

She loved being with people and enjoyed seeing her friends at the coffee mornings in Fringford and Shelswell by the Sea. Her funeral at St Michaels Church in Fringford, where she was buried with her husband of 56 years, was a lovely celebration of a life well lived. Her life was seemingly ordinary but made extraordinary by her love and appreciation of simple pleasures through which she found a deep sense of peace and contentment."



## Mary Elizabeth MORGAN

11 October 1928 -16 September 2024

St Mary The Virgin, Hardwick

Mary lived much of her life in Hethe but latterly had been living in Brackley Care Home. Her funeral took place at Hardwick Church, and subsequently there was a cremation. Her ashes will be buried with her husband Charlie in Hardwick Churchyard. She leaves her daughter Margaret and son David, and a number of grandchildren and great grandchildren.



## Margaret Rose DAVIS

30<sup>th</sup> December 1937 – 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024

St Mary and St Edburga, Stratton Audley



Margaret was born on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1937 at Pebble Hill Farm in Launton, the fourth of the six children born to Albert and Ena Green. She had four brothers and one sister. It was a hard childhood, with all the children working on the farm from an early age, helping with the milking and so on, and then as she got a little older with the cooking and cleaning on a Saturday. She and her siblings had to walk 3 miles to Launton School. There were occasional holidays though to Blackpool or to visit their Auntie Dora in Rugby. She enjoyed pressing wild flowers and going on bike rides with friends. And there was the dog called Fanny, a cat and a lamb.

Throughout her schooldays, Margaret had apparently wanted a job to do with the sea. However on leaving school she did a variety of jobs, the first being at Evans Department Store in Bicester. After getting

married, she worked for years at the Red Lion with Mr and Mrs Moy in Stratton Audley. Then she moved to a job at Bicester Garage for years, then a garage in Buckingham, and then in the café at Bicester North Station. And throughout this she cleaned for Mrs Howson. However this really interesting variety of jobs put her daughter Rita in a bit of a fix when she went to register the death – they ended up recording her work as ‘farmers wife’, which of course she was.

Margaret first met Robin at the Sow and Pigs in Poundon, which her parents had taken on after the farm. Robin had spied her in the garden there, and was bowled over by how she was dressed; she looked so smart. It was love at first sight and there followed many a date in the pub or at the pictures. And then marriage. Margaret, having grown up on a farm knew what she was getting into and the pair were married in Streaon Audley church on 3rd May 1958. They then stuck together through thick and thin for over 60 years and we were delighted to celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary with a special service just last year.

Initially they lived in a caravan at Elm Farm where Kevin was born on 11th November 1959. Then they moved to Poundon where Jackie came along in April 1962.

In spring 1964 they moved to Glen Close in Stratton Audley where in the August Rita was born. Sensibly, given that each move seemed to lead to a baby, they then stayed put, and when Kim arrived in 1978, Margaret brought her up in Glen Close too.

Margaret loved her family and was delighted as the years went by to welcome the grandchildren Tyler and Jarren – and she was so proud when they went off to work in Dubai, and then the great grandchildren Tia and Kaelun, and then the great great grandchildren Lyla and Leyton.

Her family was Margaret's proudest achievement, but apart from Robin and her family, she had three other passions. The first began in 1969 when Uncle Bob and Uncle Pop wanted to go and see Oxford United play Blackpool. She went along, and there began what was to be a lifelong devotion to Oxford United. She loved going to the matches. When asked what her dreams were, she said it was probably a bit too late to have dreams, but they would be to see all her family settled and happy and to see Oxford United Football Club promoted – which they were this year on 18<sup>th</sup> May. And although she wasn't well enough to go to Wembley to see it, she knew that it had happened.

Her second passion was Daniel O Donnell – and there were many holidays to Ireland every year to see him. She went to dozens of his concerts, and would even queue up overnight in order to get front row seats when he was playing in Oxford!

And her third passion was Christmas. She loved Christmas and Christmas at Glen Close with her was always very special. She was often heard to say 'don't let your dad see' as she sent one of the family off to find an extra present she'd hidden in the wardrobe. The Christmas before last was particularly noteworthy for the old marquee that was erected in the back garden – it had to be covered with a plastic sheet to make it weather worthy, and Robin did his best to burn it down with a big heater that seemed to double up as a flame thrower. But a good time was had by all.

Margaret was asked how she hoped people thought about her – she said she hoped they thought she was kind. She had many attributes – she was hardworking, loving and caring to her family, loyal to her football team, patient, strong and courageous. But it is her kindness that perhaps stands out. She gave so much to her family, so much kindness and love and care. At times this wasn't easy, but she wouldn't have had it any other way.

Margaret's funeral took place on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> October at St Mary and St Edburga, Stratton Audley. Her coffin was carried into the church to Jim Reeves singing 'Precious Lord, take my hand'. Her grandson Tyler gave a lovely tribute to Margaret, and Rita read a poem 'When tomorrow starts without me'. Our Bible reading was Ecclesiastes 3: 1 – 8: for everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven. We sang 'The Lord's my shepherd', 'Lord of all hopefulness' and 'Lord of the Dance', and the coffin left the church to more Jim Reeves – Distant Drums. The committal took place immediately after the service at North Oxford Crematorium. After the service, people were invited back to the Littlebury Hotel for refreshments.

The family would like to express their thank to everyone who attended Margaret's funeral and who contributed so generously to the retiring collection which was divided between the church and Oxford United in the Community. Our thoughts and prayers are with Robin and the family at this difficult time.

### **Precious Lord, take my hand**

When my way groweth drear  
Precious Lord, linger near-ear  
When my light is almost gone  
Hear my cry, hear my call  
Hold my hand lest I fall  
Take my hand, precious Lord  
Lead me on

Precious Lord, take my hand  
Lead me on, let me stand  
I am tired, I'm weak, I am worn  
Through the storm, through the night  
Lead me on to the light  
Take my ha-and, precious Lord  
Lead me home

When my work is all done  
And my race here is run  
Let me see by the light  
Thou hast shown  
That fair city so bright  
Where the Lamb is the light  
Take my hand, precious Lord  
Lead me on

Precious Lord, take my hand  
Lead me on, let me stand  
I am tired, I'm weak, I am worn  
Through the storm, through the night  
Lead me on to the light  
Take my ha-and, precious Lord  
Lead me home



## Elizabeth Anne NEWLAND ['Annie']

20 March 1943 – 14 October 2024

St Michael & All Angels, Newton Purcell

There was standing room only at Annie's funeral on 8<sup>th</sup> November. One of her daughters in law, Miranda Markham, delivered the family's tribute to her:

"Annie was born in March 1943 to John and Joan Robarts who had a mixed farm at Kimble. She grew up there with her old sister Fizz and spent her childhood surrounded by horses, dogs and the countryside. Her much loved pony Cider gained her numerous rosettes at gymkanas and later she enjoyed the thrill of regularly hunting with *the Old Berkley*. After attending Pepworth boarding school together with Fizz she joined Aylesbury Young farmers.



Annie met Barry and married at the age 19 and they were blessed with 2 boys, David was born 1964 and Mike 2 years later. The family lived at Godington Cottages before moving to Home Farm at Shelswell Park and later here at Elm Farm.

After Barry and Annie went their separate ways Annie went on to form a partnership with American born Jerry Harrington and spent several happy years together which they ran a pub together, the White Horse at Dinton. Though his career took him back to the USA they remained close friends and Jerry continued to visit Annie whenever he returned to England. Annie was eventually to find love again marrying the son of a family friend, Jack Newland, and became stepmother to Caroline and James who credit Annie as being both an inspirational and loving stepmother.

