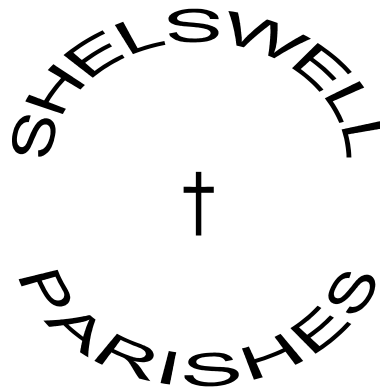


Shelswell News

The magazine of the Shelswell Group of Churches

Cottisford
Fringford
Hardwick
Mixbury
Stoke Lyne



Finmere
Godington
Hethe
Newton Purcell
Stratton Audley



*Trust in God and nurture
your God-given talents;
Minster's Letter by Fr Alex
p.3*

*Fringford's carved pews
(left); a beautiful legacy
from a local man who
finally found his God-
given talent
p.10*

*Save the Date!
1st September – the
Induction and Installation
of our new Rector, Revd
Dr Claire Maxim
p.5*

SHELLOWELL BENEFICE MISSION STATEMENT

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

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RECTOR: Vacancy

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

HOLY TRINITY ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, HETHE,

Mass: 4pm Saturday.

Weekday Mass: 9.30am Monday

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

Telephone: 01869 253277

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

SHELLOWELL NEWS

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Deadlines for the September edition of Shelswell News

To Magazine Correspondents: **Midday on Friday 7th August**

Correspondents to Editor: **Midday on Sunday 9th August at editor@shelswellparishes.info**

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

www.shelswellparishes.info

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

Minister's Letter

IF DREAMS GET YOU INTO PRISON, THE SAME DREAMING WILL TAKE YOU OUT

(Genesis 37:5-8 and Genesis 41:25-32)

Dear friends in Christ, God's time is the best time. The Bible says the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of human beings. With God all things are possible. There are moments in life when we doubt our God-given talents or when others doubt what God gave us as individuals and even call us names, but God's time is the best time.

In Genesis 37, we hear the story of Joseph the son of Israel or Jacob. Joseph was a handsome boy and his father loved him more than others because he was given to him in old age. Joseph had many talents and the greatest of them from God was to dream and being able to interpret dreams.

It is the dreams that got him into trouble with his brothers. One day in Gen 37:5 he told his brothers a dream which pointed to him being a saviour to his brothers and the whole family. Because of this, the hatred became even deeper. It culminated in him being arrested and thrown into a pit and later getting sold.

If dreams get you into trouble, God will use the same dreams to take you out of trouble. After being sold and later coming to Egypt, Joseph was then in Egypt, in Potifer's house. He was arrested again and put into prison. This is where God comes in with his powers to make dreams and interpretation of dreams take Joseph out of prison.

Genesis 41 states that Pharaoh had a troubling dream which none of his officers would interpret or explain. Eventually Joseph had to be called from prison to explain the dreams of Pharaoh. Dreams got Joseph into trouble and God freed him through dreams again.

Dear friends, let us hold fast to our God-given faith. We were given the faith by God and that faith in him will see us through. There are many times that people have called you names or doubted that which God gave you. Do not despair; God will see you through. If God-given talents seem likely to take you into difficult times, the same God-given talents will serve us.

Be blessed, be safe,

Fr Alex Mahlava

Heavenly Father,
I thank You for the unique gifts and talents You have placed in me;
reveal them to me clearly
and help me to use them for Your glory.
Amen

BIBLE READINGS



Sunday 2 nd August	9 th Sunday after Trinity	Isaiah 55 v 1 – 5 Romans 9 v 1-5 Matthew 14 v 13 – 21
Sunday 9 th August	10 th Sunday after Trinity	1 Kings 19 v 9 – 18 Romans 10 v 5 – 15 Matthew 14 v 22 – 33
Sunday 16 th August	11 th Sunday after Trinity	Isaiah 56 v1 and 6 – 8 Romans 11 v 1 – 2a and 29 – 32 Matthew 15 v 21 – 28
Sunday 23 rd August	12 th Sunday after Trinity	Isaiah 51 v 1 – 6 Romans 12 v 1 – 8 Matthew 16 v 13 – 20
Sunday 30 th August	13 th Sunday after Trinity	Jeremiah 15 v 15 – 21 Romans 12 v 9 – end Matthew 16 v 21 – end



A warm welcome for everyone to our informal service

Connect

on August 2nd 10:45 am at Finmere village hall.

We are delighted to have a guest speaker this month; Rev Dennis Nixiol from Bicester, originally from Ohio USA .

And as always, we serve coffee and cake afterwards !

