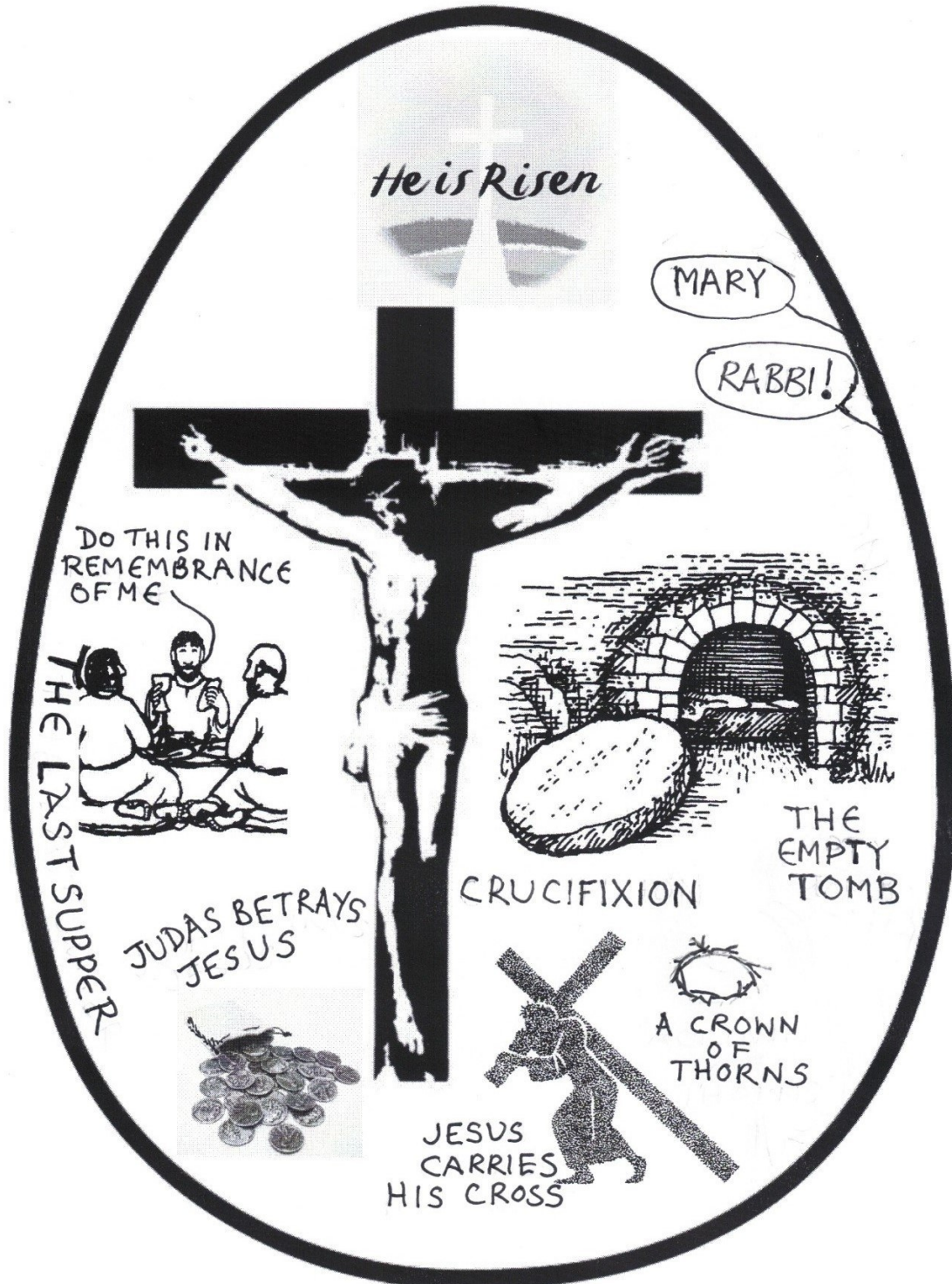


# Shelswell News

The magazine of the Shelswell Group of Churches

Cottisford  
Fringford  
Hardwick  
Mixbury  
Stoke Lyne

Finmere  
Godington  
Hethe  
Newton Purcell  
Stratton Audley



## 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

**RECTOR:** Vacancy

**BENEFICE ADMINISTRATOR:** Mrs Becky Adams, c/o The Shelswell Benefice Office, 6 Chinalls Close, Finmere, Buckingham MK18 4BQ Tel: 07928 990569 Email [admin@shelswellparishes.info](mailto:admin@shelswellparishes.info) Administrator's normal office hours: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 9.00 am – 1.00 pm

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**LICENSED LAY MINISTER:** Mrs Penny Wood, 8 Crosslands Fringford, Bicester, Oxon. OX27 8DF Telephone: 01869 277310 Email [penelope.wood@btopenworld.com](mailto:penelope.wood@btopenworld.com)

**BENEFICE TREASURER:** Mr Philip Austin c/o The Shelswell Benefice Office, 6 Chinalls Close, Finmere, Buckingham MK18 4BQ or email [philandpenni@live.com](mailto:philandpenni@live.com)

**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.holytrinityhethes.co.uk/>

#### **SHELLOWELL NEWS**

Published monthly. To subscribe, contact Mrs Becky Adams, Benefice Administrator, The Shelswell Benefice Office, 6 Chinalls Close, Finmere, Buckingham MK18 4BQ Email [admin@shelswellparishes.info](mailto:admin@shelswellparishes.info)

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**Deadlines** for the **May** edition of Shelswell News

To Magazine Correspondents: **Midday on Friday 17th April**

Correspondents to Editor: **Midday on Sunday 19th April** 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 .

## INTEGRITY

Listening to the news programs these days, on television or on the radio, I find myself doubting the veracity of what I'm hearing. So many opinions, so many conflicting claims, so much vitriol. What is going on? What is the truth? Who should I trust?

Struggling with these uncertainties has made me remember some words from St Matthew's Gospel. They are part of a block of Jesus' teaching in what has come to be called 'The Sermon on the Mount'. Here they are:

"Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.'<sup>34</sup> But I say to you: Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God,<sup>35</sup> or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.<sup>36</sup> And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.<sup>37</sup> Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one.

And this teaching is echoed in the Letter of James, chapter 5:

<sup>12</sup>Above all, brothers and sisters, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "Yes" be yes and your "No" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

When Jesus instructs us to let our "yes" be yes and our "no" be no, I think he is calling us to be truthful and trustworthy in our communication with others. We build credibility and strengthen our relationships based on mutual trust by being clear and direct in our agreements and promises, and in what we talk about.

A person of integrity does not need to swear by anything.

A person of integrity is honest, does not manipulate their words to hide and deceive.

A person of integrity tries to establish the facts, does not spread rumours. Rather, speak simply, be known as a reliable person whose word alone is sufficient.

Sometimes we say what we think people want to hear, because we fear that saying what we really think will make them dislike us. Sometimes it is difficult to know what to say without hurting other people's feelings. People in the public eye often have, or consider they have, many constraints on what they can or cannot say. Determining when, and what, to speak, or when to remain silent, is often not straightforward.

If you read the accounts of Jesus' trial in the four Gospels you will notice that Jesus in the main is silent. All around him question, accuse, insult, but he is silent. It is **who** he is that speaks for him – his teaching, his healings, his care for the weak and vulnerable, his integrity – and those in authority and power know all this, fear it, and want to destroy him: so, he is crucified. His body entombed.

That should have been the end of it, but the four Gospels bear witness to the disciples,' both women and men, experience of Jesus risen from the dead. A transformative experience which empowered them to begin to carry on the work of Jesus in the world, above all to put on love which, as St Paul would say, "binds everything together in perfect harmony."

Today's disciples, if we too want to carry on the work of Jesus, would be well advised to take on board his teaching about letting our "Yes" be yes and our "No" be no, and strive to be people of integrity, honest, trustworthy, and loving.

*Penny Wood LLM*

## BIBLE READINGS



Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> April	Easter Day	Jeremiah 31 v1-6 Acts 10 v34-43 John 20 v1-18 or Matthew 28 v1-10
Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> April	2nd Sunday of Easter	Acts 2 v14a & v22-32 1 Peter 1 v3-9 John 20 v19-end
Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup> April	3rd Sunday of Easter	Acts 2 v14a and 36-41 1 Peter 1 v17-23 Luke 24 v13-35
Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup> April	4th Sunday of Easter	Acts 2 v42-end 1 Peter 2 v19-end John 10 v1-10

### JAM TOMORROW

The parishes of the Shelswell Benefice will be holding one Joint Annual Meeting again this year on **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April** in **Stratton Audley Parish Church** starting at 7.30pm. The only exception to this is the parish of Cottisford and Hardwick which will be holding a separate Annual Meeting on **Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April**.

Anyone from across our parishes is welcome to attend the joint meeting, but those on church electoral rolls are particularly encouraged to come along to hear about the work of the church over the last year and support the church officers. Only those on church electoral rolls are eligible to vote at the meeting. If you would like to join your church electoral roll then please contact Becky at the Benefice Office on 07928 990569 or email [admin@shelswellparishes.info](mailto:admin@shelswellparishes.info) Applications will need to be made by the weekend of 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> March so that the revised rolls can be published for the required period ahead of the meeting.

There will be other meetings locally to appoint Churchwardens. Some have already been held, but those coming up are:

Fringford – Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March (following the 10.45am service)

Hethe – Sunday 12th April (following the 9.15am service)

Stratton Audley and Godington – Sunday 12th April (following the 10.45am service)

Finmere - Sunday 19th April (following 9.15am service)

Stoke Lyne – Sunday 26th April (following the 10.45am service)

All meetings will be duly advertised via notices in church porches.

**SINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE...BUT YOU CAN HELP OUT!**



The choir looking is for new members: all voices, but men particularly needed. We meet on Tuesday evenings from 7.30pm to 8.30pm in Stoke Lyne. We practice to sing Evensong on the fourth Sunday of every month, and for special Benefice services as required. No audition required, just enthusiasm for singing. Interested? Contact Penny Wood on 01869-277310.



**GOOD FRIDAY**

**Workshop of Easter crafts**

for 5 to 11 year olds, on 3<sup>rd</sup> April.

Venue: Fringford Village Hall

Time: 10.00am to 11.45am.

At 11.45 we'll walk down to church for a  
short service.

Get a Booking Form from [penelope.wood@btopenworld.com](mailto:penelope.wood@btopenworld.com)

## HOLY WEEK

Commemorate the Last Supper by taking Communion on the Thursday before Good Friday...