Annie was never one to stand still. Through her working partnership with General Motors she travelled all over the world, was a regular on Concorde travelling to every continent and even a weekend shopping trip to New York to get her favourite perfume. She remained close with her boys who both went to local boarding schools. They would visit her on alternate weekends and enjoy her famous Sunday roasts which included the crispiest golden roast potatoes and always followed by a crumble and custard. Later she would continue a « meals on wheels » service to David and Mattie Harper when they were sharing the cottage in Newton Purcell as well as a full gold star laundry service.

Although Anne inherited a love of horses and the countryside, it was cars that shaped her life and her career. She began working in the Robarts family business in St Albans, in the eighties alongside her husband Jack. Marlborough Motors was to become the 2nd largest Vauxhall dealer in the country with Annie responsible for some record sales and this was the springboard for her venturing into motor racing, first as a sponsor and then into management. David joined working in the business during the winter season. Both David and Mike went on to compete with David winning many prizes in saloon car racing while Mike squashed himself into a single seater with some success.

One of Annie's proudest moments was when she joined ranks with David Sears and together they managed Jan Magnussen from the beginning his journey in Formula Ford, Vauxhall Lotus, Formula 3 to his much prized Formula 1 seat with McLaren and Stewart racing. They were a formidable team and were proud to say that they nurtured and developed some great young racing talent.

As a regular at the Silverstone circuit, Annie quickly became part of the racing community and in particular, *The Doghouse* now more politely known - as the Women's Motor Racing Club - for the wives and partners of those involved in Motor racing but importantly fund raising and offering support. Julie, Carol, Emma are here and have told us Annie was a staunch supporter. According to the ladies she had a huge zest for life and a mischievous streak.

Annie and Jack went their separate ways but Annie's motorsport career continued to flourish. However, in 1995 Annie was to suffer a major setback when she was involved in a serious accident whilst on the circuit in Nürnberg. Annie sustained severe head injuries and the German surgeons requested permission to amputate her leg. With help from the John Sunderland and St Johns Ambulance we were able to get Annie flown home and her leg was saved but this was the beginning of a long and painful recovery.

But Annie was ready for anything that life threw at her - with her characteristic « true grit » approach she was not deterred, she remained unbelievably positive laughing off any negative thoughts and just got on with it. The silver lining of her convalescence was that Annie had a regular hospital visitor, William Davies, a friend and motorsport travel consultant. Annie and William really hit it off sharing a love of her grandchildren and of course horse-racing and motor racing with William adding snooker and Motorbikes to the mix. They were in many ways a perfect match with so much in common. Annie doted on William and a quieter family life. Sadly William was lost to cancer far too early but it is Annie's wish to be buried with him in a shared grave at Newton Purcell.

No recollections of Annie would be complete without mentioning her most treasured and loyal companion, Scruffie, her border terrier with whom she was inseparable in her solo years.

As some of you may know she was one of the tidiest, most organised and fastidious people you would ever meet - her neighbours in Finnere were a little taken aback when she first hoovered her driveway, but they got used to it. Another time when she joined the Mobley family Christmas lunch at my sister Katie's we all wondered why she was producing a pen and envelope from her handbag before we sat down to eat. She breezily said, "I'm just writing your thank you card!"

Annie was an amazing support when the children were growing up. She would do school runs, babysitting, washing and ironing (so much ironing) and was generally at the heart of family life. Many of you will recall Annie's banter, sitting on the sidelines at sports matches at Beachborough and at Stowe handing out copious sausages, crisps and haribos and occasionally arguing with the referee. Annie had herself been a cricketer and was very happy to reiterate the rules of the game whenever required (and sometimes not). Annie's other favourite pastime was the monthly Girls Lunch with Barbara, Janine, Yvonne to name a few.

Over the last 4 years, Annie's health significantly declined but she has enjoyed the most wonderful care at Juniper House in Brackley. Annie became a self-appointed « Head girl » in the home - she had her own little club of friends to socialise with and she regaled residents and staff with her many stories and adventures. The staff were incredibly fond of her even though some of her antics were more reminiscent of the Colonel in *Faulty Towers* as she critiqued the food and the service. In reality she did give it a 5 star rating. It was sometimes difficult to separate fact from fiction as Annie's illness progressed; her life had been so extraordinary. Why would the Queen have not paid her a personal visit or the entire England cricket team sit by her bedside while they apologised at their performance in Australia?

She continued to take the Daily Mail every day (and to believe every word in it) and would not miss watching racing at Cheltenham or Ascot and of course the cricket! The whole family owe a huge debt of gratitude to the staff at Juniper house who we will be making donations to - they all deserve a medal.

So Goodbye Annie - We thank you for your kindness and generosity, your enthusiasm, your encouragement, and for your fun and laughter. You have been so strong and resilient all your life. May you finally rest and be at Peace. “



## David Eoin McCULLAGH

22 November 1948 - 17 October 2024

St Michael & All Angels, Fringford

Fringford church was packed for the funeral of David McCullagh on 1 November. Some people even had to remain outside. Not only had David been hugely active in village life, and village people wanted to pay their respects, but clearly he had touched a wide range of relatives, friends, and people from his working life. He was well loved and respected.

Tributes were paid to David by a former colleague and dear friend Andrew Richards, and his daughter Sophie gave a moving eulogy, summarised below:

“My Dad, David, Mac, Spreader or however you knew him, grew up and spent all of his childhood in a beautiful estate village called Hulcote which is just outside of Towcester. On the Friday before he died, we visited this lovely place together as a family along with his brother Mike and heard many of the wonderful stories about Dad, Mike and Shaun growing up together in the most idyllic of settings.

He went to primary school in Towcester and then onto grammar school in Brackley where he worked hard and proudly played for the 1st rugby fifteen. He then went on to study agriculture at Wye Agricultural College where he met some of his closest friends.

After university, he returned to Northamptonshire to start his career as an agronomist. For those of you who don't quite know what that is, my Mum always described it as 'what a vet does for animals, he does for crops.'

I recently asked my Dad about his very first client. When I asked how he made contact with this farmer, he simply replied 'I knocked on his door.' Dad went on to pursue a long and incredibly rewarding career in agronomy. His passion and enthusiasm for his career is something I have always admired. I always remember wondering how he had the energy to get up so early every morning and to dedicate so many hours to his clients.

Everyone who met him in a professional sense was incredibly lucky to tap into his extensive knowledge, although from speaking to his colleagues over the last few weeks, I believe many were also slightly terrified of him due to his punctuality and attention to detail. One also commented on the benefits Dad passed onto the fledgling agronomists he mentored and said you could 'always tell one of David's.'

Despite his marriage to his job, he did manage to find time to marry my wonderful Mama in 1994. They had met at a mutual friend's 40th birthday a few years before. When Mama contacted her friend the following day to ask for Dad's number, she informed her that she had been too slow and he had already asked for hers. They bought our house in Crosslands here in Fringford and named it after their beloved black Labrador Henry. In 1997, I arrived and quickly became his little princess, which I never grew out of. Mum and Dad provided me with an idyllic childhood, that I will be eternally grateful for.

More recently in 2022, we welcomed a Ukrainian family into our home, which quickly became their home for almost two years. Dad helped them settle in, get through the mountains of paperwork and eventually find them their own wonderful home in Bicester, which they moved into last month.

As I grew up, he shared many of his passions with me. I will treasure our Daddy daughter trips to Franklins gardens for the rest of my life and I will continue to support our beloved Northampton Saints Rugby Club. Skiing is another passion that he shared with me and in the mountains on a bluebird day is probably where we both felt the most content.