MIDWEEK HOLY COMMUNION AND LIGHT LUNCH

The next service will be on Thursday 6th August

12 noon

Stoke Lyne Church

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

Email admin@shelswellparishes.info



THE SHELSWELL BENEFICE



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

The Revd Dr Claire Maxim
as Rector of the Shelswell Benefice

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

Refreshments in the Church after the service.

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



"Kai" by Paul Wilkinson Photography, Haddenham

Love dogs? Have time to spare? Why not become a Volunteer Puppy Trainer?

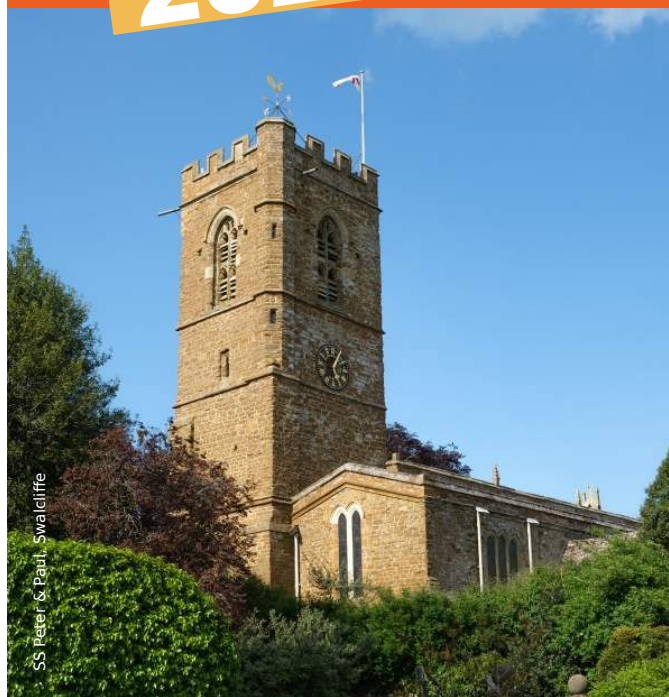
Hearing Dogs for Deaf People is urgently looking for kind-hearted dog lovers in and around the Bicester area who would be interested in volunteering to care for and train a puppy who will go on to transform the life of a deaf person.

All costs are covered. No experience is necessary. Visit hearingdogs.org.uk/volunteer/ or call 01844 348129 to find out more.

TH
12
SEPT
2026

RIDE+STRIDE **for Churches**

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



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

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

join us

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

Sign up with our online fund-raising partners GoodHub.

Email: rideandstride@ohct.org.uk



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

Shelswell-Wulu-Link Update and Grateful Thanks Teachers' Incentive Scheme, Wulu Girls' Primary School, South Sudan

The Cream Teas at Stratton Audley on 5th July were well supported despite the Grand Prix being shown on TV at the same time. We were updated on the situation in South Sudan and saw video clips of teachers with their classes at the Girls' School. Very generous donations at this enjoyable afternoon resulted in a total of **£406.11** for the Teachers' Incentive Scheme. **Grateful thanks** go to all who baked scones and cakes, helped at and supported the event.

Until now 5 teachers have each been paid an incentive of 20 USD per month which helps with feeding their families and paying medical expenses. We will now send **25 USD** per teacher per month to account for the high rate of inflation in South Sudan.

More teachers need the incentive because pay from the government is often very late, too little or non-existent. There are 11 teachers at present and by giving them all an incentive Bishop Zachariah hopes the qualified staff already at the school will remain during 2027. We now have enough in hand to pay 11 teachers' incentives for the period October – December 2026, a total of **825 USD** (approx £660 depending on the exchange rate).

We are looking at ways of covering the incentive for these teachers in 2027 in addition to fundraising events and collections at special services. For example, people have already promised to sponsor the incentives for three teachers for 2027. Perhaps others may be willing to sponsor a teacher's incentive for a year or part of a year. More details of this in the autumn.



Emmanuel
Rundial

Bishop Zachariah forwarded a video featuring **Emmanuel Rundial**, a prominent South Sudanese educator who lectures at Rumbek University of Science and Technology. An extract from this video was viewed at the Cream Teas.

Emmanuel feels that many students are being let down because most primary & secondary schools don't have competent and qualified teachers. Teachers have not had the right education themselves at primary or secondary level and are not well trained.

Qualified teachers abandon the profession as their salaries don't come on time, or not at all. Even if pay finally arrives months late, it is not sufficient for their needs. Emmanuel suggests that the Ministry of Education needs to set things right by:

- * Paying teachers very well
- * Recruiting qualified teachers
- * Having strict policies to regulate exams

Emmanuel actively discourages young people from taking the dangerous illegal migration routes to Europe and encourages them to build their futures in South Sudan.