### MIDWEEK HOLY COMMUNION AND SOUP LUNCH

Maundy Thursday

2nd April at 12 noon

Stoke Lyne Church

If you would like a lift then please contact Becky on 07928 990569

Email [admin@shelswellparishes.info](mailto:admin@shelswellparishes.info)

### Holy Communion

Maundy Thursday, 2nd April 2026

7 pm

Stratton Audley Church



## GOOD FRIDAY

A Good Friday workshop for children aged 5 - 11 will be happening at Fringford Village Hall - see advert on page 5 - followed by

Good Friday 5th April 2026

12 noon

ALL AGE SERVICE

St Michael's Church, Fringford



Good Friday 5th April 2026

6pm

Devotional Service

*with the Shelswell Group Choir*

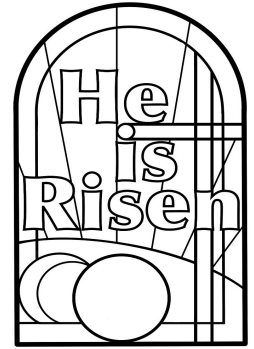
Hardwick Church



## EASTER DAY

### Easter Day Holy Communion

at 9.15 am in  
**Cottisford**  
**Hethe**  
**Finmere**  
**Mixbury**



at 10.45 am in  
**Fringford**  
**Hardwick**  
**Newton Purcell (followed by Easter Egg hunt)**  
**Stoke Lyne**  
**Stratton Audley**

*See village sections or back page for more details!*



Volunteer applications for this year's holiday week have now started. Children's applications start on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May. We are currently looking at running two Lighthouses of fifteen children each. That will be half the number that we accommodated last year.

We would be grateful if you could consider helping with the event - there are a variety of roles from craft making to refreshments and sport and drama activities. It doesn't have to be the whole week, it could be for just half a day.

Please go to our web site and register to help or email us at the address below.



We also welcome any donations towards the cost of running the event. We are grateful to the parents/guardians who were able to make donations last year, but we still had an in-year deficit of £1,369. The cost is about £50 per child, so any donations up to this amount would be welcome. If you don't have a child attending the holiday week, could you sponsor a child?



**Register on: <https://app.signmeup.org.uk/lighthouse-shelswell/50>**

**To donate: <https://goodhub.com/go/lighthouse-shelswell> or scan the QR Code**

**To email: [shelswell@lighthousecentral.org.uk](mailto:shelswell@lighthousecentral.org.uk)**



## FLORA THOMPSON 150 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

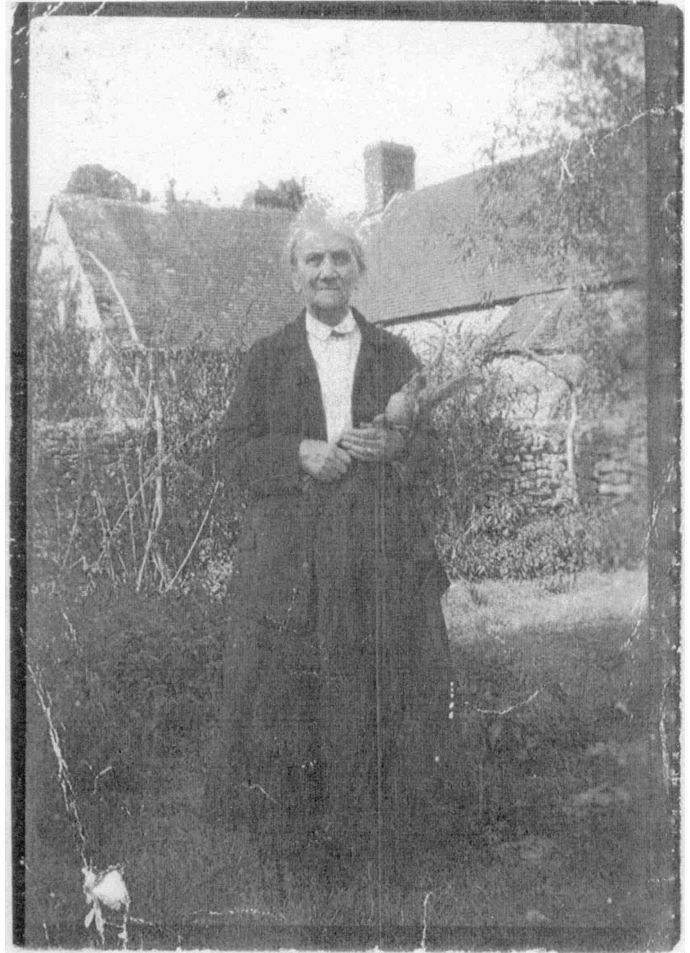
### SARAH BUTLER RENNISON

Our series on Fringfordians of the 1890s continues with Sarah Butler Rennison who worked the same round as Flora Thompson as a letter-carrier.

Sarah Rennison was the daughter of Richard Butler, a cordwainer (shoemaker) born in Fringford in 1850. The Butlers had 12 children of whom four died in infancy and four sons emigrated to Australia, Henry, Joseph, Charles and Thomas.

Sarah had her share of problems to contend with. She met her husband in London, where she was working as a cook in the 1870s. She had a daughter, Nellie (b.1873), but her son, William (b.1874) died. Nellie was living with her grandmother, Rhoda, in Fringford when the birth of another son, also called William was registered.

By 1891, Sarah was living in Fringford, working as a dressmaker, with William (8), and a lodger, her cousin, Charles Tame, (45), who was blind. 1898, a letter from Kezia Whitton indicates that Sarah had become a letter-carrier, probably to replace Flora who left Fringford in 1897. She would certainly have known her, as she was living only a few steps from the Forge, in her father's old house on Main Street (left-hand part of The Cottage).



In 1916, she wrote in a letter to Thomas in Northern Queensland, 'I'm afraid that I do not keep it as well as he used to. Most of the women and children are gone to get crabs [crayfish].

'They can get 1/- per bushel for the government to use the acid in making shells in Birmingham. I don't go as I have to reserve my strength to carry the letters and parcels in the morning. They told me this morning that I looked like a Red Indian in my big boots and gaiters and waterproof skin and my red face.' She was doing the same round as Laura and wrapping up like Mrs Gubbins. In the early 1920s she was living in the south-end cottage at Church farm House. This was where her photograph was taken, and it shows a very determined woman. In the late 1920s however, she returned to The Cottage.

By 1910, Ellen Price had taken over the Post Office, which she ran from Pringle Cottage on Rectory Lane, and Sarah worked for her. There was a nice incident in 1916, after she received a present (a £2 money order) from her brother Thomas in Queensland. She had to go round to Ellen Price to get the money. 'I cried and could scarcely walk home and then when I had the notes in my hand I could not count them. I did no more work for the rest of the day and I have felt in a dream ever since.' This gift of £2 must have seemed wonderful at a time when labourers pay was only 10/- a week. We do not know how long she continued to do the letter-round but it must have been well into the 1920s.

In her last letter of 25 July 1932, when she was clearly not very well and preparing to leave Fringford, she comments 'I want to be quiet and help myself as long as I can. I am leaving no debts. I pay for everything as I have it. I am selling off and giving away. I seem to have collected so much.' This is very much in the *Lark Rise* tradition of 'Pay your own way', 'Look after yourself', 'Don't flinch' and 'Avoid the House' [Workhouse] and dependence on parish relief.

As feelings of deference weakened slowly, both Kezia and Sarah followed the the mid-Victorians' cult of independence and self-help (epitomised in Samuel Smiles's best-selling book of that title in 1859). This went hand-in-hand with the desire for a reputation of respectability, as witness Sarah's pleasure in her letter of 1919, where she mentions that 'I have made myself a Black necklace. I wear it when I am dressed up in the summer: and I shall be 70 next April and I shall be a lady at last.' In 1932, she moved to live with her son, William, and his wife Beatrice, in Somerford Haynes, near Cirencester, where she died in 1933.

*Martin Greenwood*

Note: An audio version of my Fringford Trail (read by my son, Adrian) is now available on Guidl, cost £4.99. It is only available on a smartphone and not on the web. Cottisford and Juniper Hill Trails should be available in the summer.

## Save the Date

**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September "Flora Day"**  
**Celebrate 150 years since the birth of**  
**author**  
**Flora Thompson 5<sup>th</sup> December 1876**  
**Events in**  
**Fringford Village Hall and Cottisford**  
**Church**

# Open Gardens!

## Cottisford and Juniper Hill

Sunday 14th June 2026, 2- 5 pm



# After Flora Fringford 1900-1920

A local History Talk by Jayne Todd



27<sup>th</sup> March 2026 7.30pm  
Fringford Village Hall  
Refreshments

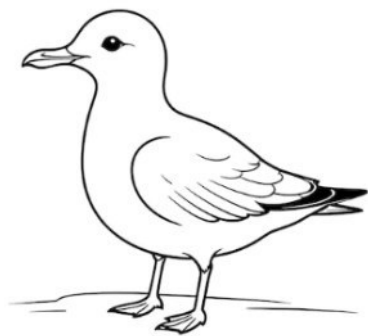


## SHELLOW-BY-THE-SEA 2<sup>ND</sup> AND 3<sup>RD</sup> MARCH 2026

This was held at The Old School , Newton Purcell. We had a very pleasant two days, the venue is ideal for when there are not too many people attending. Unfortunately we had some cancellations due to illness or bereavement.

The tables were set up with different crafts and some people had brought along their own work to do. There were newspapers to keep up with the news, jigsaw puzzles, and various other things to try. A few were making little chickens for Easter which could hold a small Easter egg.

On arrival we were greeted with tea or coffee with a choice of cakes. While lunch was being prepared Penny gave us a quiz on the subject of "Birds": down the edge of a sheet of paper we had to write down every letter of the alphabet and next to each letter we had to write down the name of a bird beginning with that letter. We had some laughs doing this. This was something Marion Crowther had made up. Unfortunately we didn't know till we got home Marion had died that morning. Was it fate that we should choose that quiz ?



*A Xeme or Sabine's Gull*

Lunch was then served with three choices of main course followed by three choices of pudding.

The afternoon began with one of Liz's famous quizzes to complete while the washing up was

being done. This one was on "Flora and Fauna" and was really interesting. Did you know that frogs can't swallow with their eyes open? Or that cows have no upper teeth in front?

We then had afternoon tea again with choices of cake.