His commitment to making other people's lives easier and putting others before himself was truly inspiring. Even in the last few weeks and months, I was completely in awe of his ability to prioritise others. As you come through the green hopefully you will notice the new village sign, new parking, new dry-stone wall and



new playground, all of which have what a fellow villager described as the 'famous McCullagh touch.' Even when he was very poorly, he often made us push him in his wheelchair to inspect the work being carried out and check it was up to his standard.

Whether it was the village, carers' trust, Milton Keynes community shop, the sailing club, the Clarendon club, Kirtlington golf club or whatever other committee he had managed to sneak onto, I can guarantee that it ran like clockwork whenever he was around. So, I wish all the new committee members luck; they certainly have big shoes to fill.

Sadly in 2021, Daddy received an awful diagnosis of advanced cancer in his throat. He approached this horrible situation with the most positive attitude imaginable. The day he got his diagnosis I remember him saying 'we're going to fight this Soph' and that he did. Just six months later we got the all clear.

Since then, he travelled to Italy, France, New Zealand, Australia and Singapore. He played more rounds of golf than you can possibly imagine, bought a few outrageous cars, took a trip to Twickenham to see his beloved Saints finally lift the trophy, and made several very special trips to Edinburgh to visit me in the beautiful flat that he helped me to become proud owner of.

Just a few weeks ago, I said to him 'this is SO unfair' and he simply replied with, 'not really, I got three and a half years extra time.'

He left us before his time but I encourage you to remember him with a smile on your faces remembering what a wonderful man you had the privilege of being your agronomist, relative, husband, friend or neighbour. And as part of his legacy, I urge you to do that thing you've been putting off, book the flights, call that friend, buy the outrageous car... whatever it is, just do it. "



## Club News



**SHELSWELL WI**



For our November meeting we were led by Linda one of our own members. Linda was very patient with us as we were instructed on how to make our own Christmas cards. This involved some quite intricate folding, cleverly resulting in a Christmas tree. It was a lovely evening enjoyed by everyone.

At the end of October several of our members enjoyed an evening at our group event hosted by Tews and Barton WI. We had a very entertaining talk by Richard Preston encouraging us to put our gardens to bed for winter.

In December we are looking forward to both our Christmas meal and the North Ploughley Group Carol Service.

When we return in January 2025 for one month only we will be meeting on Thursday 9 January for an evening of fun with a talk and entertainment 'The History of Old Time American Music'.

Shelswell WI always welcome new members; for more information contact Lesley Beagent 07729 605670



## SHELSWELL GARDEN CLUB



At the November meeting, after the Garden Club's AGM, we welcomed Katharine Woods from Great Missenden. In 2018, Katharine started blogging about her garden and her passion for all things gardening, sharing the joy that she experienced. From there she moved into garden talks and in this talk, she explained how we, as gardeners, can get the most out of the internet, avoiding some of the pitfalls along the way. We learnt about a new platform for bloggers, 'Substack', which does not use advertisements but allows users to earn money from their posts, while giving readers the flexibility to choose their involvement.

Katharine also showed the range of platforms in which we could find every subject imaginable. And while some members were still reluctant to delve too deeply into the online world, it gave us all food for thought.

Next month, **December 12th**, there will be a practical demonstration of making a **Christmas Gonk** as well as festive nibbles and drinks. On January 9th, we have a Zoom meeting with Liz Zorab, an award-winning gardener, video creator, homesteader and best-selling author. On her farm, she grows vegetables, fruit and herbs, as well as flower gardening and promotes living a more sustainable life. She will be talking to us about Gardening Mistakes and how to avoid them. For the first time, we will be showing the Zoom in Hethe village hall, for those who would like to chat and socialise rather than watch at home.

*Secretary, Corrine Mitchell, was sad to report that the current committee have decided to step down from their positions in the summer of 2025. We hope that a new committee will form and take the Garden Club forward with renewed vigour and ideas. However, until then, we have a full programme of exciting talks and events for our members.*

We welcome visitors to our club and meet at Hethe Village Hall at 7.30 pm on the second Tuesday of the month (apart from August). During winter months, some meetings may be held via Zoom. Meetings and outings are open to members and visitors. Your membership card gives you a discount at Swallows Nursery, Mixbury. Club membership fee is now **£15 per year**. This covers all speakers, zoom meetings, as well as entry to *some* evening garden visits. The **visitor fee is now £5**, which will be refunded if the visitor decides to join the Club that evening.

For further information, call Sally Drummond Hay on 01280 848591 or Corrine Mitchell on 01869 247411 (shelswellgardenclub@gmail.com).

## SHELSWELL READING GROUP

Our October book was - 'In Memoriam' by Alice Winn which provided us with a great deal to discuss and was a book enjoyed (if you can say that about the horrors of WW1) by most of us. The themes of love, forbidden love, the brutality of war and comradeship were written with a deft touch, and for a women, we felt that Alice Winn was able to inhabit the male psych.. There may be better books about WW1 and the trenches, and the aftermath of the war, however this took a different tack with a love story between two teenage boys thrust into action. Other key themes were the class divide (all the officers were public school boys), the lost generation of women, and the dichotomy of horror and boredom at the front, as well as poetry as a running thread through the book.

Our next Reading Group meeting will be Wednesday 29th November (NEW DATE) at 7.30 pm at 1&2 Hethe Cottages, Cottisford and the book will be An American Wife by Curtis Sittenfeld

Other books discussed were

The Mission House by Carys Davies – which we will read in December for the January meeting.

The Regeneration Trilogy - Pat Barker

Siegfried Sassoon - Memoirs of a Fox Hunting Man and Memoirs of a Infantry Officer

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society - Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows

Clear - Carys Davies

Foster - Gillian Keegan  
Never Let me Go - Kazuo Ishiguro

There is no December meeting planned although we hope to be able to find a date to go to the Cinema to see 'Small things Like These' starring Cillian Murphy and Emma Watson. If we can't make it to a cinema, we will try and do a 'home cinema' night...

Jane Birnage

## SHELSWELL POETRY APPRECIATION GROUP

Our theme for November (carried over from the cancelled October session) was Rodents. This might not seem to be particularly poetic, but we found plenty of examples, ranging from mice to lemmings!

Mice feature in many poems. John Betjeman (1906-84) used the creature to symbolise human attitudes and behaviour in his poem *Diary of a Church Mouse* and his satire makes for uncomfortable reading for the 'big occasions only' churchgoer. In *To a Mouse*, Robert Burns (1759-96) apologises to one disturbed by his ploughing, and expresses fellowship with it. Theodore Roethke (1908-63), in *The Meadow Mouse*, explores his feelings about a baby mouse, one of the wild creatures 'innocent, hapless, forsaken' at the mercy of nature. In *Cat and Mouse*, Ted Hughes (1930-98) creates a similar sense of vulnerability in a few powerful lines, and Gillian Clarke (b 1937) describes the trauma suffered when she and her children found a fieldmouse injured during harvest. She aligns its suffering with that of humanity in wartime in *The Field Mouse*.

The libretto of Benjamin Britten's cantata *Rejoice in the Lamb* uses the words of Christopher Smart (1722-71) from the poem *Jubilate Agno*, written whilst incarcerated in a lunatic asylum. On a simpler level the poem *The City Mouse and the Garden Mouse*, by Christina Rossetti (1830-94) is both educational and touching, describing the mouse as 'poor little timid furry man'. She is similarly sympathetic towards a creature many treat as a pest in *My Mouse* – a memorial to a beloved pet. Paul Verlaine (1844-1896) sees the mouse as a symbol of night-time in *Impression Fausse* and calls it 'Dame mouse', creating a sense of companionship.