Please pray:

- for the teachers and pupils at Wulu Girls' School as life in South Sudan is so uncertain
- for Bishop Zachariah and Mama Monica
- for peace
- for good government - elections are due to be held in Dec 2026
- that the Education Ministry will be able to pay teachers properly



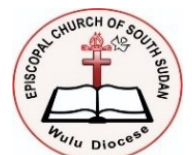
***Educate a Girl,
Educate a
Nation
African
Proverb***



***Obtaining a quality education
is the foundation to
improving people's lives and
sustainable development
UN's Sustainable Goal 4***

To donate to the Incentive Scheme by bank transfer:

Account Name: Shelswell Group of Churches **Sort Code:** 30 91 39
Account No: 00261525 **Ref:** Wulu



THANK YOU from Bishop Zachariah, the teachers and pupils

ROUND THE BENEFICE IN JUNE AND JULY



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Father's Day and Food for Thought came together in June this year and we focussed on Joseph, Jesus' father on earth. Although he isn't quoted as saying anything in the Bible, he had a huge impact on his son's life, his confidence and skill. Joseph was a good man and showed how to fill the role of being a father, a protector and a supporter.

Food for Thought is our regular, informal service held on the third Sunday of each month, beginning at 10am with breakfast, why not try it?

Kelly Holden-White

MIDWEEK COMMUNION AND SOUP LUNCH – THURSDAY 2ND JULY

We set up the tables for lunch before the service started. Reverend Liz Welters began by welcoming all to the service, followed by prayers for those who have been bereaved and also those known to us who have been ill and need prayers. Prayers were also said for King Charles and family, our Government, and people across the world where there is drought, wars and devastation caused by flooding, earthquakes etc and especially for the people of Venezuela who lost so many in the recent earthquakes.

The Gospel reading was from Matthew Chapter 9 verses 1 to 8 which tells of how Jesus forgave and healed a paralysed man. Jesus stepped into a boat and rowed across Lake Gallilee to Capernaum, where He had centred his ministry. There was a belief at that time that all illness was the result of sin and so could not be cured until sins were forgiven. Some friends of the paralysed man brought him to Jesus. The man may have done something wrong for which he felt guilty and it caused his body to stop working and could not be cured. Jesus did not condemn the man but told him to take heart his sins were forgiven and that he should get up and take up his mat and go home. The man did so, forgiven and freed from all that bound him.

We then had the lovely service of Communion, assisted by Jan, after which we moved to the tables for a lovely lunch of jacket potatoes with lots delicious fillings followed by various puddings of trifle, lemon sponge puddings and a lemon tart.

Thank you Liz for keeping the Midweek Communion, also thank you to those who provided the food, helped to set up and also give lifts.

Rena Andrews

SHELWELL-BY-THE SEA – MONDAY, 6TH JULY

We met at Newton Purcell village hall at 10 30. It is a lovely little hall for small numbers. On arrival we had tea and cake. There were a few games that people could do and some people had brought other things to do. There was lots of chatting and laughter going on. While we were waiting for lunch we did two of Marion's quizzes, where we put down every letter of the alphabet in a column down the side of the page, and then we were given a subject, one of which was birds. We had to write down a bird beginning with each letter of the alphabet and we had some funny birds come up- I think some were made up! We also did one with countries beginning with each letter of the alphabet.

Penny then gave a talk on two saints, Thomas More and John Fisher. Both were well educated men. Thomas More was educated at Oxford University and John Fisher was educated at Cambridge University. These two men were executed by order of King Henry VIII during the Reformation, for refusing to accept the king as the supreme head of the Church of England and for upholding the Pope's authority. They were both executed in 1535 at the Tower of London and both canonised in 1935 as saints. The history of these two men is fascinating reading and shows how strongly they believed in their faith and that they were willing to die for it.

Thank you, Penny, for your reflection. We then had a lovely lunch of hot jacket potato with a variety of cold or hot fillings, followed by a choice of delicious desserts, fruit salad, strawberries and cream or creme fraiche, with jelly. While the washing up was being done Liz gave us a quiz sheet to fill in, with very interesting questions. Later we had tea and cake.

Thank you to all who provide food, and lifts. A big thank you to Penny, Liz, June and Claire for their hard work, and making an enjoyable day for us. We were given the time to meet at the Stoke Lyne church ready for our trip to Lichfield on Wednesday 8th July.

Rena Andrews

VISIT TO LICHFIELD - 8th JULY

The minibus picked us up at 9.30, we had a pleasant journey in the air conditioned coach. When we arrived at Lichfield, we made our way to the Cathedral. The Cathedral is dedicated to St Chad who was born to a noble family around 634 and died 672. Chad was educated on the Holy Isle of Lindisfarne. He was a 7th century Anglo Saxon monk and the first Bishop of Mercia in Central England. He was much loved and revered, and was nicknamed the walking Bishop.