Day two followed along the same lines as day one, with people choosing what they wanted to do. Lunch was again a choice of three different selections and the same with the pudding. We had a lot of chatting and laughing catching up with each other.

The morning session began with Penny giving a talk on Bishop Chad of Northumbria, as it was St Chad's Day. He was born to a noble family on Lindisfarne around 634 and died of the plague in 672. He was a well-travelled man, and became Bishop of York and various other places. He is the Saint and Bishop to whom Lichfield Cathedral is dedicated, which is said to be a very beautiful Cathedral. We hope to arrange a visit to see how wonderful it is.

We then had a visit from Allison from the Oxford Museum, who had brought along what she called her mystery box. She passed round various items to see if we could guess what they were used for. Some of the items dated back to the 1700's. It was fascinating to hear Allison explaining everything and needless to say we didn't get many of them correct! She has brought along these boxes before. The Oxford Museum are grateful for items of local history, so before you throw old items out, check if it would be of local interest to the museum.

Thank you to Penny for arranging the Shelswell-by-the-Sea. Thank you also to the many helpers (Liz, Claire, Veronica, June, and Rebecca) also for cooking and preparing the lovely meals, and arranging pick ups

*Rena Andrews*

THE PHOENIX SINGERS

with TRINITY CAMERATA

St. Edburg's Church, Bicester

Saturday April 18<sup>th</sup> 2026

Stabat Mater  
**ROSSINI**

**VAUGHAN WILLIAMS**

Lark Ascending

**MONTEVERDI**

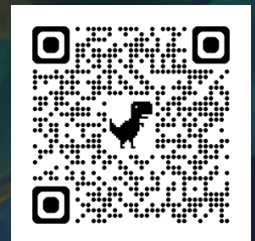
Beatus Vir

**LAURIDSEN**

O Magnum Mysterium

GJEILO – Northern Lights

HARRIS – Faire is the Heaven



TICKETS – Adults £16 Under 16 Free

Coles Books, Ticket Source or on the door

## MIDWEEK HOLY COMMUNION AND SOUP LUNCH – THURSDAY, 5<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

This is a short service for people who are not able to get to a Sunday service or unable to sit through the normal communion.

Liz began with prayers across the world for people who live in fear, flooding, famine and war, and hope that these countries can find peace, also prayed for the King and the government of our own Country and Commonwealth, our own Benefice, for people who are sick or have been bereaved and also others known to us.

The Gospel reading was from John chapter 7 verses 1 to 13, read by Rena.

Liz began her sermon with a reflection on the meaning of the Gospel reading, suggesting that this story tells us not to be afraid if we have fallen out with our siblings or others we may have fallen out with and that we should not let pride stop us from saying sorry. Jesus' brothers wanted him to do things he didn't want to do, just so that people could see him. Jesus didn't do as they asked as he didn't want to.

Liz then began the service of Communion, after which we moved over to the tables set for lunch. Instead of the usual soup, it was decided to have a ploughman's lunch. Because Liz is on her own doing this service, it was agreed that we should all bring something for lunch so we had a lovely selection of food to enjoy.

We always have plenty of chatting and catching up to do. Everyone helps to clear up afterwards. Thank you Liz for keeping the service going and also everyone who brought food.

The next Midweek Communion will be at 12 noon on 9<sup>th</sup> April at St Peter's Church, Stoke Lyne.

*Rena Andrews*

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT – 15<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2026

The breakfast tables were laid out with a selection of cereals, croissants, pancakes, bread for toasting, with the usual accompaniments of jams and marmalades, butters and spreads, fruit juices, tea and coffee. Selections made, we moved over to the table set up for the service.

The usual leaflets were on the table for us to take away. Ali began her service with prayers for those in countries across the world who are suffering hardship, be it famine, floods, wars, or other tragedies. We prayed for our King Charles and the Commonwealth, our own Government and the Shelswell Benefice with the hope that a new Rector will soon be placed.

The Gospel Reading was from Matthew chapter 17: verses 1 to 9 which was shown on the overhead screen for all to read. This was about the transfiguration. After 6 days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James and led them up a high mountain by themselves, there he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light, and just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus.

We then had a discussion about what all this meant. This was followed by the lovely hymn "Be still for the presence of the Lord". Ali then started prayers including for those known to us who are ill or have been bereaved and finishing up with the Lord's Prayer. Thank you to all who provided food and to Ali for preparing the service with the assistance of Kelly.

*Rena Andrews*



## REGISTRY

### Baptism

#### SPRING SPLASH AT ST PETER'S, STOKE LYNE



The drizzle on Saturday 7th March soon evaporated with the sunny smile of Father Alexander Mahlava as he teased the delayed arrival of a soon-to-be godparent and his family. Pre-COVID, this same mixture of friends, siblings and parents had celebrated our marriage at St Peter's. Same place, same bunting, more offspring and slightly more grey hairs! Since 2018, we have navigated a great deal of life experiences and I have felt very supported by the prayers of the Parish. Despite living in Exeter, as the youngest daughter of Caroline and Harriet, Stoke Lyne will always feel like another home.

The Christening of our three sons - Malcolm Martin, Frederick Douglas and Rory Gerald was a jolly occasion. Fr. Alex leading the congregation and Pam playing the organ made a great team to rouse 65 regular and irregular church goers through the classics 'All Things Bright and Beautiful' and 'One More Step Along the World I Go'. The splash of baptism was well tolerated by the big, bigger and biggest boy. Godparents from as far as coastal Kent, rural Leicestershire and the Big Smoke proudly took on their roles in exchange for some sustenance. The play park was well utilised by all sizes of children. We look forward to continuing to return regularly to celebrate here. It will always be a special place for our large and loving family. Many thanks for letting us share it with you.

*Rosie Kerr*



## Funeral

**Raymond (Ray) Barnes**

**12.12.1957 – 6.2.2026**

**St Michael and All Angels, Finmere**

Ray's funeral was held at the Church of St Michael and All Angels Finmere on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Ray's life began in 1957 at Grounds Farm in Finmere with the most important woman in his life, his mother Sylvia. For Ray, the village was the foundation of everything he was. It was home. Growing up alongside his two sisters, Sonia and Wendy, he was part of a household rooted in the rhythm of village life. Most of their time was spent outside playing with their numerous Finmere friends.

Ray was an active young man, he attended cadets and ran for the county! He was also a very talented artist despite the troubles he faced in preventing his favourite artworks from smudging due to being left-handed! He remained very proud that his works were used for display and even won awards!



Whether it was attending Finmere school or sitting through Sunday school, those early years shaped Ray's character. And he wasn't alone in his adventures - he was rarely seen without his best friend, Graham. They grew up in the village together; a friendship forged in childhood that lasted a lifetime. But as anyone who knew them can attest, that friendship was put to the test most Saturdays. They shared a fiery passion for football, though they sat on opposite sides of the fence. Their loyalty to their opposing teams was legendary; the laughs, the arguments, and the 'expert' post-match analysis between Ray and Graham were a constant, lively soundtrack to their lives.

As he grew, Ray took that steady, village-grown work ethic and turned it into a lifelong craft. He became a plumber and heating engineer - a man who truly understood how things worked. He was in his element with a tool in his hand, and the one people called when things went wrong because they knew he had the skill to get it right.

That same dedication could be seen in his great passion outside work: his dogs. Ray spent years breeding and showing German Shepherds with much success, a breed that mirrored his own loyalty and strength. That love for dogs continued throughout his entire life, and it was a passion he made sure to pass down to every one of the family.

In early adulthood, Ray met his first wife, Bev, and together they welcomed three daughters into the world: Tina, Nicola and Leanne. Later in life, his family grew even larger when he met his second wife, Suzie, where they welcomed his fourth daughter, Chanelle. The final chapter of Ray's family life was with his third wife, Yupin. With Yupin, he didn't just welcome his first son Joe, but also his stepdaughter, Fern. He took great pride in the home they shared together, and being a father to all his children - through every branch of the family tree - was perhaps his greatest engineering feat of all.

When Joe was little, he and Ray tussled and fought one afternoon on the floor! Joe accidentally kicked his Dad in the mouth whilst wearing his favourite Bob the Builder boots. Ray's tooth tumbled onto the carpet! But laughter came with that gappy smile!

Across all the years there was one other constant: The Arsenal. Ray loved taking his family to see his beloved Gunners play. One of Ray's proudest moments was taking Joe to the Emirates for the first time to pass the torch to the next generation. But Ray's love for the game went beyond just 90 minutes on a Saturday. It took him all over the world, following the sport he loved and meeting some of his greatest friends along the way.

As Ray's health declined in his later years, he was supported with care and compassion by some truly wonderful people, especially the ambulance crews and the District Nurses. Ray's son Joe was his carer and his constant companion.

Whether he was the protective brother to Sonia and Wendy, the loyal friend to Graham, or the hard-working father to all of us, Ray was a man who stayed true to his roots. On 6<sup>th</sup> March Ray was returned to those roots, alongside his father Fred, who he missed endlessly, and his lifelong best friend Graham. Reunited with the people who knew him best, he is home.

Rest in peace, Ray. You are loved and missed deeply.



## **Funeral**

**Penelope Antonia SYMES**

**25 May 1947 - 4 January 2026**

**All Saints Church, Mixbury**

Penelope Antonia – Toni - Symes was born on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1947 in Moreton in Marsh to Cecil Anthony and Nancy Samuda. Her father was a regular Army officer in the Somerset Light Infantry and her mother a teacher, who met and married during WW2 in India.

Her early childhood was spent with her parents, her older sister Jane and her younger brother Richard in various overseas postings given her father's position in the Army. Such postings included the Austrian Tyrol, the Rhine region in Germany, Mauritius, Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and finally Nairobi in Kenya. In between and during family holidays, Toni and family travelled back to the Cotswolds to stay with her father's parents in Willersey.

Toni was educated at various schools, including for a short time in Kenya, but in 1960 went to St Mary's Wantage, and then in 1964 moved onto Evendine College in Malvern, and finally Queen's Secretarial College in London. She started work as an executive personal assistant to the CEO of ABC Television, Lou Grade, and then moved onto be an executive personal assistant to the Finance Director at Cape Industries.

Whilst working in London in the late 1960s, she met Douglas – Dougie – Symes and in 1975 they married in Easton, Hampshire, Dougie's childhood home. Together, they moved from London to Deddington in Oxfordshire, and then finally to Coldharbour Barn outside Cottisford in 1986, which became not only a labour of love but a beloved family home for nearly 40 years. In 1977, they had their first son, Nicholas, followed quite quickly by their daughter Harriet in 1978 and a second son, Richard, in 1984.