There is less sympathy to be found in poems about rats. John Gay (1685-1732) turned one of Aesop's Fables into a poem entitled *The Rat-Catcher and Cats* and turns it into a moral tale of conflict of interests with a mercantilist twist. In *Break of Day in the Trenches* Isaac Rosenberg (1890-1918) addresses a rat - whose kind swarmed over the World War I battlefields - and expresses a wry appreciation of how the rat has more chance of surviving the war than do the soldiers fighting it. Few poems with a strong streak of humour can have been written about rats, but Robert Browning (1812-89), in *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, employs it in his description of the townsfolk when invaded by an army of vermin.

Two humorous poems about squirrels ('rats with bushy tails') are *Squirrels Go Nuts* by Eric Ashford, written in 2024, and *Two Squirrels Discussing Poetry*, by John Lawless, another contemporary poet. Guinea pigs, those pets so often ending up in a parent's reluctant care, find their way into an anonymous nonsense poem, *A Guinea Pig*, written around 1775, *The Guinea Pig and the Green Balloon*, by Oni Buchanan (b1975) and *A Guinea Pig is Dead* by Caren Krutsinger, (writing in 2018).

Ogden Nash (1902-71) chose the porcupine for a humorous 4-line verse in *The Porcupine*, and in *Lake Beaver* Melvin Walker La Folle (1930-2015) considers how humans exploit beavers for their fur. A poem about lemmings, comparing them with humans moving ever westward across America, is *The Lemmings* by John Masefield (1878-1967). A creature common in parts of America is described as 'a small, brown flame' by Robert Gibb (b 1946) in *For the Chipmunk in My Yard*. Finally, in *Another Day Safe from the Harvester's Jaws*, Wendy Watson, a contemporary poet, imagines the consternation caused in a harvest field inhabited by many tiny rodents.

If you would like to join the group, please contact me on 01869 811994 or at [judith.harvey@live.co.uk](mailto: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, Honeysuckle Cottage, 11 Hardwick  
 PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER Flora Skinner  
 MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Sandra Bickmore, Thatch End, Juniper Hill (sandrambickmore@gmail.com)

Tel 01280 848247

Tel 01869 277690

Tel: 01869 277366

#### SERVICES

Sunday 15th December 4pm Carol Service

Christmas Eve 10 pm Early Midnight Communion

#### COTTISFORD AND JUNIPER HILL SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The Social Committee would like to thank everyone who came and supported both the bonfire night and the coffee morning. The bonfire raised £142 going towards Social Committee funds. The coffee morning raised more than £120 split between the Social Committee and Friends of Cottisford Church. The Social Committee are looking to help fund a defibrillator and also this time of year there is always the possibility that we may need to pay for a snow plough.

In December we are looking forward to a pop up pub on Saturday 7th being hosted by Jane and David. The following weekend the church will be decorated for Christmas on Saturday 14th and the Carol Service will take place on Sunday 15th at 4pm, followed by tea, coffee and mince pies.

If you would like to help at any of our activities or would like to host a coffee morning or pop up pub.

Contact Sandra on [sandrambickmore@gmail.com](mailto:sandrambickmore@gmail.com)



### Finmere

#### St Michael and All Angels

CHURCHWARDEN: Barbara Cunningham, 'Woodlea' Finmere,  
 TREASURER: Emma Brennan  
 PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Katherine Grimston, The Old Rectory, Finmere  
 MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Paul Nash Email: paan63@yahoo.co.uk

Tel: 01280 847992

emma\_mary@hotmail.co.uk

Tel: 01280 848364

Tel 01280 848268

#### Church Services

Friday 6 th December – Finmere Carol Service (7.15pm at the tree; 7.30pm in church)

Sunday 8th December 4pm Village Hall, Connect Informal Worship

Sunday 15th December 9.15 am Holy Communion

Sunday 22nd December 9.15 am Holy Communion

Christmas Eve 10 pm Early Midnight Communion

#### Village Hall

The village hall has been fully renovated and is now available for hire. A number of facilities have been added, including updated AV facilities with a new projector with larger screen, new flooring and front and fire exit doors and enlarged storage spaces for regular users. WiFi facilities are also now available.

Patio doors have been installed, leading onto a hard standing, adjacent to the children's play area, making the hall ideal for children's & adult's events alike. For all hall bookings enquiries, please visit

[www.myfinmere.com/villagehall](http://www.myfinmere.com/villagehall) [www.myfinmere.com/villagehall](http://www.myfinmere.com/villagehall).



# Light lunch

Finmere Village Hall  
4th Tuesday of the month

**THERE IS NO LIGHT LUNCH IN  
DECEMBER, THE NEXT ONE IS  
January 28th 12.30-2pm**

Everyone welcome,  
donations to cover costs appreciated.



**For more information, ask for help with transport  
or to let us know about specific dietary needs  
contact Richard & Debbie Bloomfield (07765 874090)**

# Christmas POP-UP PUB

**Friday 13 December  
7-10pm  
Finmere Church**

Join us for an evening of good company and festive cheer  
Mulled wine & festive treats provided  
Please bring any other drinks you'd like!  
Donations towards heating and refreshments  
gratefully received (card or cash)

## Allotments



It may be dark and murky but there's still plenty of life on the allotment. The Fieldfares are busily flying around and winter vegetables just waiting for Christmas. All this for £20 a year, so let us know if you are interested in a plot.

And remember : it's not always hard work!

Interested, visit [www.myfinmere.com/poorsplot](http://www.myfinmere.com/poorsplot) and select the 'enquiry' link.

*Jean  
Allotment correspondent*



Please come along to support Finmere's  
**"Tuesday Teas"**

If you are at home in the day, please pop into the Village Hall for a cuppa & a catch-up...

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup>. December, 2.00pm-4.00pm**

All locals 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 with "Tuesday Teas", 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](http://www.shelswellparishes.info/finmere)

Finmere Parish Council website at – [www.finmerepc.org](http://www.finmerepc.org)

Village hall news at – [www.myfinmere.com](http://www.myfinmere.com)

Finmere Poor's Plot – [www.myfinmere.com/poorsplot](http://www.myfinmere.com/poorsplot)

Old Finmere history website – [www.myfinmere.com/history](http://www.myfinmere.com/history)

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

Finmere Primary School - [www.finmere.oxon.sch.uk](http://www.finmere.oxon.sch.uk)

## Fringford

### St Michael and All Angels

CHURCHWARDEN:	John Mayo, 10 Church Close, Fringford	Tel 01869 278873
TREASURER:	Christina McCullagh, 5 Crosslands, Fringford	Tel 07867 515207
PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER	Penny Wood, as below	
MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT:	Penny Wood, 8 Crosslands, Fringford	Tel 01869 277310
VILLAGE HALL CORRESPONDENT:	Christine Underwood	Tel 01869 278949
WEBSITE	<a href="http://www.fringford.info">www.fringford.info</a>	

### ST MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS, SERVICES & EVENTS

#### Services

- Sunday 1 December – Advent Sunday – at 10.45am Morning Service
- Sunday 1 December – Advent Sunday - at 6.00pm in Hardwick Church, a service of Readings, Hymns and Music for Advent.
- Sunday 15 December – at 4.00pm Fringford Carol Service (with Fringford School Choir)
- Sunday 24 December – Christmas Eve – at 4.00pm Crib Service in Stratton Audley Church.
- Sunday 24 December - Christmas Eve – Midnight Communion in Fringford – at 11.30pm
- 25 December – Christmas Day – at 10.45am – Family Service in Fringford.
- 29 December – at 10.45am, Holy Communion



To find out the times and places of other services on Sundays, please check the back cover of this magazine, the Benefice website [www.shelswellparishes.info](http://www.shelswellparishes.info), the noticeboard at the church, or ring the Benefice office (01280-848192). You will always be welcome in our other parishes.