When you stand and look at the exterior of the building, it is amazing how many statues you can see. In all there are over 150 ornate statues including 113 on the west front that includes a statue of Queen Victoria (sculpted by her daughter Princess Louise). Lichfield Cathedral is unique in that it is the only medieval Cathedral in the UK to feature three spires, known as "The Ladies of the Vale."

We had tea and buns at a lovely little cafe a few minutes walk away. Alice and Joe met us there and it was so nice to see them both looking so well. Afterwards we went back to the Cathedral for a short service of Communion.

We then walked to a place recommended by Alice and Joe where we had lunch together from a menu with lots of choices. We had a lovely walk back to the Cathedral for another look round, there are so many beautiful marble statues to see. When it was time for the minibus to arrive we went out into the hot sun, where Jan collared a passer-by and asked if he would take a photo of the group which he was delighted to do. It was a very hot day, the Cathedral was really cool to sit in.

It was a lovely day out, enjoyed by all. I will say you can't take it all in on a day trip to the Cathedral. Thank you to Penny and her band of assistants for a perfect day.

Rena Andrews



Our group from Shelswell Benefice in Lichfield

FLORA THOMPSON 150th ANNIVERSARY



'FLORA'S FRINGFORD' SATURDAY 19th September

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

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

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

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

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

Free event with donations welcome.

**Exhibition &
photographic display**

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

**Short films & Audio
Visuals to view**

**3.00 Q&A with local
author and historian
Martin Greenwood**

**Candleford Café for
tea & cake**

FRINGFORD VILLAGE HALL

The Green
Fringford
OX27 8DY

Saturday 19th September

11am to 4pm

THE RECTOR AND THE WOOD-CARVER

Martin Greenwood writes about two more Fringford residents who would have known Flora Thompson, Charles Freeman and the Reverend Charles Thompson.

Charles Freeman, Fringford (1863-1912), wood carver

Charles Freeman was born in Fringford on 3 May 1863 in Rose Cottage, an old thatched cottage next to the schoolhouse, where his parents kept a sweet shop and pastured sheep on the Green. This is now the site of No.1 The Green.

His father was Thomas Charles Freeman, born in 1899 in Newton Purcell, his mother, Harriet Porter, was born in 1834 in Waddesdon. In 1871, he was at Cotmore House and in 1891 at Fringford Post Office.

Freeman was twice in trouble with the law: in September 1875, he was charged with committing willful damage to some straw bands, the property of Mr Paxton of Mixbury. Upon the suggestion of Chairman, Mr Paxton did not press the charge. In 1881, he was also in Court. In 1891, Charles was listed as an agricultural labourer and he was still living with his parents. He emigrated to Canada at some point in the early 1890s where his feet were ruined by frostbite.

Sometime before 1897, he was back in Fringford, as noted in a letter of 14 November 1897 from Kezia Whitton to her son, George. She had been down to Manor Farm to see Mr Simon's house, as he had died recently, 'I would like you to see Mr Simon's house, now they have took out all the inside there is only room left in it..and that is where CFreeman (Charlie who carved the pews etc in the church) lives in the best parlour they have I hear...'. He became a wood carver for the church with Henry Chinnery as his patron and in the 1901 Census he is listed as a wood carver.



He used to hobble down to the church each day with the aid of two sticks and two iron calipers on his legs, and did most of his work lying down in the aisles, and carving the whole vestry wall, the pew ends and the choir stalls.



He was still alive in 1911 but died in 1912 aged about 49. The quality of his work is astonishing, full of variety and very beautiful.

It has to be said that the Victorian pews are very uncomfortable but the church does not have the money to take them out and replace them with chairs, as has happened in neighbouring Stratton Audley. So we may be able to continue to enjoy the beauty of Freeman's carving.

The Revd Charles Thompson (*Mr Delafield in Lark Rise*) (Rector 1894-98)

Democracy came to Fringford with a vengeance, with the arrival of the Revd Charles Thompson in 1894. He was married but did not have any children, although Flora gives him two daughters in *Lark Rise*; this gives her the freedom to discuss children in the community. Flora herself was used to going to church and her description of the new rector sounds very authentic. 'Dignity did not enter into his composition. He would run out to post a letter..in his shirt-sleeves and he had a charming way of relieving any old woman of her load.'