Toni was keen horsewoman and tennis player – with some talent, being Sports Captain at St Mary's – and then later a keen watcher of horse racing and tennis tournaments. Besides the times when Toni had her grandchildren around her, the Wimbledon tournament was pretty much her favourite time of the year! She was a devoted mum, granny and friend and delighted in catching up to hear people's news and sharing her views on all subjects! She was the centre of family life at Coldharbour, which included Dougie's parents, Commander Douglas Symes and Polly Symes who lived next door in Coldharbour Farm. Over the years many fabulous, happy family events were thrown with Toni masterminding every detail with ease and finesse.

Toni will be very much missed by her family and friends. She will join Dougie, Douglas and Polly in the graveyard at St Mary's Cottisford, and they will all be visited often. The family would like to thank all of you who have sent their kind thoughts and wonderful memories of Toni and times spent at Coldharbour.



# Club News



## SHELLOWELL WI



As usual in March we held our AGM. We had the Annual Committee report read by Sandra outlining all of last year's meetings and events and the Treasurer's report read by Meryl. This year all of the Committee members decided to carry on and Sandra, Meryl and Diane remained as President, Treasurer and Secretary with Jane as programme organiser. The Committee's thanks goes once again to all the members of Shelswell who take on the various tasks that make the group evenings and events run so smoothly. We followed the official business of the evening with cheese and wine and a quiz. The quiz involved the members trying to identify some spices, a couple of which were not so well known and scoring points for various items they had in their handbags. The evening concluded with one lucky member finding a raffle ticket stuck to the underside of their chair winning a WI recipe book. A very enjoyable evening all round.

Later on in March Sandra and Meryl will be attending the Oxfordshire Federations AGM and will report back accordingly.

April will see us welcome the lighter evenings and hopefully warmer weather, for our speaker in April we will welcome Bruce Wakeling and his talk on Tax, Care and the New Partner. In May we will on our annual walk (location to be announced).

In June we have the opportunity to come together with other WI members from other groups to observe the National AGM.

Shelswell WI always welcome new members, we meet on the first Thursday of the month 7.30pm in Fringford Village Hall. For more information please contact Sandra Bickmore at [sandrambickmore@gmail.com](mailto:sandrambickmore@gmail.com)

## SHELLOWELL READING GROUP

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

Our next book club meetings are:

- Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April, 7.30 pm, (Manor Grange, Cottisford, NN13 5SW)
- Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May, 7.30 pm, Venue TBC
- Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 7.30 pm, Venue TBC

Our next book is '**Frozen River**' by **Ariel Lawhon**

**Atmosphere** by **Taylor Jenkins Reid** (stop reading here if you haven't finished it!), divided opinion. Some of us really enjoyed the story and main character and were moved to tears at points. Some found the start exciting and found the 'pause' to handle the back story / history somewhat frustrating. We enjoyed the history of the shuttle and the story of the first women astronauts, but felt that there were a lot of themes, which meant that some key story lines were quite 'light' and we would have liked to know more. The relationship between Vanessa and Joanie was delicately handled and really resonated with some of us. We did feel there were better books about space flight (The Wives of Los Alamo, Martian, The Right Stuff etc) but it was an interesting take from female point of view. We felt it was 'popular' fiction rather than a deep

insight into space / relationships – but it was an enjoyable read. Some felt the end was a bit of a ‘cop out’ but it certainly moved many of us.

Other books discussed:

Orlando – Virginia Woolf  
 Mrs Dalloway – Virginia Woolf  
 Precipice – Robert Harris  
 Wave Walker – Suzanne Heywood  
 The Right Stuff – Tom Wolfe  
 Freedom – Angela Merkel  
 Mornings in Jenin – Susan Abulhawa  
 Gabriel’s Moon – William Boyd  
 Persepolis – Marjane Satrapi  
 Flashlight – Susan Choi  
 The Lessons – Ian McKewan  
 The Wives of Loas Alamos – Tarashea Nesbit  
 Wintering – Katherine May  
 Enter Ghost – Isabella Hammad  
 Careless People – Sarah Wynn Williams  
 Fraud – Sadie Smith  
 When the Cranes Fly South – Lisa Ridzen - (possible next book club read)  
 The Wilderness – Samantha Harr



## SHELLOW POETRY APPRECIATION GROUP

Our March session focused on the theme of Imagination. It has been said that writing poetry requires ten percent imagination and ninety percent perspiration. In the poems we discussed there were many different takes on the subject, including one by Ted Hughes which describes the effort, or ‘perspiration’ of creating a poem and the catalyst provided by imagination.

***Imagination by James Baldwin (1924-87)*** is a short, humorous poem which makes us think about where imagination comes from. A much longer poem on the same theme is ***On Imagination by Phillis Wheatley (1753-84)***, a work which is a good example of eighteenth-century poetic style.

***Imagination’s Power, by Catherine Pulsifer (extant)*** tells us how use of the imagination empowers us and opens out a whole world of the mind. ***Emily Bronte (1818-48)***, in ***To Imagination***, thinks of it as a friend, a source of comfort and a positive asset in troubled times. ***Marianne Moore (1887-1972)*** insists that imagination must work on genuine ideas and feelings in her poem ***Poetry***.

A poem which has become a classic on the subject of how a poet works is ***The Thought-Fox by Ted Hughes (1930-98)***. Striving to write a poem about a fox, he likens his imagination itself to a fox, and in doing so he produces something which perfectly sums up what a fox is like – so giving the reader a double helping of ‘foxiness’!

In ***Home Thoughts from Abroad by Robert Browning (1812-89)***, the poet uses his imagination to conjure up a picture of an English spring which he is missing. It is a classic of nostalgia. He wrote it whilst living in Italy and homesickness is in every line. The poet ***Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)*** had his imagination sparked by a traveller telling him of seeing a ruined statue in the desert. His poem ***Ozymandias*** asks us to both imagine a distant land and era of history and think about how all power and glory is transient.

As a child **Robert Louis Stevenson** was often ill and confined to his bed. His imagination, however, was not imprisoned, and he describes how he used it to construct stories and adventures with his toys. An upsetting case of childhood sexual abuse is related by **Phillip Larkin (1922-85)** in **Deceptions**. Taking a young girl's story from Henry Mayhew's book 'London Labour and the London Poor', he imagines how she was drugged and raped, and how destructive it was for both her and the perpetrator. There is a huge contrast in the way the two poems embody childhood experiences.

Other atrocities stimulated the imagination in two poems by **Seamus Heaney (1939-2013)**. He was fascinated by the discovery of bog burials in Denmark. In **Bog Queen** he takes on the persona of a girl who tells of lying in the bog for aeons before being accidentally exhumed by someone cutting turf, and his identification with her experience is so strong that it has a most disturbing effect on the reader. In **The Tollund Man** he describes the body of a man ritually slaughtered and how it reminds him of the killings during Northern Ireland's Troubles.

Also about murder is **The Masque of Anarchy**, another poem by Shelley. Infuriated by the Peterloo Massacre in 1819, he presented the British government as grotesque figures in a hellish procession, and his imagination keeps horror and imaginative description constantly jostling each other.

A poem in which imaginative use of humour joins speculation about another poet (Walt Whitman) is **A Supermarket in California by Allen Ginsberg (1926-97)**. Ginsberg matches fellow-feeling for another poet with a pastiche of Whitman's own style.

Finally, two short pieces: **Imagination, a Haiku by Basho (1644-94)**, about the limitless possibilities of human imagination, and the traditional, anonymous English nursery rhyme **Hey Diddle Diddle**, which dates back to (at the latest) the sixteenth century. In it, impossible ideas stimulate a young child to think about what is possible and what is fantasy.

If you would like to join us in a future meeting, 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

Tel 01280 848247

TREASURER: David Barnes, Honeysuckle Cottage, 11 Hardwick

Tel 01869 277690

PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Flora Skinner

Tel: 01869 277366

MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Sandra Bickmore, Thatch End, Juniper Hill

sandrambickmore@g  
mail.com

## SERVICES

Sunday 5th April 9.15 am Easter Day Holy Communion (CW)

Sunday 19th April 10.45 am Holy Communion (BCP)

## COTTISFORD AND JUNIPER HILL SOCIAL COMMITTEE

By the time that you read this all the households in our Parish would have received their primroses marking Mothering Sunday from the Social Committee and the Church. Thank you to those who helped

*Cottisford and Juniper Hill, continued*

organise this. It definitely looks as if spring is well on the way, Cottisford and Juniper both having beautiful displays of daffodils.

We are now looking forward to our Open Gardens event being held on Sunday 14 June 2-4pm. The gardens are now all praying for some fine weather to be able to get outside and start preparing for the big day. It's not too late to let us know if you would like to open your garden. As well as the gardens we will be providing tea, coffee and cakes along with a display in the church celebrating 150 years of Flora Thompson. If you are able to help in any way either with refreshments on the day or by making a cake please let us know. (We know from the success of Snowdrop Sunday that everyone likes your homemade cakes).

If you are able to help with any of the above please contact either Jane Birnage in Cottisford or Sandra Bickmore in Juniper Hill.

## Finmere St Michael and All Angels

CHURCHWARDEN: Barbara Cunningham, 'Woodlea' Finmere

TREASURER: Peter Goss, 6 Stable Close Finmere

PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Katherine Grimston, The Old Rectory, Finmere

MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Paul Nash Email: paan63@yahoo.co.uk

Tel: 01280 847992

Tel: 07941 322 840

Tel: 01280 848364

Tel 01280 848268

### CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 5th April 9.15 am Easter Day Holy Communion (CW)

Sunday 19th April 9.15 am Holy Communion (CW)

Sunday 26th April 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)

### Village Hall



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



### Allotments



April is the month when the allotment season really seems gets going. A quick dig over the beds and those chitted, early potatoes that have been lurking in odd corners at home, can now be planted.

The allotments welcome 2 new holders and we now have just one plot available for any new enthusiast, so why not come and join our lovely community. Details can be found here Interested, visit [www.myfinmere.com/poorsplot](http://www.myfinmere.com/poorsplot) and select the 'enquiry' link.



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 14th April from 2 - 4 pm**

Tea, coffee, cake & biscuits

All locals welcome, no charge

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...