### **Carol Singing Round the Village**

Join us to carol sing around the village (well, part of it) on Thursday 19 December. Meet up by the church gate at 6.30pm. Bring a torch. Collecting in aid of Nai's House a local charity offering mental health support for young people.

### **Light Party**

There was a change of venue for the Light Party; in the event it took place in the village hall on 31 October. We were delighted to welcome quite a number of children and parents to enjoy worship, tea, and a range of activities from apple bobbing to doughnut gobbling!

### **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 1<sup>st</sup> prize £61, 2<sup>nd</sup> £37, 3<sup>rd</sup> £25. 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.

### **Little Lambs Babies & Toddler Group**

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

### **Fringford Village Coffee Morning**

Village Coffee Mornings will take place on Monday 16 December, and Monday 20 January 2025. Drop by for a coffee/tea and a chat any time between 10.30am and 12 noon. It is 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 or create craft items/albums.

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 at Fringford Village Hall.

### **Our next sessions for 2024/25 are:**

<b>December</b>	<b>Sunday 15<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>January 25</b>	<b>Sunday 26<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>February</b>	<b>Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup></b>

Sessions are £2.00 drop in - No need to book – just come and join us!  
If you would like information, please email Irene [ireneethomas@btinternet.com](mailto: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
<p style="text-align: center;">FS Dance Monday &amp; Wednesday (term time) After school classes BALLET • TAP • MODERN • STREET leah.fsd@gmail.com or 07885827592</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">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</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Puppy Stars Dog Training Tuesday evening – various classes  Contact Nick 07542 131400 <a href="http://www.puppystars.co.uk">www.puppystars.co.uk</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Parish Council Meeting All villagers welcome Third Monday in the month 7.45pm  Contact 01844 237766 or <a href="mailto:fringford.parishclerk@gmail.com">fringford.parishclerk@gmail.com</a></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Fringford Yoga Wednesday (term time) 9.30am – 11am Carolyn White 01869 277161</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Bicester Meditation Space &amp; Sound Bath  First Sunday of the month from 6 -9 pm Sonia - <a href="mailto:contact@holisticaxis.com">contact@holisticaxis.com</a> Please text - 07709634847</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Just Puppies Puppy Training Wednesday evening – various classes  Contact Kerri 07720 891489 <a href="http://www.justpuppies.training">www.justpuppies.training</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Shelswell WI  First Thursday of the month 7.30pm (Not December or August) Contact Lesley Beagent on 07729605670</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Pilates Thursday at 10.00am <a href="mailto:natashaflowerspilates@gmail.com">natashaflowerspilates@gmail.com</a> or 07545 525820</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Mindfulness Meditation Monthly Sunday 11am to 12.30pm <a href="mailto:janerainey17@gmail.com">janerainey17@gmail.com</a> or 07971 008337</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">My Baby Spa Monday mornings Spa experience for babies and toddlers 1 – 4 years <a href="http://www.mybabyspa.co.uk">www.mybabyspa.co.uk</a> contact Danielle at <a href="mailto:contact@mybabyspa.co.uk">contact@mybabyspa.co.uk</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Fringford Sewcial Sew and Chat! Monthly Wednesday from 7pm Or Sunday from 3pm Contact Irene at <a href="mailto:ireneethomas@btinternet.com">ireneethomas@btinternet.com</a></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Village Hall Team Meeting Please contact for dates  Open meetings – all welcome <a href="mailto:fringford.hall@gmail.com">fringford.hall@gmail.com</a> or 07936 879175</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">To book the hall for your own event, please go to <a href="http://fringford.info">fringford.info</a>, 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: <a href="mailto:fringford.hall@gmail.com">fringford.hall@gmail.com</a></p>	

## Hardwick St Mary the Virgin

CHURCHWARDEN: David Barnes, Honeysuckle Cottage, 11 Hardwick  
 TREASURER: David Barnes, Honeysuckle Cottage, 11 Hardwick  
 PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Flora Skinner  
 MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Veronica Barnes, Honeysuckle Cottage, 11 Hardwick  
 WEBSITE: <http://hardwickvillage.btck.co.uk>

Tel 01869 277690  
 Tel 01869 277690  
 Tel: 01869 277366  
 Tel 01869 277690

### Services

Sunday 1st December 9.15 am Holy Communion  
 Sunday 22nd December 4 pm Carol Service  
 Christmas Day 9.15 am Holy Communion

## CHRISTMAS IN HARDWICK



Please join us for these festive events at  
**St. Mary's Church, Hardwick**

**Christmas Carol Service**  
 on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December at 4 pm  
 followed by refreshments  
 and

A service of **Holy Communion**  
 on Christmas Day at 9:15 am



**All welcome**



**From 1<sup>st</sup> November during the winter months**

**Hardwick Church will be open on Saturdays & Sundays 10am to 4pm.**

Private prayer and quiet contemplation  
 View the architecture, memorials and stained-glass windows

Please make use of this special space

### 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 (01869 277690), 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 (01869 277690), 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

Tel 01869 277366

TREASURER: Mike Green, Greenhill Cottage, Main Street, Hethe

Tel 01869 278166

PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Flora Skinner as above

MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Mike Green as above

Tel 01869 278166

WEBSITE: [www.hethe.org](http://www.hethe.org)

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. The deadline for the next edition of the Shelswell News is on Page 2.



Happy Christmas to everyone, very best wishes for the New Year and many thanks to the volunteers who have worked so hard this year to make our church a special place in the community. The volunteers undertake varied roles from helping to maintain the churchyard, to church cleaning, to providing flowers, to being members of the PCC – all are thanked for their contributions.

## ST EDMUND & ST GEORGE CHURCH

### Church Services and Events



The church is now open for visits and private prayer, except for the eastern end of the nave and the chancel which will not be accessible until further notice (apart from limited access during services). Unfortunately the church is not a “warm space”, except during the service on the second Sunday of each month, so please dress appropriately. Note that the lay led service on 22<sup>nd</sup> December, starting at 9.30am, will be held in the Village Hall – and that is a “warm space”!

Remember that you will always be welcome at services in any of our 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>.



**Remembrance Service.** Thank you to everyone who contributed to the collection of £110 at the Remembrance Service, all of which has been given to the Royal British Legion.

**Church Restoration.** We are working with our Church Architect to identify and specify the further work required to solve the damp problems in the church. We don't know at this stage what the cost will be of restoring the church, we also have an outstanding issue with the west window in the nave and we are heading for an in-year deficit. If you can contribute to meeting the cost, please scan this QR Code:



If you prefer to contribute to other church expenses, you may make a one-off gift through a single transaction or set up regular donations, using a debit or credit card, or Apple or Google Pay, using the secure Parish Giving (PGS) website - <https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/home/> or through the following QR Code (note that our gaining a Silver Eco Church Award has been at no cost to the church):



Scan here to make a one-off donation or to set up regular giving by direct debit

**100 Club.** There are still plenty of numbers if you wish to join! Please contact Mike or one of the other PCC members for an application form (full details on the village website).

**Fund Raising.** Thanks to Flora for providing the refreshments at the Autumnal Fayre in October, where £270 was donated for the church.