Some missed Mr Coulsdon (The Revd Cadwallader Coker) (1873-94) 'He was a gentleman if ever there was one!' Others liked Mr Delafield because he was 'not proud and stuck up' and he soon won the 'reputation of being the best preacher in the neighbourhood – some said in the county.' As a parishioner was heard to say 'A sermon like that makes you feel two inches taller.' 'On summer evenings the church was often so well filled that latecomers had to stand in the aisle.'

'You've got to summer and winter a man before you can pretend to know him' was an old country maxim much quoted at the time. Attendance was variable and it had decreased significantly in the 1880s. By 1899 however, the Rector described it as 'very satisfactory.'



St Michael and All Angels, Fringford in the early 1900s

FRINGFORD TRAIL AUDIO

Note: An audio of my Fringford Trail is now available on Guidl for those with a smart phone; cost £4.99. It is not available on the web. Cottisford and Juniper Hill Trails should also be available in the summer. They are all read by my son Adrian.

Martin Greenwood

REGISTRY

Baptism

Lucca Grace Vesper Preston

St Mary and St Edburga, Stratton Audley

Saturday 13th June 2026

At 11 am on Saturday 13th June, guests assembled in Stratton Audley church for the Christening of Lucca Preston. Lucca, who was born on 13th December 2024, is the daughter of James and Katherine Preston of Stratton Audley.



Lucca was baptised by Fr Alex. She has six godparents; Archie Sinclair, Alexander Cherry, Maxwell Graham, Elizabeth Englehart, Sophie Gurney and Tashi Goldring.

We pray for Lucca as she starts her Christian journey – may her baptism be the beginning of a lifelong journey with God.

Funeral

Ronald Albert James Reynolds, 1946-2026

Ron Reynolds of Stoke Lyne died earlier this year and will be much missed by the village.

The following poem, written by Brian (Ron's son-in-law), was read out at Ron's funeral at the North Oxfordshire Crematorium on Friday, 10th July 2026.



Rocket Ron!

They called him Rocket Ron that much is true
He worked on the taxis giving lifts to me and you.
He lived in Stoke Lyne and was known by many
He spent hours on his allotment, donating his produce without charging a penny.

He made a fake camera to reduce traffic speed.
It doubled up as a birdbox, yet another good deed.
With a line of garden ornaments right up to the door.
No sign of any gnomes, that subject is sore.

He loved feeding hedgehogs, come rain, sun or frost.
Buying mealworms from Amazon no matter the cost.
He enjoyed smoking tobacco and drinking a brew
He wore a silver earring and had many a tattoo.

He liked driving cars and serviced them too
He preferred buying old ones, instead of brand new.
With stripes on his car he certainly stood out.
He was a bit of a joker of that there's no doubt.

He was a member of Upper Thames for quite a few years
Doing lots of caravan rallies and drinking a few beers.
He'd been to the Algarve, even swam in the nude
Once drank from a 'pond' but loved Portuguese food.

He had a big shed and liked cutting the grass
He loved CB radios and had a tall mast.
He liked keeping busy, but paint tin beware
Everything got coated until the tin was left bare.

He did things his own way not worrying a jot.
His DIY skills were interesting, compliant - possibly not!
He enjoyed casting his line out to catch a big fish
Whilst lots got away, some made it onto his dish.

He had many flags that flapped during the year
To mark sporting occasions that raised a big cheer.
He loved watching sport in his own space
Whether it's Chelsea or England or a Grand Prix race.

We admired his Christmas lights that shone for many miles
They lit up the sky and raised lots of smiles.
He had time for his friends and enjoyed meals out
He liked summer BBQ's, drinking whisky not stout.

He loved his wife June and the wider family too
He would do anything to help us that much is true.
He was one of a kind and will be sorely missed
Till we meet again dear Ron, have fun in heaven but please don't get ???

Club News



SHELSWELL WI



At our July meeting we opened the door and welcomed everyone. Our guest speaker for the evening was Analiza Jones. Analiza gave us a very entertaining talk about the Shellcraft of the Philippines. The combination of slideshow and examples gave us a real insight into the life and culture of the Philippines. It was also lovely to welcome visitors and potential members to our group.

In August we look forward to meeting Janine Kilroe and her talk British Piers. An Illustrated Story of Their History and Future. In September we have Rob Brewer - The Roles of a TV Film Extra and How Anyone Can Do It and in October we welcome back Gillian Cane with It's a Girls Life in The Army.

Shelswell WI meet on the first Thursday of the month 7.30pm, in the village hall Fringford. Our programme includes a wide variety of speakers and activities. As well as all our activities we have the opportunity to take part in talks, visits and classes provided by both our Oxfordshire Federation and National, including VIA an online learning platform. If you would like to come along and find out what we are about please contact Sandra at sandrambickmore@gmail.com.