### **THE (FINMERE) FIRKIN**

the village pop up pub

### **FIRST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH**

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

**Licensed bar  
and food van**

**FINMERE VILLAGE HALL  
6-10PM**

## **Light lunch**

**Finmere Village Hall**

**4th Tuesday of the month**

**No charge but donations appreciated**



**TO BOOK YOUR PLACE  
PLEASE RING DEBBIE  
07765 874090**



#### 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: Max Todd 5, The Manor, Fringford

Tel 07936 760684

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 [www.fringford.info](http://www.fringford.info)

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

##### SERVICES

- **Maundy Thursday**, 2 April – 12 noon in Stoke Lyne church, Holy Communion followed by a soup lunch, or 7.00pm Holy Communion in Stratton Audley Church
- **Good Friday**, 3 April – 12 noon Family Service in Fringford Church, or 6.00pm Readings, Reflections and Hymns in Hardwick Church.
- **Easter Day**, 5 April – **10.45am Holy Communion by Extension**
- Sunday 19 April – Holy Communion

To find out the times and places of other services on Sundays, please check the back cover of the *Shelswell News*, the Benefice website [www.shelswellparishes.info](http://www.shelswellparishes.info), the noticeboard at the church, or ring the Benefice office (07928 990569). You will always be welcome in our other parishes. [Note: The Benefice Office has moved to 6 Chinalls Close, Finmere MK18 4BQ]



If you would like to donate an Easter Lily in memory of a loved one (to be displayed over Easter in an arrangement in the font), the cost will be £5-00 a stem. Please contact Carol Reader on 277057 or [carol.reader@btinternet.com](mailto:carol.reader@btinternet.com)

## EVENTS

### Looking Ahead .....

There will be another **History Talk** on Friday March 27th 2026., at 7.30pm in Fringford Village Hall. The topic will be: "After Flora - Fringford from 1900 to WW1." Refreshments will be available. And later in the year look out for "Flora Day" on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September when there will be events in Fringford Village Hall and Cottisford Church to mark 150 years since the birth of Flora Thompson.

The **2026 Fringford Beer Festival** in aid of Fringford Church Restoration Fund - Save the date:

**Saturday 13th June 12 - 11pm**

Bring friends and family  
Meet other villagers  
Food and drink outlets  
Stalls, music and family entertainment

To sponsor a barrel or volunteer help  
[beerfestivalsponsorship@gmail.com](mailto:beerfestivalsponsorship@gmail.com)  
[christina.skarbek@talk21.com](mailto:christina.skarbek@talk21.com)

### 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) . [Volunteers always needed to help at Little Lambs – could you help? ]

## 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><b>FS Dance</b></p> <p>Wednesday (term time) After school classes BALLET • TAP • MODERN • STREET leah.fsd@gmail.com or 07885827592</p>	<p><b>Village Coffee Morning</b></p> <p>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><b>Parish Council Meeting</b></p> <p>All villagers welcome Third Monday in the month 7.45pm Contact 01844 237766 or fringford.parishclerk@gmail.com</p>	<p><b>Just Puppies</b></p> <p>Puppy Training Tuesday evening, Sunday afternoon – various classes Contact Kerri 07720 891489 www.justpuppies.training</p>
<p><b>Fringford Yoga</b></p> <p>Wednesday morning 9.30am – 11am Carolyn White 07763 817078</p>	<p><b>Shelswell WI</b></p> <p>First Thursday of the month 7.30pm Contact Sandra Bickmore 07961 828571</p>
<p><b>Pilates</b></p> <p>Thursday at 10.00am natashaflowerspilates@gmail.com or 07545 525820</p>	<p><b>Fringford Sewcial</b></p> <p>Sew and Chat! All welcome Monthly Wednesday from 7pm Or Sunday from 3pm Contact Irene at ireneethomas@btinternet.com</p>
<p><b>Mindfulness Meditation</b></p> <p>Monthly Sunday 11am to 12.30pm janerainey17@gmail.com or 07971 008337</p>	<p><b>Village Hall Team Meeting</b></p> <p>Please contact for dates Open meetings – all welcome fringford.hall@gmail.com or 07936 879175</p>
<p>To book the hall for your own event, please go to <a href="http://www.fringford.info/village%20hall">www.fringford.info/village hall</a>, 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>	

### FRINGFORD VILLAGE COFFEE MORNING

Village Coffee Mornings usually take place on the third Monday of each month. In April we will meet on Monday 20<sup>th</sup>. Drop by for a coffee/tea and a chat any time between 10.30 am and 12 noon, in the Chinnery Room at the Village Hall. Contact Penny on 277310 if you want more information.

## COME & JOIN US AT 'SEWCIAL'



We enjoy any type of craft and a natter getting together to relax and enjoy each other's company. Some of us knit, crochet, embroider, quilt, sew. Please come and join us for tea and chat too, crafts not essential.

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

Our next sessions for 2026 are:

Wednesday April 15 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday May 17 <sup>th</sup>
Wednesday June 17 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday July 19 <sup>th</sup>

Everyone welcome

No need to book – just come and join us!

If you would like information, please email Irene [ireneethomas@btinternet.com](mailto:ireneethomas@btinternet.com)

## 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

## EASTER SERVICES AT ST MARY'S CHURCH, HARDWICK

### GOOD FRIDAY

Devotional Service with the Shelswell Choir at 6pm

### EASTER SUNDAY

am Holy Communion Service

**Now that Spring has arrived, Hardwick Church will be open everyday from 10 am to 4pm**

Private prayer and quiet contemplation

View the architecture, memorials and stained-glass windows

Please make use of this special space

**Evensong at Hardwick on the last Sunday of the month will now start at 6 pm.**

### 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.**

### ST EDMUND & ST GEORGE CHURCH



**"All churches need friends,  
and they are out there ready to be made"**

## Church Services and Events

The church will be awash with flowers for the Easter Sunday service on 5<sup>th</sup> April and watch out for free Easter Eggs - thanks to Flora.

There are plenty of events being planned for this year. More details to come.

# St Edmund & St George Church

## Mega Raffle at Hethe Village Fete on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May



Many fantastic prizes,  
including  
**£100 in cash and a wine  
box**



More prizes will be welcomed - to Flora or Mike or let us know  
what and bring it along on the day



Our Annual Church Meetings to which everyone is welcome to attend:

- The Meeting of Parishioners (MoP) - formerly known as the Annual Meeting of Parishioners and before that the Vestry Meeting! This will be held after the service on 12<sup>th</sup> April and is to elect Church Wardens.
- The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) will be held this year on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April, starting at 7.30pm in Stratton Audley Church. Reports will be presented and PCC members elected.



## St Edmund & St George 100 Club

Results of the 86th draw held  
on 15th February 2026

1st Prize No 16 Helen Wood  
2nd Prize No 47 Ben & Ali Jones  
3rd Prize No 58 Perry Stuart

Many thanks to our members  
Hethe PCC

The next regular PCC Meeting is on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June starting at 1.30pm at Old Montague Barn, The Green.

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

**100 Club.** If you would like to join the 100 Club or request additional numbers, please contact Helen Pritchard.

### Kneelers

While cleaning the church, I wondered when church kneelers started to be used and this message appeared from the National Churches Trust:

“Did You Know?”

“Kneelers – also known as hassocks or tuffets – are convenient, but did you know that they're also a treasure trove of local history? Kneelers began to be used around the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, but the modern art of embroidered kneelers exploded in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, inspired by the work of Louise Pesel and Sybil Blunt, who were commissioned to design and embroider hundreds of cushions and kneelers for Winchester Cathedral in the 1930s. Following their example, embroiderers across the UK started to make decorative kneelers for their own churches, with designs often featuring local traditions, saints, landmarks and events.”



Remember to look at the kneelers when you next visit the church.



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

### HETHE COMMUNITY ACTIVITY

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

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April from 10.00am to 12.00pm**

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



#### Hethe and District Darby & Joan Club

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

**Membership £15 p.a.  
New members welcome.**

**Contact: Sheila Heydon 07455 185201**

# Hethe Village Fete

## Saturday

## May 16<sup>th</sup>

## at 2pm



A traditional Village Fete with fantastic live music from Bicester Concert Band and excellent teas.



### Parish Council Meeting Dates:

- April 14th AGM of the Parish
- May 12th Annual Meeting of The Parish Council
- July 14th Parish Council Meeting
- October 13th Parish Council Meeting
- January 19<sup>th</sup> 2027, Parish Council Meeting

**Recycling.** With effect from January, glass jars and bottles are being collected in the blue recycle bins. Also, since January everyone needs to book a time slot to visit one of the Oxfordshire Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). You can book thirty minutes before your visit (subject to availability) or up to two weeks in advance. To help Oxfordshire recycle even more you are also asked to sort recyclable items from other waste, either before you arrive (which will speed up your visit), or by using the sorting area on site. Customers are encouraged to make a booking online via the website [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/waste](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/waste). For customers who do not have access to the internet, they can call the customer service centre on 01865 519800.

**Pop-up Pub.** Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April in the Village Hall, from 7.00 to 10.00pm. Everyone welcome. Bring your own drinks of choice, snacks, and games!

### Local Bus Service



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

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

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

**Temporary Cottisford/Fringford Road Closure.** Note the dates - 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> April. Details on the village web site.

### 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/>

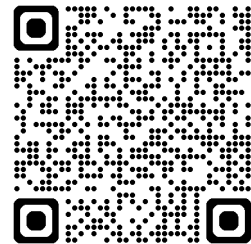
Facebook Pages:

Community Spirit of the Hethens

Hethe Community

Hethe Allotments

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



I saw this verse the other day, based on Job Ch12 v7-8, and thought it provided a timely message for reflection on our environmental impact:

**“But ask the animals, and they will teach you,  
or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you,  
or speak to the earth, and it will teach you,  
or let the fish in the sea inform you.”**

## Mixbury All Saints

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

Tel 07899 792552  
Tel 01280 848295  
Tel 01280 847769  
Tel 01280 848295  
Tel 01280 848002  
pasgoodman551@gmail.com

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

### CHURCH SERVICES

**Sunday 5th April 9.15 am Easter Day Holy Communion**

#### MIXBURY CHURCH FLOWER ROTA

Thank you to everyone for doing church flowers. It's much appreciated. If anyone wishes to be added or removed from the list, please get in touch with Eryl on 07840 464541.