**Churchyard.** Many thanks to everyone who helped in raking the churchyard.

Next **PCC Meeting** Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

## HETHE COMMUNITY ACTIVITY

**Heating & Safety.** In winter, electric blankets can reduce the need for heating. Oxfordshire's Fire and Rescue Service offers free electric blanket testing to all Oxfordshire residents. To request a test call 01865 895999 and select option 3.



## Hethe Community Coffee Morning in St Philip's Hall

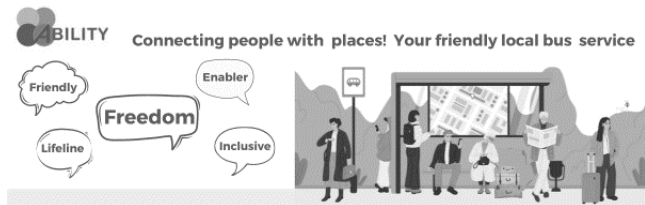
**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December from 10.00am to 12.00pm**

*Friends, neighbours, dog walkers, pram pushers:  
an opportunity to meet during the daytime – there's great  
cake too!*



**Climate Action Groups.** If you would like to join a Climate Action Group to discuss and take action in and around Hethe, please let us know. Contact [hethenews@outlook.com](mailto:hethenews@outlook.com).

### The New Bus Service



Monday to Saturday - pick up at Hethe War Memorial at 07.39, 10.54, 1342 and 15.42. Last bus departs Bicester at 17.50 to arrive in Hethe at 18.12.

**Parish Council.** The next meeting of the Parish Council is to be held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025, starting at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

For **Village Hall bookings**, please contact Flora, the Village Hall Booking Secretary, on 01869 277366 [fjskinner@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:fjskinner@hotmail.co.uk).

**The Stay & Play Group** contact is Kelly Woodford on 07716 981263. They meet on Friday mornings.

**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:

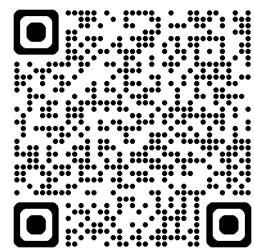
Community Spirit of the Hethens

Hethe Community

Hethe Allotments

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

Shelswell Lift Share WhatsApp Group – Contact Flora to join



## 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 [pasgoodman551@gmail.com](mailto:pasgoodman551@gmail.com)

Tel 07899 792552

Tel 01280 848295

Tel 01280 847769

Tel 01280 848295

Tel 01280 848002

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](mailto:pasgoodman551@gmail.com) or telephone: 01280 848002.

## MIXBURY CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 8th December 9.15 am Mixbury Half Hour  
 Sunday 22nd December 4.30 pm Nativity and Carols  
 Christmas Day 9.15 am Holy Communion

## MIXBURY CHURCH FLOWER ROTA 2024 - Up and Running Again

December Carol service and Christmas - everyone  
 Reserve Sam Lockwood



## MIXBURY CHURCH CLEANING ROTA 2024

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered to go on this rota in order to clean and to help maintain the church throughout the year. Your hard work is very much appreciated.

DECEMBER Gail Bellingham, Mel Soar & Sue Boshier

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. For more information please contact - Julie Mitchell on 01280 – 847769

## 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 – email: [markandtanya@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:markandtanya@yahoo.co.uk).



## REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Remembrance Sunday was well attended. From the First World War the following were remembered: Edward Blencowe, Gordon Hancock, Leslie Paxton and Robert Strickland, From the Second World War: John Aldsworth and Robert Dunkley. Rev. Alice Goodall led the service.



## MIXBURY BONFIRE 3<sup>RD</sup> NOVEMBER 2024; CASTLE FIELD

The first bonfire to be held in Castle Field was a fantastic success – well done Jon Berrie and team.

## PROJECT POPPY 2025

A small enthusiastic group of villagers have expressed how lovely it would be to see Mixbury Church War Memorial and Church decorated with poppies like other churches in the area especially as 2025 will be the 80th anniversary year of the end of WW2.

We would like to invite knitters/sewers/artists/people who crochet, the young as well as the slightly more mature people, to join this community project.

We need a very large quantity of poppies, all sizes, not just red, some purple ones for the animals that served in the war and just to give an idea of what could be achieved I will have posted some photos of a church I have visited elsewhere on the Mixbury Facebook page and am not saying we can produce a display of such a huge scale as in the photos, but we can make a start. I think it would be very ambitious to do a cascade from the top of the tower - but who knows once people get knitting and on board.....



Poppies can be made of felt or material not necessarily wool. A plastic box will be left in the church porch for completed poppies so ask around for donations of red/purple and black wool, visit charity shops to see if they have any wool, get family members on board to help. (Donations of wool can also be left in the box).

As soon as we have a good supply of poppies we would need to start assembling and a working party will be needed. If you are interested in helping please let me know, there will be coffee/cake, and lots of chat and laughter - possibly making new friends and meeting neighbours. We have till the mid October 2025 to complete this project - ***and we cannot do it without you.*** There are lots of knitting/crochet patterns on line for poppies and if you cannot knit/crochet but want to participate there are lots of YouTube tutorials also on line, if you need help please ask.

So get those needles out, get sewing, get creative!

In anticipation.....from

Sue Goodman and fellow Book Club Members - email: [pasgoodman551@gmail.com](mailto:pasgoodman551@gmail.com) Tel: 01280 848002

### BOOKS IN CHURCH

Looking for something to read on the dark winter nights? there is a large selection of paper and hard back books in the Church. Feel free to take one and leave any books you no longer want. They are located directly in front of you when you walk through the door – just behind the organ next to the North Door.

### CHRISTMAS TREES

Get your Christmas Tree locally from Swallows Nursery this year!

### WELCOME TO THE VILLAGE

**If you have recently moved here – WELCOME!**

*Happy Christmas and New Year to You All - thank you for your contributions during the year.*

*From the Magazine Correspondent.*



## Newton Purcell St Michael and All Angels

CHURCHWARDENS: Ann von Maltzahn, Home Farm Shelswell Park  
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:-

Sunday 1st December - 9.15 a.m. Holy Communion

Wednesday 25th December - 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion



**STOP PRESS!!**

Get ahead with your Christmas shopping and come to our **Christmas Market** on **Saturday 30th November** in The Old School, Newton Purcell.

Masses of lovely things to buy and Mulled Wine with Mince Pies all day!

**Remembrance Sunday:-**

Our thanks to Carolyn Oley who conducted the service and her husband John who played the organ for us on Sunday 10th November. We remembered those from the parish who perished in both the 1st and 2nd World wars and all those soldiers and civilians who continue to be killed in the dreadful continuing conflicts around the world.

The church collection will be donated to The Royal British Legion along with monies collected around the village for the Poppy Appeal. Thank you to everyone for your generosity.