SHELSWELL READING GROUP

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

Our next meetings are:

- Tuesday 25 August, 7.30 pm (Venue TBC)
- Monday 21st September, 7.30 pm (Venue TBC)

Our next book is **'Colony' by Annika Norlin**

'Open' by Andre Agassi was our first autobiography for some time and was loved by those of us who loved Tennis – and maybe less so by those not so interested in the racquet sport. We felt it was an honest, raw and deep insight into the world of Tennis. Agassi was self-deprecating, flawed and self-reflective, and although sometimes you wanted to shake him, you were rooting for him all the way. He came across as a decent guy who was pushed into tennis – a sport he had a love / hate relationship with. We loved to see him build a team around him, who stayed with him his whole career, and who were clearly highly influential. His relations were complex and raw at times, but we loved that he and Steffi Graff were 'fated' to meet and be together... We were impressed with the level of detail he remembered about each match, and whilst for some the tennis match descriptions were a bit too much, for others, they were a highlight! His relationship with his father was well documented (and clearly difficult) but there was scarce mention of his mother... and whilst his father pushed him, there did not seem to be any blame or resentment...

There were some interesting insights into the other Tennis players of his age – Becker, Sampras, Courier... and we were with him on his journey as he started to realise that he needed to stop being perfect... and when he needed to rebuild himself from the ground up... Overall, many of us felt it was one of the best

autobiographies that we had read, it read like a novel and gave us plenty to discuss about the world of tennis.

Other books discussed:

Guernica – Dave Boling
 The Madness – Fergal Keane
 City Girls – Elizabeth Gilbert
 Yesteryear – Caro Claire Burke
 A Town Like Alice – Neville Shute
 All that is Solid Melts into Air – Darragh McKeon
 Transatlantic – Colm McCann
 Mend the Living – Maylis de Kerangal
 War Doctor – David Nott
 My breath becomes Air – Paul Kalanithi
 Ice Bound – Jerri Nielsen
 The Names – Florence Knapp
 This is Happiness – Niall Williams
 Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell – Robert Dugoni
 Bear Town – Fredrik Backman
 My Friends – Fredrik Backman
 When the Cranes Fly South – Lisa Ridzen
 Project Hail Mary – Andy Weir
 London Falling – Patrick Radden Keefe
 Shadowlands – Brian Sibley (and film)
 John McEnroe – ‘You Cannot be Serious’ and ‘But Seriously’



SHELSWELL POETRY APPRECIATION GROUP

Our July meeting focused on the theme of Space.

We began with ***A Night Piece*** by William Wordsworth (1770-1850). It describes the poet walking at night, observing the moon and stars and feeling spiritually enriched by what he sees. Henry Vaughan (1621-95) uses the skies as a metaphor for heaven.

A more frivolous treatment of the topic is to be found in ***Tea in a Spaceship*** by James Kirkup (1918-2009) and ***But Outer Space....*** by Robert Frost (1874-1963). Richard Aldington (1892-1962) has his tongue firmly in his cheek in ***Evening***, when he casts himself as a lustful voyeur of the Moon. The theme of illicit love is taken up by Oliver Tearle (extant) in ***Conjunction***, in which he imagines an affair between the planets Jupiter and Saturn. Rebecca Elson, another contemporary poet, reminds us in ***What If There Were No Moon?*** how important the Moon is to Life on earth.

It is easy to be overwhelmed by the physics of astronomy, and Walt Whitman (1819-92) describes that feeling and escaping from the lecture hall to find solace in just looking at the night sky. Scientific knowledge of the universe is the theme of ***What Astronomers Know (or Think)*** by Philip Waddell (extant) Rebecca Elson, another contemporary poet, reminds us how important the moon is to life on earth. ***In Praise of Mystery*** by Ada Limon (extant) celebrates the launching of the NASA Europa space craft. ***Space*** by Elias Padilla (extant) gives space travel a personal dimension, as does ***I Wanna go to the Moon***, an anonymous poem. John Keats (1795-1821), in his poem ***Bright Star*** wants to stay with the woman he loves in a state as changeless of the stars in their places.

Two poets who deal with the same ideas are Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) and A E Housman (1859-1936). In ***Astronomy*** Housman mourns for a soldier killed during the Boer War in South Africa and buried under a foreign sky. Hardy does the same. Perhaps it was partly to give a more positive slant to soldiers dying away from home that Rupert Brooke wrote 'The Soldier'!

A different interpretation of the word space is found in two poems. ***Space*** by Kerry Thomas (extant) is about her personal space and that around her, which is hostile and threatening, and ***Keeping Things Whole*** by Mark Strand (1934-2014) has a distinctly neuro-divergent cast. Louis Macneice (1907-63) has a navel-gazing reaction to the night sky, and leaves the reader with a realisation of how vast in distance and time the universe is, in ***Star-Gazer***.