April	Easter – Everyone
May	Jane Marshall
June	Kate Darby
July	Sue Goodman
August	Helen Backon
September	Philippa Brown
	Harvest festival – everyone
October	Morag Westworth
November	Fi Bairstow
December	Carol service and Christmas - everyone
Reserve	Sam Lockwood

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

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

#### MIXBURY CHURCH CLEANING ROTA 2026

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

APRIL Emma Bray and Viv Williams  
MAY Alison Bailey, Pam Burrill and Jules Channon  
JUNE Nicola Adams and Anna Howard & Sue Boshier  
JULY Julie Mitchell and Helen Backon  
AUGUST Rebecca Ayres and Eryl Tobin  
SEPTEMBER Giovanna Holdcroft and Tanya Howroyd  
OCTOBER Emma Bray and Viv Williams  
NOVEMBER Alison Bailey, Pam Burrill and Jules Channon  
DECEMBER Gail Bellingham, Mel Soar & Sue Boshier

*Mixbury, continued*

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

Having done this role for the greater part of 30 years, I have decided to resign from my position as church cleaning rota organiser and voluntary cleaner. This decision is based on both age and health grounds. During these years I have brought up a family and held down a job.

I am appealing for someone new to step up and take on this necessary and important role. This message goes out to the wider Mixbury community and not just those who currently give of their time.

It would be particularly appropriate if someone new to the village and / or from the younger generation were to volunteer. Anyone prepared to take on this role, please let me know by email or phone. See details below.

Best wishes, Julie.

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

### **BOOK EXCHANGE**

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

### **MIXBURY DROP IN TEA/COFFEE/CHAT**

Courtesy of Anna at Swallows Nursery Mixbury Ladies can now meet every Tuesday in the coffee shop at the Nursery. 2-3.30pm (4pm when British Summer Time starts).

All welcome – and you don't have to knit or crochet, just come along and chat! You will find us next to the wood burner! Swallows not only sell lovely plants but coffee and cake too.....!

## LARK RISE BIKE RIDE 2026

We are proud to run the Lark Rise Bike Ride again, this year, on behalf of '*brainstrust*', the Meg Jones brain cancer charity.

**Event date: Sunday 17th May 2026**

**Event venue: Castle Field, Mixbury**

**Please put the date in your diary!**

The Lark Rise Bike Ride is a family- friendly, sponsored cycle ride for charity, mostly off-road, through the lovely countryside that formed the backdrop to Flora Thompson's Lark Rise to Candleford.

Riding through Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire, the route is for cyclists of all abilities, with a choice of 12.5 mile, 25-mile and 40-mile circuits. All ages are welcome and as we cycle on lanes, tracks and bridleways, the riding is safe and ideal for families.

The routes will start and finish at Castle Field, Mixbury. Please come along and raise as much as you can for '*brainstrust*' – you will be very welcome!

We look forward to building on the successes of recent years, raising funds for this wonderful charity.

We are very grateful to Anna Allen of Swallows Nursery and Plant Centre, for hosting the event in recent years, however, please note the change of venue this year.

By kind permission of the trustees, we are able to run this year's event in Castle Field.

More details will be published in due course.

If anyone would like to help (you don't have to be into cycling!), please get in touch with James Tobin ( No 21 Mixbury ) Mob 07999 938669

In the meantime, if you can spare a moment, do visit the charity's website <http://www.brainstrust.org.uk> to see the amazing work they do supporting those with a brain tumour diagnosis.

## VILLAGE DEFIBRILLATOR

The village is fortunate to have a defibrillator, which is kept on the wall by the driveway of Hanwell Farm. The defib is a life saving bit of kit used in the unfortunate event of a cardiac arrest. (Heart attack)

The defib is now being looked after by Jason, at 5 Mixbury Hall Cottages, and Melanie and Jason at Meadow House, Church Lane.

Our thanks to Jules for previously keeping this in working order for the village. With the change of "defib keepers", it is a good opportunity for a fresh look at this equipment. Things to be aware of:

The defib is not locked, but the cabinet should be closed. The door closure isn't great, so if it has blown open, please close it. Through the window, you should be able to see an orange box - similar to a child's plastic lunch box. May we ask that each time you walk up and down the village, you check that it is still in situ. If it has been taken, we need to know as soon as possible. On the top shelf of the cabinet, there is a yellow box. This contains a face mask, and it is attached to the defib.

The checking of the battery, power, and general working order of this equipment will be dealt with by Jason, and Jason and Melanie. In due course, we plan to add a "bleed kit" to the cabinet and acquire a new

*Mixbury, continued*

defib sign. The bleed kit could help stem bleeding, for example, of a person involved in a road traffic accident.

Also, we are looking into establishing the Good Samaritan App. This could be a really useful, possibly life saving tool for villagers to have. More details on this to come!

We would also like to offer first aid training, with guidance on how to help in an emergency and show villagers how to do CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) and how to use the defib. Watch this space .... more details in due course.

If in the mean time, you need to use the defib, please call 999 and follow the instructions from the call operator. Please keep as calm as possible, as the machine will also guide you through what to do.

Kind regards, Melanie.

### THE NORDIC KITCHEN AT SWALLOWS NURSERY

I'm delighted to say we are open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays for the full menu. Opening hours are from 10am to 4pm (last cooked orders at 2:45pm).

Our wood burner is on full blast and everyone is assured of a warm welcome. We look forward to seeing you!

Best regards Anna

**SAVE THE DATE – THE BIG LUNCH WEEKEND**  
**7<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026**  
**FURTHER DETAILS TO FOLLOW.**

## Newton Purcell St Michael and All Angels

CHURCHWARDEN: Ann von Maltzahn, Home Farm Shelswell Park

CHURCHWARDEN: Stuart Hinton

TREASURER: Fai Li

PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER Flora Skinner

MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Ann von Maltzahn

Tel 01280 848680

Tel: 07593 784143

Tel: 07725 009838

Tel: 01869 277366

Tel 01280 848680

### Services:-

Sunday 5th April - Easter Sunday Service - 10.45 a.m.



#### **Churchyard Clear Up :-**

Our grateful thanks to all of you who came to help and particularly to Jackie for providing refreshments and delicious Bacon Butties!

#### **Bonus Ball Lotto:-**

Our recent very lucky winner was Jen Beaumont - twice!

#### **Hall to Let:-**

If you are looking for a venue for meetings, a party or an event please contact Jackie Le Fevre on 07544 985117 or [jackielefevre@btinternet.com](mailto:jackielefevre@btinternet.com) for details and to make your booking.

#### **Dates for Your Diary:-**

This years ever popular 'Artists in the Countryside' exhibition of local artists work will be held on **Saturday 13th June** with the Private View on the evening of Friday the 12th.

Our Summer Fete will be later than usual on **Saturday 12th September** and promises to be a great day out for all the family.

Please keep these dates free and come along.

## Stoke Lyne St Peter's

CHURCHWARDEN: Christopher Poole

CHURCHWARDEN: James Holden-White

TREASURER: Janey Poole

PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER Emma Brown

MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Rena Andrews

PARISH ROOM BOOKINGS : Kelly and James Holden-White

Tel 01869 346020

[CTP@oxford-educational.co.uk](mailto:CTP@oxford-educational.co.uk)

[kholdenwhite@aol.com](mailto:kholdenwhite@aol.com)

Tel 07810 120457

[janey@oxford-educational.co.uk](mailto:janey@oxford-educational.co.uk)

[emmabrown911@gmail.com](mailto:emmabrown911@gmail.com)

Tel: 01869 346653

[renaandrews820@gmail.com](mailto:renaandrews820@gmail.com)

Tel 01869 345211

[kholdenwhite@aol.com](mailto:kholdenwhite@aol.com)

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

### St Peter's Church Stoke Lyne Services

Thursday 2nd April 12.00 Maundy Thursday Midday Holy Communion with soup lunch

Sunday 5th April 10.45 am Easter Day Holy Communion

Sunday 12th April 6.00 pm Evening Communion

Sunday 19th April 10.00 am Food for Thought

Sunday 26th April 10.45 am Holy Communion

### Flower Duty for April

Janey Poole

### Stoke Lyne 100 Club – March Results

Lucky Winners this month are as follows:

First Prize      Membership No 32      Kelly Holden-White

Second Prize    Membership No 6      Faye Billingham

Third Prize      Membership No 23      Elaine Barnes

Congratulations and thank you to all for your continued support.

It would be great to have more people join our 100 Club. We have lost a few members due to relocation etc. therefore, our prize money has been reduced.

Please, do join us each month. A cost of £3.00 per membership is all it takes (more than one membership per family is perfectly ok). Simply set up a payment each month to the St Peter's account, details as follows and email me to let me know, I will give you a membership number by return and off we go.

Account:          St Peter's Church

Account No:      01832174

Sort Code:        51 70 15

Janey Poole

Treasurer, St Peter's Church PCC

## Stoke Lyne Village Litter Pick – 28<sup>th</sup> February

We had a great turn out, with 16 volunteers including our youngest helpers, Willow and Sid.

Thank you to everyone for helping out and collecting 24 bin bags full of rubbish and some over-sized objects which couldn't fit in bags (including a bean bag and car mudguards and bumpers!)



*Kelly Holden-White*

## Senior Citizens' Lunch – 28<sup>th</sup> February



Villagers came to enjoy a roast dinner and crumble (or have food delivered to their homes). Ped and Ricky worked hard to produce perfect meat over the fire pit – thank you so much to everyone who helped.

*Kelly Holden-White*

## Open Mic Night – Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 7-11pm

We are planning an Open Mic Night. Please let Ped or Kelly know if you can come to take part (07926 590035 or [07557108067/kholdenwhite@icloud.com](mailto:07557108067/kholdenwhite@icloud.com)) There will be bar snacks and drinks, with a Temporary Events Notice in place.

### Stoke Lyne on the internet:

Stoke Lyne Village Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/StokeLyneVillage>

Stoke Lyne Parish Council: <https://stokelyne.org/>

Stoke Lyne Stories: <https://stokelynestories.webador.co.uk/>

Victoria County History: <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol6/pp312-323>

# Stratton Audley and Godington

## St Mary and St Edburga; Holy Trinity

CHURCHWARDEN: Sarah Noujaim, 15 Cavendish Place, Stratton Audley

CHURCHWARDEN: Penny Oakey, Grange Farm, Godington

TREASURER: Fai Li

PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Maxine Ling

MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Vacant (Stratton Audley)

MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Sylvia List (Godington)

Tel 07941 273145

Tel 01869 278778

Tel 07725 009838

[editor@shelswellparishes.info](mailto:editor@shelswellparishes.info)

### CHURCH SERVICES

Thursday 2nd April 7.00 pm Maundy Thursday Holy Communion at Stratton Audley

Sunday 5th April 10.45 am Easter Day Holy Communion at Stratton Audley

Sunday 12th April 10.45 am Morning Service at Stratton Audley

Sunday 26th April 9.15 am Holy Communion at Stratton Audley

### FOODBANK

Please don't forget the foodbank donation point in the church porch in Stratton Audley, supporting Bicester Foodbank! Thank you to everyone who donates. Particularly appreciated are tinned fruit, veg, soup and fish also coffee and hot chocolate. If you are in need or would like more information, please contact Becky on 07928 990569 (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 9.00 am – 1.00 pm) or by email [admin@shelswellparishes.info](mailto:admin@shelswellparishes.info)



### 'Little Lambs' Baby and Toddler Group

Stratton Audley Church

Wednesdays 10am - 11.30am

(Term Time)

Come & join us! Play, music and stories.