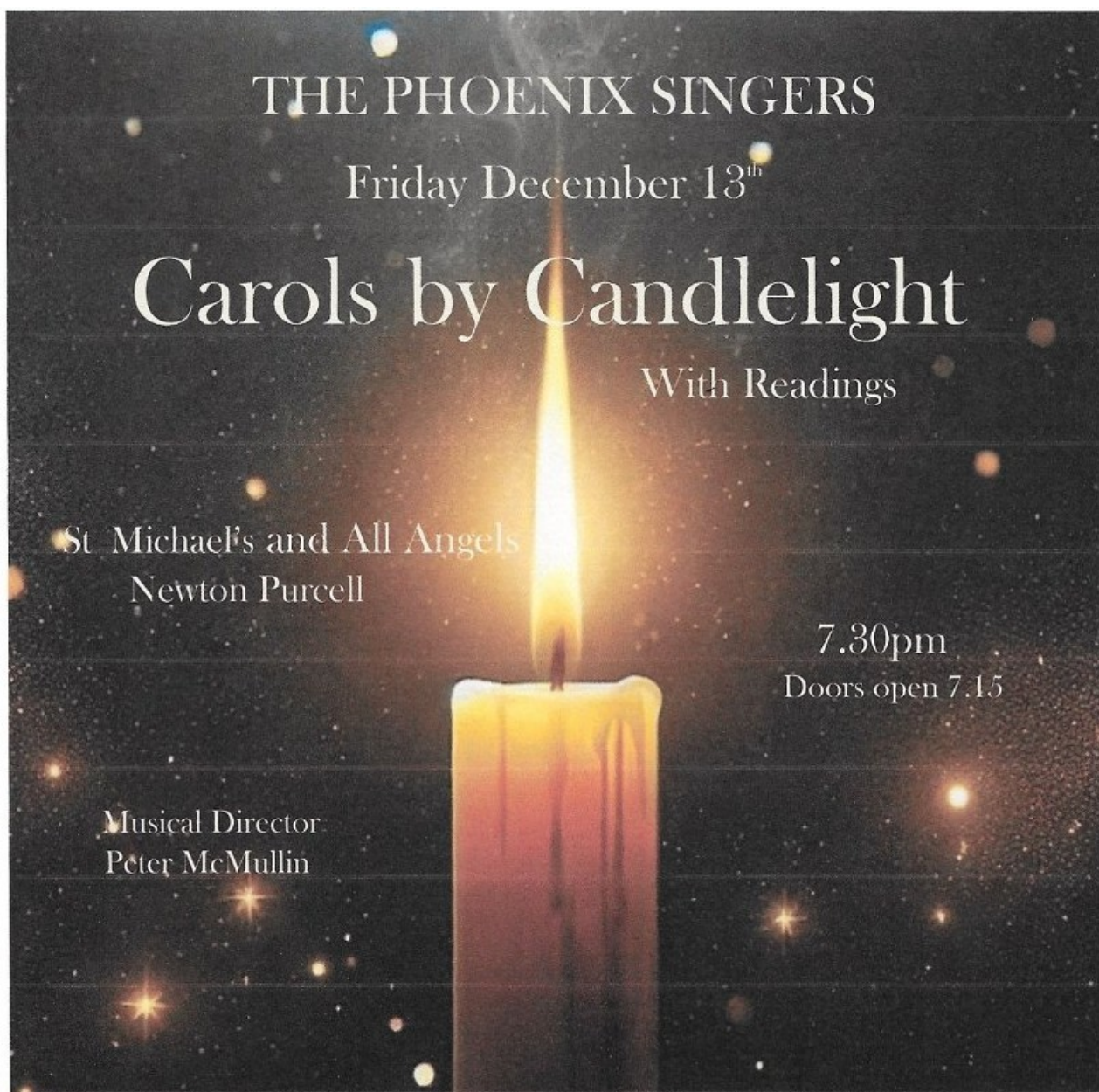
**Bonus Ball Lotto:-**

Our recent lucky winner was Patrick Clarke

*Continued overleaf*

**The Christmas Concert:-**

We look forward to welcoming all who are able to come to our Christmas Concert on **Friday 13th December**. The Phoenix Singers will entertain us once more and there will be the usual refreshments plus a Secret Santa. If you have any small gift you could wrap to put under the tree please bring it along on the night. This is always a very popular event so please reserve your ticket or tickets in good time by contacting [ann\\_maltzahn@yahoo.com](mailto:ann_maltzahn@yahoo.com). The ticket price remains £10 per head which is payable on the door.



We wish all our readers A HAPPY & PEACEFUL CHRISTMAS.

## Stoke Lyne St Peter's

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### **Forthcoming December Events**

1 <sup>st</sup> December	Food For Thought
5 <sup>th</sup> December	Midweek Holy Communion and Soup Lunch
7 <sup>th</sup> December	Christmas Quiz - details in the advert on page 7
14 <sup>th</sup> December	An Afternoon of Christmas Cheer - details in the advert on page 10
22 <sup>nd</sup> December	Carol Service
Christmas Day	Family Communion

For more information on church services see the back page.

## **St Peter's Church, Stoke Lyne**

### **Welcomes you to a**

### **Carol service**

### **With readings, poems and of course lots of carols**

### **Sunday 22nd December**

### **6pm**

### **After the service why not stay for some**

### **Mulled wine and mince pies**



### **Flower Duty for December**

Janey Poole

### **Midweek Communion – Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> November**

This is a short service of communion, it is ideal for people across the Benefice who are unable to attend other services, lifts can be arranged if necessary.

The service was led by Rev Sam Mortimer assisted by Liz Welters. Sam welcomed all with prayers. The reading was from St John's gospel chapter 15:9-17. This passage speaks about a Father's love and to be loved back.

*“My command is this, love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.”*

Sam then gave a reflection on a holiday he had recently, in a Mediterranean country, where he came to a place where a temple had been set on fire in an arson attack. All of the palm trees around the site had been



*Midweek Communion, continued*

burned, and you would have thought they would have died as the bark was completely blackened, but each one had a vibrant crown of leaves sticking out of the top.

This reminded him of the sacrifice that our service personnel and others who serve in conflict make when they put their lives on the line to fight for justice and peace, and security for all. Like the trees, our communities grow back with strength after hardship. So as we remember those who suffered and died let's give thanks for them. Let's show our respect for their memory by living, working and acting with kindness and wisdom and courage, serving others as they served us, to build a better society that demonstrates the love of God to everyone, particularly the vulnerable and needy amongst us.



Prayers were then said for people you may know who are ill, also the families who are mourning a loved one. We then had communion served by Sam and Liz after which we moved to tables set for lunch. There was a choice of parsnip soup made by Ali or pumpkin soup made by Penny followed by apple crumble and custard made by Liz or a piece of the celebration cake made for Penny.

Thank you to all the Clergy and others who had provided the food and helped in any way.

**Stoke Lyne 100 Club - November Results**

1 <sup>st</sup> Prize	Membership No 53	Nikki Popoola
2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize	Membership No 23	Elaine Barnes
3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize	Membership No 36	Adrian Taylor

Congratulations to all winners and once again spread the word to newcomers in the village so we can increase our prize money. The next 100 club will be drawn on the 14<sup>th</sup> December at the Stoke Lyne Christmas Event. Come to hear the results and have a glass of beer, a mulled wine or a cup of tea.

Janey Poole

Treasurer, St Peter's Church PCC [janey@oxford-educational.co.uk](mailto:janey@oxford-educational.co.uk)

**Thank You!**

We are now home!!! We wanted to take this opportunity to say a very big thank you for your welcome and for taking us under your wing when we came in February in a state of shock and despair. We have thoroughly enjoyed being part of life in Stoke Lyne and also part of the church family which means a great deal to us. We will be for ever grateful.

Thank you once again.

Steve and Angie Wright

## A Memorable Remembrance Sunday at St Peter's, Stoke Lyne!

On the unusually bright Autumn morning of Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> November, villagers and visitors gathered at St Peter's Church for the annual Remembrance Day service.

It was a pleasure to welcome Father Alex to officiate at this important service. It was his first time leading such a solemn service and he ran it in a sensitive manner. The service began promptly with a warm welcome and a reflection on the importance of remembrance in fostering gratitude and unity. His words carried through the nave, touching each heart with their sincerity. As the congregation stood in silence, the atmosphere was solemn with reverence and remembrance, a collective pause to honour those who had served and fallen in conflicts past and present.