Just as a group of mathematically gifted African-American women worked for NASA on the mid 20th century space programme, a group of English women worked for Victorian scientists exploring the universe through telescopes. The poem ***The Lady Computers 1890-95*** by Lucy Coats (extant) is a hymn of praise to them and regrets that they are not acknowledged and are "long-forgotten relics/of days when women's work just/didn't matter quite enough."

Perhaps the most moving of the poems we found was ***First Dog in Space*** by Brenig Davies (extant). Addressed to Laika, the dog the Russians used to test the effects of space flight, it is about another sort of exploitation and will touch even a non-dog lover.

Finally, Carl Sagan gave a speech, 'The Pale Blue Dot', when the Voyager 1 photo of the Earth and Solar System was first published in 1990. A member of our group turned elements of the speech into a poem, ***Our Pale Blue Dot***, urging us to cherish the Earth and its uniqueness.

If you would like to join us our next meeting will be either the first or second Tuesday in August. Contact me for details on 10869 811994 or at judith.harvey@live.co.uk Judith Harvey

REPORTS FROM THE PARISHES

Cottisford and Juniper Hill St Mary the Virgin

CHURCHWARDEN: Charles Jackson, Cottisford House, Cottisford

Tel 01280 848247

TREASURER: David Barnes

Tel 07856822030

PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Flora Skinner

Tel: 01869 277366

MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Sandra Bickmore, Thatch End, Juniper Hill

sandrambickmore@gmail.com

SERVICES

Sunday 16th August 10.45 am Holy Communion

Tuesday 1 September 7.30pm at Stratton Audley - Institution and Induction of Revd Dr Claire Maxim as the new Rector to the Benefice. All welcome to attend.

COTTISFORD AND JUNIPER HILL SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Following our very successful Open Garden event in June, July and August are quiet months for the Committee. However, this doesn't mean that we are not already arranging our next activity, so watch this space next month.

Our thanks must go to those from Juniper and Cottisford who are still working hard in the heat making our spaces look neat and tidy.

Finmere

St Michael and All Angels

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

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

CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 2nd August 10.45 am 'Connect' informal worship in Finmere Village Hall

Sunday 16th August 9.15 am Holy Communion (CW)

Sunday 23rd August 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)

Tuesday 1 September 7.30pm at Stratton Audley - Institution and Induction of Revd Dr Claire Maxim as the new Rector to the Benefice. All welcome to attend.

Village Hall



The village hall is available for hire. Facilities include AV system with a new projector and larger screen, plus sound system. Fitted kitchen, Meeting room, Patio doors onto the children's play area and enlarged storage spaces for regular users. WiFi facilities are available.

For all hall booking enquiries, please visit www.myfinmere.com/villagehall.



Allotments



Last month we reported that the rain dancer had done a good job - well they seem to have gone on holiday, since the ground is now like rock and all the plants are crying out for rain. It feels that the allotment holder's sole task is now watering every day, rewarding those plants that despite the drought, doggedly continue to produce some edible crop – looking at you – courgettes and early potatoes. 😊

Have just read an interesting tip for home produced fertiliser – soak stinging nettles (and there appears to be no shortage of them) in a water container for a week or so (apparently the brew is rich in nitrogen) and then use the brew (and boy! does it stink) as an additive to the watering can when watering.

Interested, we do still have one plot (with resident stinging nettles) available at the incredibly low cost of £20 p.a., so if interested, please visit www.myfinmere.com/poorsplot and select the enquiry link. *Jean*



Sorry folks...
In August, there will be no
Tuesday Teas

Teas will resume on Tuesday 8th September
Finmere Village Hall
2 - 4 pm

Everyone welcome – no charge



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**

Some Finmere related links:

Finmere facebook page -

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

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

Finmere Parish Council website at – www.finmerepc.org

Village hall news at – www.myfinmere.com

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

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

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

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

Fringford St Michael and All Angels

CHURCHWARDEN: Max Todd 5, The Manor, Fringford

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

ST MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS, SERVICES & EVENTS

SERVICES

- Sunday 2 August – 10.45 Morning Service
- Sunday 16 August – 10.45 Holy Communion
- Sunday 30 August – 10.45 Benefice Service of Holy Communion – venue to be decided.
- Tuesday 1 September – 7.30pm in Stratton Audley Church, Institution and Induction of Revd Dr Claire Maxim as the new Rector to the Benefice. All welcome to attend.

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

The **2026 Fringford Beer Festival** in aid of Fringford Church Restoration Fund raised £14,000, a remarkable sum. Thank you to everyone who helped in any way and who came and supported the event.