Tea, coffee and snacks for adults and  
children

Meet new families from the local area.

If you'd like more details or to be added to our regular email circulation then please email [admin@shelswellparishes.info](mailto:admin@shelswellparishes.info)

## The Last Word

"At my age I ... get my daily paper, look at the obituaries page and if I'm not there, I carry on as usual."  
 – Patrick Moore

### 9th APRIL - DIETRICH BONHOEFFER, LUTHERAN PASTOR AND MARTYR

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was born at Breslau in Silesia (now the Polish city of Wroclaw) in 1906, the son of an academic. In 1912, his father was appointed to be Professor of Psychiatry and Neurology at Berlin university, and so the family moved to Berlin.

Bonhoeffer never even considered going into politics or saw himself as a rebel. Instead, he studied theology in Tubingen, Berlin and New York, before returning to Berlin as a lecturer in theology in 1931.

But on 30th January 1933 Adolf Hitler, leader of the National Socialist German Workers' Party, had come to power. His totalitarian approach left no room for anyone in public life to disagree with him, including anyone in the two major churches – Lutheran and Catholic.

Bonhoeffer refused to be compliant, and joined the Confessing Church, which had formed in opposition to the takeover of the Lutheran Church. The Confessing Church also opposed Hitler's attempts to force antisemitism on the church and society.



Bonhoeffer was in America when war broke out in 1939, but he returned to Germany. He said: "I shall have no right to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war, if I do not share the trials of this time with my people."

Back in Germany, he joined the underground anti-Nazi opposition and worked hard to oppose Hitler. In 1943 he was arrested and imprisoned at Tegel prison in Berlin. The involvement of many of his contacts in the July 1944 plot to kill Hitler may well have sealed his fate. He was finally moved on to Flossenberg concentration camp. In April 1945, as American troops were approaching the camp, Bonhoeffer was hanged.

The last words of this brilliant and courageous 39-year-old opponent of Nazism were: "This is the end – for me, the beginning of life."





## EASTER WINGS

*This poem by George Herbert (1593 - 1633) is written deliberately in the shape of wings*

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store  
 Though foolishly he lost the same  
 Decaying more and more  
 Til he became  
 Most poore

With thee  
 Oh let me rise  
 As larks, harmoniously,  
 And sing this day thy victories  
 Then shall the full further the flight in me.

## ARE YOU A GADGET MAGPIE?

You know what they are: those things you never knew you needed until you saw one - then suddenly you felt that life would never be complete without it.

And so, you brought home the spiraliser that makes vegetables look like spaghetti. And the pasta maker that you can't quite figure out how to use. And the ice-cream maker that makes everything sticky and helped you put on another three pounds. And the robot vacuum which terrorises the cat. At least the bread maker makes a good shelf on the kitchen counter.

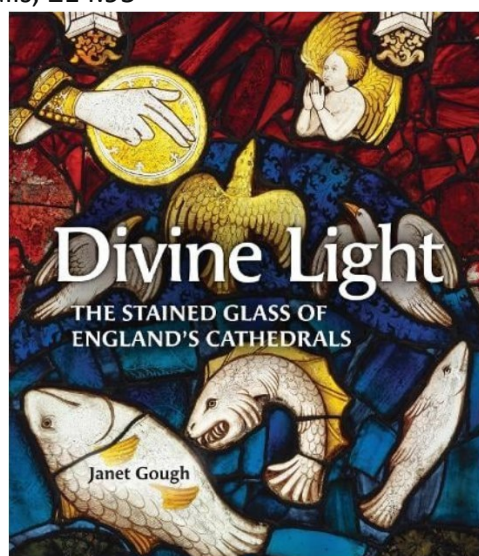
However, a recent survey by Saga has found that 65% of us have experienced 'gadget regret'. Top of the list of regrets is the spiralizer – 62% of us woke up one morning to realise that no one needs vegetables to look like spaghetti. Second place belongs to digital picture frames, which 52% of people regret buying. After that comes the pasta maker (45%), the ice-cream maker (42%), VR headsets (35%), the bread maker (31%), the internet-connected exercise equipment (31%) and finally, the robot vacuum (29%).

What do we do with all this stuff? 46% of us keep it, even when we don't want it. 15% of us try and sell the things, while a desperate 14% of us simply throw them away. And 19% of us grimly hang on to them for a year or so, before passing them on to an unsuspecting friend.

Turns out that there are blessings to having no spare money after all!

## Divine Light: The Stained Glass of England's Cathedrals

by Janet Gough  
 Kulturalis, £14.95



Could stained glass have a place in mission?

Millions of people visit cathedrals and historic churches in the UK and around the world every year. St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey are among London's most popular tourist attractions.

In many English cities, it's the cathedral that tops the TripAdvisor list for ratings and reviews. Local churches that remain open through the week often find visitors drawn to them – to look around, pray, reflect, or simply pause amid busy lives.

Historian Janet Gough has recently produced 'Divine Light,' a survey of some of the best stained

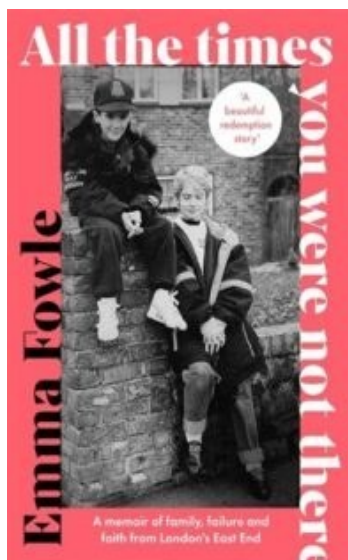
glass in England's cathedrals. She explained, "The stained-glass windows of England's cathedrals illuminate interior spaces, communicate religious, historical and political messages, and perhaps offer us a glimpse of heaven."

In today's society, dominated as it is by the visual image – from Instagram to YouTube, TikTok and Facebook – these colourful windows could help introduce contemporary people to Bible narratives and gospel truths.

There is much biblical truth to be found in stained glass windows for those who look with an inquiring mind. In our supremely visual age, these works of art – both ancient and modern – can capture the attention and imagination of the millions who are drawn to our cathedrals and historic churches.

### All The Times You Were Not There – a memoir of family, failure and faith from London's East End

By Emma Fowle, SPCK, £13.99



In 1980s East London, families lived by an unspoken code. You can throw a punch to make a point and a few too many beers were par for the course. But you never abandon your family.

That was Emma Fowle's father's greatest mistake. A champion powerlifter with a dangerous appetite for risk, he dragged his family into a world of steroids, cocaine, illegal raves, debt collecting, fraud and infidelity. Then, one day, he simply walked out

– leaving behind a trail of chaos and questions that would take decades to untangle.

Set against the gritty backdrop of London's East End, this book is a raw and redemptive memoir about the cost of broken promises and the unexpected grace that can transform even the most fractured family story.

Through her Christian faith, Emma learns to reframe her past: not as a story of failure, but of survival, forgiveness and hope. With unflinching honesty and tender insight, she writes about what it means to grow up searching for love in the ruins and to find redemption where you least expect it.

### POINTS TO PONDER...

My doctor said now that I'm older I need to install a bar in my bathroom...How's it looking?



MAUNDY THURSDAY - WHEN JESUS WASHED THE DISCIPLES' FEET...

# Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Luke 22:24, John 13:3-17

Jesus and his disciples were celebrating the Passover with the special meal. The disciples were bickering again.

I'm most important because I've known him the longest

But I'm the oldest!

I've given up the most to follow him!

There was a reason why no-one wanted to be the least important - the roads were mud and everyone's feet got very dirty.

It was the job of the least important servant to wash everyone's feet...

The disciples didn't have a servant, and none of them wanted to do the foot washing...

Jesus took off his outer robe and tied a towel around his waist.

He filled a large bowl with water and started washing the disciples' feet.

Peter couldn't believe what he was seeing!

Are you really going to wash my feet?

You will understand later why I am doing this.

I can't ever let you serve me like this!

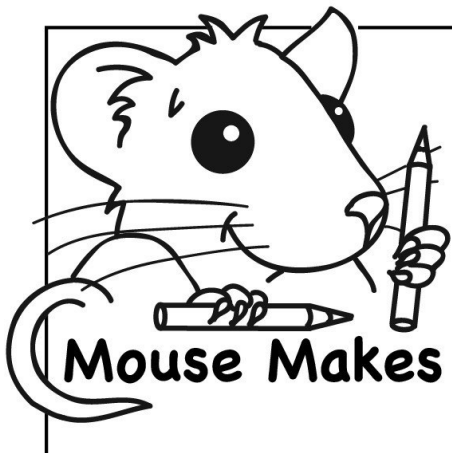
If you don't let me, you will no longer be my disciple

Then wash all of me!

If you've had a bath, then you only need your feet washing!

Once Jesus had washed all their feet, he put his robe back on and sat down.

Do you understand why I, your teacher, did this? I am setting you the example of how you are to serve each other. Do it, and God will bless you.