We surrounded the war memorials of WW1 and WW2 at the west end of the nave and joined together in the Act of Remembrance. The names of the departed were beautifully read by Rena who also read the Exhortation:

*"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old,  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them."*

Seven-year-old Alma from Stoke Lyne bravely delivered the next reading

*"At the going down of the sun,  
And in the morning  
We will remember them"*

At the eleventh hour, the Last Post sounded poignantly throughout the church, sending tingles down the spine and putting lumps in the throats of all present. Always a moving moment, this marked the beginning of the two-minute silence followed by the rousing Reveille. The buglers notes echoed through the church, stirring poignant memories and emotions. Heads bowed, a profound stillness enveloped St Peter's.

We sang hymns that resonated with themes of hope and peace, reminding all present of the enduring message of Remembrance Day: to honour the past while striving for a better future. The service concluded with the singing of the National Anthem.

Christopher Poole Church Warden, St Peter's Church, Stoke Lyne

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Penny Oakey, Grange Farm, Godington

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Tel 07725 009838

TREASURER: Fai Li

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MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Vacant (Stratton Audley); Sylvia List (Godington) [editor@shelswellparishes.info](mailto:editor@shelswellparishes.info)

## CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 1st December 6.00 pm Reflective Service of Music and Readings for Advent, Stratton Audley

Sunday 8th December 10.45 am Morning Service, Stratton Audley

Friday 20th December 7.00 pm Carol Service, Godington

Sunday 22nd December 6.00 pm Carol Service, Stratton Audley

Christmas Eve, 4 pm Crib Service, Stratton Audley

Christmas Day 10.45 am Holy Communion, Stratton Audley

## Carol Service

Friday 20th December 7.00 pm

Holy Trinity Godington



## Carol Service

Sunday 22nd December 6.00 pm

St Mary & St Edburga Stratton Audley



## ‘THANK YOU’ FROM THE DAVIS FAMILY

The Davis family would like to thank everyone who attended Margaret’s funeral on the afternoon of Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> October. They were so grateful for all the support on the day. And the very generous donations in memory of Margaret were much appreciated. Nearly £800 was raised to be divided between the church and the Oxford United Community Fund. They are sorry not to be able to thank everyone individually but can’t be sure of identifying all those who were at the service. Please accept this acknowledgement as a personal ‘Thank you’ from the family.

## FOODBANK AT CHRISTMAS

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. The Rector, Alice Goodall is a ‘Local Referrer’ and can refer anyone who is in need to the Bicester Foodbank. Contact: Alice Goodall, The Rectory, Finmere 01280 848192 [alicegoodall313@gmail.com](mailto:alicegoodall313@gmail.com)



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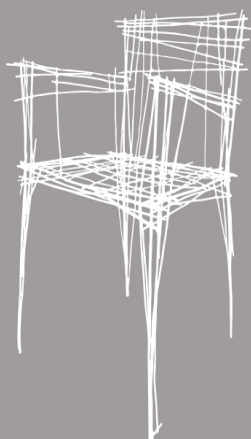
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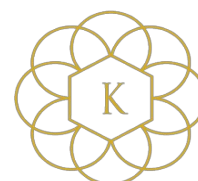


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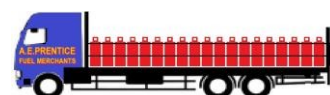
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**SHELSWELL GROUP SERVICES: DECEMBER 2024**

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

| DATE     | 1 <sup>st</sup> December<br>Advent Sunday                                                        |                                                                    |                                                                                            |                                                               |                                                                                                   |                                                                    |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ALTAR    | Purple                                                                                           | 8 <sup>th</sup> December<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent       | 15 <sup>th</sup> December<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent                              | 22 <sup>nd</sup> December<br>4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent | 24 <sup>th</sup> December<br>Christmas Eve                                                        | 25 <sup>th</sup> December<br>Christmas Day                         |
| 8.00 am  |                                                                                                  | Purple                                                             | Purple                                                                                     | Purple                                                        | White                                                                                             | White                                                              |
| 9.15 am  | 9.15am<br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>HARDWICK<br>AG                                    | 9.15am<br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>HETHE<br>AG         | 9.15am<br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>FINMERE<br>AM                               | 9.15am<br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>FINMERE<br>AG  | 9.15am<br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>HETHE MK<br>9.15am<br>Holy Communion<br>MIXBURY AG | 9.15am<br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>FRINGFORD<br>LW/PW  |
|          | 9.15am<br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>NEWTON PURCELL (BCP)<br>AM                        | 9.15am<br>Mixbury Half Hour<br>PW                                  |                                                                                            | 9.30am<br>Morning Service<br>HETHE VILLAGE HALL<br>Lay led    | 4pm<br>Crib Service<br>STRATTON AUDLEY<br>AG/PW                                                   | 9.30am<br>Holy Communion<br>NEWTON PURCELL SM                      |
| 10.45 am | 10am<br>'Food for Thought'<br>STOKE LYNE Lay-led                                                 | 10.45am<br>Morning Service<br>STRATTON AUDLEY<br>LW                |                                                                                            | 4pm<br>Carol Service<br>HARDWICK<br>PW                        | 4pm<br>Crib Service<br>STRATTON AUDLEY<br>AG/PW                                                   | 10.45am<br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>FRINGFORD<br>LW/PW |
|          | 10.45am<br>Morning Service<br>FRINGFORD<br>PW                                                    |                                                                    | 4pm<br>Carol Service<br>COTTISFORD<br>SM                                                   | 4.30pm<br>Nativity and Carols<br>MIXBURY<br>AG                | 10pm<br>Early Midnight<br>Communion (CW)<br>FINMERE AG                                            | 10.30am<br>Family Communion<br>STOKE LYNE LW                       |
|          |                                                                                                  | 4pm<br>'Connect' Internal Worship<br>FINMERE VILLAGE HALL<br>SM/AM | 4pm<br>Carol Service<br>FRINGFORD<br>PW                                                    | 6pm<br>Ecumenical Carol<br>Service<br>HETHE<br>SM             | 10pm<br>Early Midnight Communion<br>(CW)<br>COTTISFORD SM                                         | 10.45am<br>Holy Communion<br>HARDWICK AG                           |
|          | 6pm<br>Reflective Service of Music<br>and Readings for<br>Advent Sunday<br>STRATTON AUDLEY<br>PW | 6pm<br>Evening Communion<br>STOKE LYNE<br>AG                       | 4pm<br>'Fun @ 4' Christingle Event<br>with crafts, food and<br>worship<br>STOKE LYNE<br>AG | 6pm<br>Carol Service<br>STOKE LYNE<br>AM                      | 11.30pm<br>Midnight Communion (CW)<br>FRINGFORD AM                                                | 10.45am<br>Holy Communion<br>STRATTON AUDLEY AM                    |
| 6.00 pm  |                                                                                                  |                                                                    |                                                                                            | 6pm<br>Carol Service<br>STRATTON AUDLEY<br>LW                 |                                                                                                   |                                                                    |

AG: Revd Alice Goodall    MK: Revd Canon Michael Kingston    AM: Revd Alex Nahlava    SM: Revd Sam Mortimer    LW: Revd Liz Wellers    PW: Mrs Penny Wood (LLM)

**Carol Services on Weekdays**

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December – **Finmere Carol Service** (7.15pm at the tree; 7.30pm in church)

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December – **Godington Carol Service** (7pm)