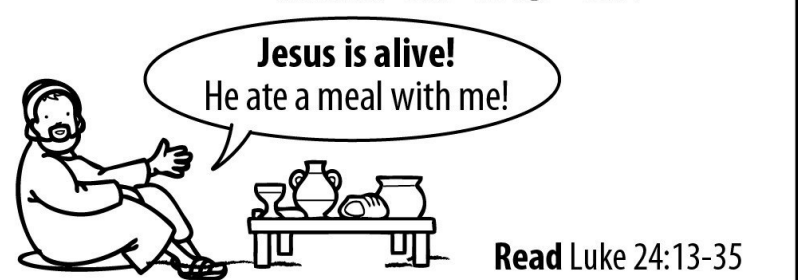
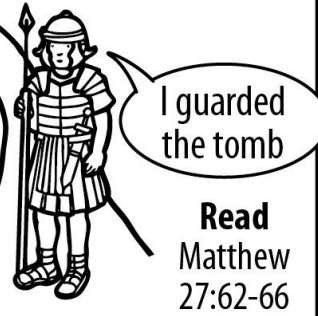
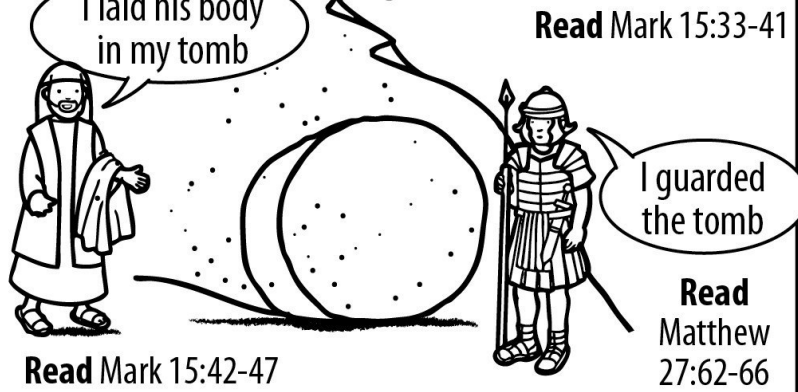
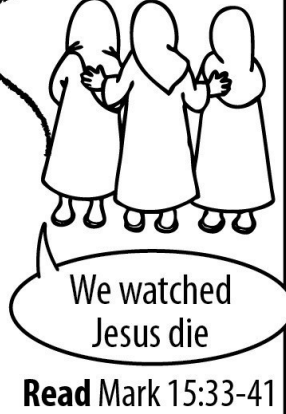
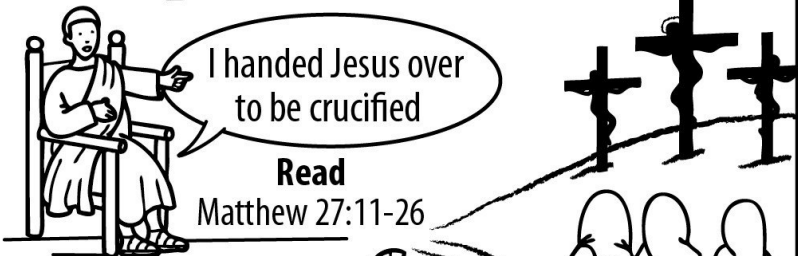
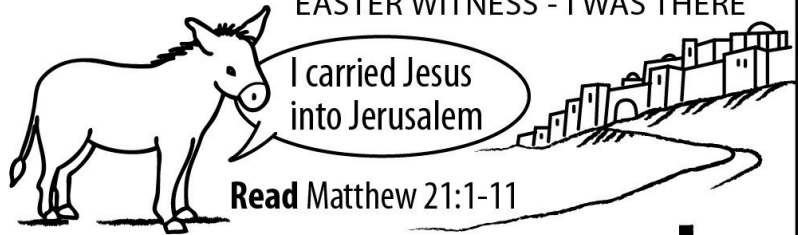


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JESUS • DONKEY • PALMS  
 HOSANNA • PILATE • THORNS  
 CRUCIFY • NAIL • CROSS  
 QUAKE • DEATH • BURY  
 TOMB • STONE • EMPTY  
 ANGEL • MARY • HEAVEN  
 RISEN • ALIVE • GOD  
 GOOD NEWS • CHRIST  
 SAVIOUR • EASTER • JOY



EASTER WITNESS - I WAS THERE



## INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR STREET CHILDREN

If you have children, you would find it unbearable to think of them abandoned and alone on the streets of a big city, struggling each day to simply survive.

Which is why the International Day for Street Children is held each year, to raise awareness about the millions of children worldwide who must rely on the streets for survival. Major international Christian charities that reach out to street children include:

**Street Child** – <https://street-child.org/churches-for-street-child/>

**Stand By Me** – <https://www.standby.me/go/christian-charity>

**Compassion UK** – <https://web.compassionuk.org/about-us/who-we-are-old/>

**Samaritan's Purse** – <https://www.samaritanspurse.org/our-ministry/childrens-ministries/>

## WHAT'S ORANGE, STICKY AND WORTH PRESERVING?

This month sees National Marmalade Week (18th – 25th April). Dalemain Mansion and Gardens in Cumbria is holding the World Marmalade Awards & Festival. It celebrates, preserves and promotes artisanal marmalades, with thousands of entries.

If you like marmalade, ever wonder where it comes from? One tradition traces it to a storm-damaged Spanish ship which took refuge in Dundee Harbour in 1700. It was full of Seville oranges that the captain was desperate to sell before they went mouldy. A local down-on-luck merchant, one James Keiller, bought the lot. He didn't know what to do with the oranges either, but fortunately he had a resourceful wife. She set about turning a shipload of Seville oranges into a preserve, and so the first marmalade factory was born.

Marmalade has been at the heart of British breakfasts for centuries. If you also want to get your fingers sticky, visit: [www.marmaladeawards.com](http://www.marmaladeawards.com).

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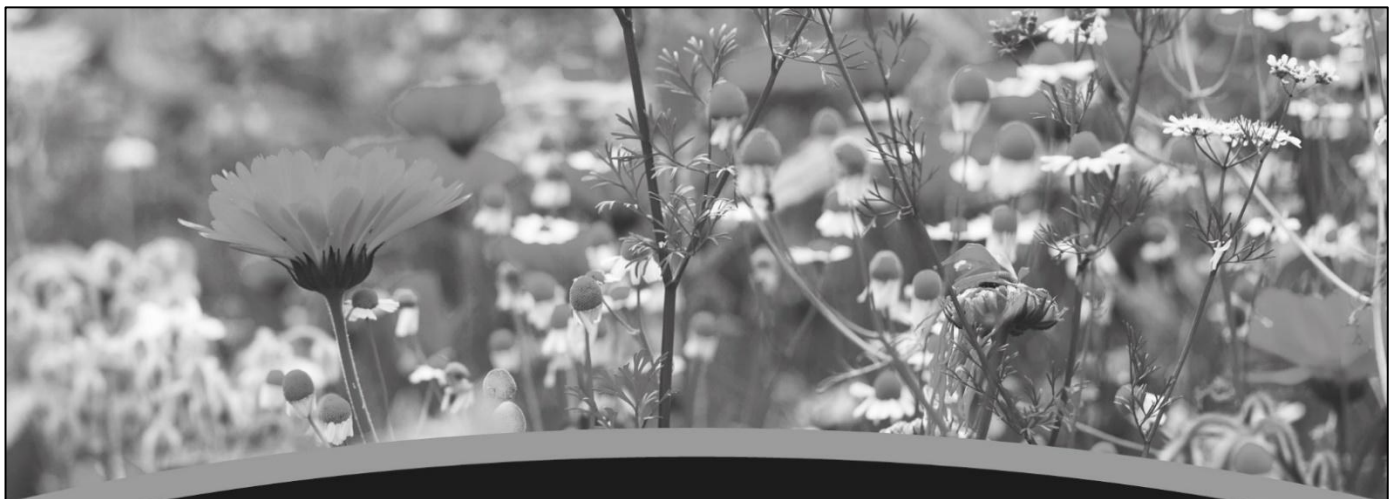
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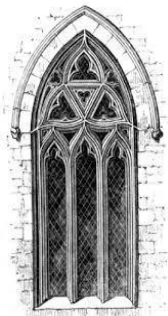
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**SHELLEWELL GROUP SERVICES: APRIL 2026**  
 CW: 'Common Worship' modern language service    BCP: 'Book of Common Prayer' traditional language service

| DATE     | Holy Week                                                                                                                                                                                        | 5 <sup>th</sup> April<br>Easter Day                                                                                                                                                                | 12 <sup>th</sup> April<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter | 19 <sup>th</sup> April<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter                                                                               | 26 <sup>th</sup> April<br>4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter                          |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AL TAR   |                                                                                                                                                                                                  | White                                                                                                                                                                                              | White                                                      | White                                                                                                                                    | White                                                                               |
| 8.00 am  |                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                            |                                                                                                                                          | Holy Communion<br>(BCP)<br>FINMERE<br>AM                                            |
| 9.15 am  | 2 <sup>nd</sup> April<br>Maundy Thursday<br>(White)<br><br>12 noon<br>Holy Communion (CW) and<br>Soup Lunch<br>STOKE LYNE<br>LW                                                                  | 9.15am<br>Holy Communion by<br>Extension<br>with hymns (CW)<br>COTTISFORD PV<br><br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>FINMERE LW<br><br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>HETHE VM           | Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>HETHE<br>AM           | 9.15am<br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>FINMERE<br>AM                                                                             | 9.15am<br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>STRATTON AUDLEY<br>AM/John Alderdice |
|          | 7pm<br>Holy Communion (CW)<br>STRATTON AUDLEY<br>AM                                                                                                                                              | Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>MIXBURY AM                                                                                                                                                    |                                                            | 10am<br>'Food for Thought'<br>STOKE LYNE<br>Lay-led                                                                                      | 9.30am<br>Morning Service<br>HETHE<br>Lay-led                                       |
| 10.45 am | 3 <sup>rd</sup> April<br>Good Friday<br>(Hangings Removed)<br><br>12 noon<br>All-age Service<br>FRINGFORD<br>PV<br><br>6pm<br>Devotional Service with<br>Shelswell Group Choir<br>HARDWICK<br>PV | 10.45am<br>Holy Communion by<br>Extension<br>with hymns (CW)<br>FRINGFORD PV<br><br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>HARDWICK VM<br><br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>NEWTON PURCELL LW | Morning Service<br>STRATTON AUDLEY<br>PV                   | 10.45am<br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (BCP)<br>COTTISFORD<br>AM<br><br>10.45am<br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>FRINGFORD<br>LW | 10.45am<br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>STOKE LYNE<br>AM/John Alderdice     |
| 6.00 pm  |                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Evening Communion<br>STOKE LYNE<br>AM                      |                                                                                                                                          | Evensong with<br>the Shelswell Group Choir<br>HARDWICK<br>PV                        |

AM: Revd Alex Mahlava    VM: Revd Vicki Mellor    LW: Revd Liz Welkers    MW: Revd Canon Max Wigley    PV: Mrs Penny Wood (LLM)