Cream Teas for Wulu – on **Sunday 5 July** raised £406.11 to go towards supporting the teachers in Wulu Girls Primary School. [See elsewhere in this magazine for an article about our Wulu link.]

LOOKING AHEAD - FUTURE EVENTS

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

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

“Flora Day” on Saturday 19th September when there will be events in Fringford Village Hall and Cottisford Church to mark 150 years since the birth of Flora Thompson. See poster in ‘General’ Section.

Greetings Cards

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

Fringford Church 100 Club

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

Little Lambs Babies & Toddler Group

Every Wednesday during term time in Stratton Audley Church. Times are: from 10.00am to 11.30am. Not **usually** during holidays and half term, but due to popular demand there will be sessions this summer on the following days: Wednesday 22 July, Friday 31 July, and Monday 17 August. Just come along. If you need information in the meantime, email admin@shelswellparishes.info

FRINGFORD VILLAGE COFFEE MORNING

Village Coffee Mornings usually take place on the third Monday of each month. In August we will meet on Monday 17th. Drop by for a coffee/tea and a chat any time between 10.30 am and 12 noon, in the Chinnery Room at the Village Hall. Contact Penny on 277310 if you want more information.

COME & JOIN US AT 'SEWCIAL'



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

We get together once a month, either on a Wednesday evening at 7 – 9pm or Sunday afternoon at 3 – 5pm

We meet in the Chinnery Room or the Fringford Village Hall.

Our next sessions for 2026 are:

August no meeting

Wednesday September 16th

Sunday October 18th

Wednesday November 18th

Sunday December 13th

Everyone welcome. No need to book – just come and join us!

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

FRIDAY 4th SEPTEMBER 2026

Spanish Wine Tasting Evening

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

Hosted by Fringford PCC
in the Village Hall

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

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

Cost £15 per head

¡Salud, dinero
y amor!



Regular Activities held in Fringford Village Hall

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

Hardwick St Mary the Virgin

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

Tel 07856822030
 Tel 07856822030
 Tel: 01869 277366
 Tel 07769774144

CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 2nd August 9.15 am Holy Communion
 Sunday 23rd August 4 pm Evensong with the Shelswell Group Choir
 Tuesday 1 September 7.30pm in Stratton Audley Church, Institution and Induction of Revd Dr Claire Maxim as the new Rector to the Benefice. All welcome to attend.



Pilgrim Pathways

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

Hardwick Church guidebook

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

Hethe St Edmund and St George

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

Tel 01869 277366
 Tel 01869 278166
 Tel 01869 278166

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

ST EDMUND & ST GEORGE CHURCH

Church Services and Events

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

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



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

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

On Tuesday 1 September 7.30pm in Stratton Audley Church is the institution and induction of Revd Dr Claire Maxim as the new Rector to the Benefice. All welcome to attend.

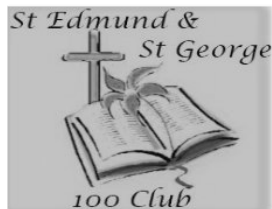
Thank you to everyone who braved the hot weather to help with the churchyard tidy-up last month.



The next regular PCC Meeting is on Wednesday 14th October starting at 1.30pm at Old Montague Barn, The Green. The PCC wish to thank the Parish Council for a grant in recognition of the location of the defibrillator and flagpole on church ground.

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





St Edmund & St George 100 Club

Results of the 92nd draw

1st Prize No 33 Anne Mansfield
2nd Prize No 11 Jenny Cullen
3rd Prize No 41 John & Sue Schutz

Many thanks to our members,
Hethe PCC

Welcome to our new members.

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

HETHE COMMUNITY ACTIVITY



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

Please note that there is no coffee morning this month. The next should be held on Monday 14th September in the village hall.

Hethe and District Darby & Joan Club

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

Membership £15 p.a.
New members welcome.

Contact: Sheila Heydon 07455 185201

Parish Council. The next meeting of the council will take place on Tuesday 13th October, starting at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. Note that under the agreed District & County Council Reorganisation, Hethe will be covered by a Northern Oxfordshire Council – covering most of the existing Cherwell and West Oxfordshire districts. The effect on Parish Councils, from a government announcement:

“Parish and town councils have an important place in neighbourhood governance and in the wider community empowerment agenda. A new neighbourhood governance framework, due later this year, will set out the principles and guidance for how these arrangements will work in practice, with parish and town councils expected to play a central role.”

Pop-up Pub. Friday 7th August in the Village Hall, from 7.00 to 10.00pm. Everyone welcome. Bring your own drinks of choice, snacks, and games!

Local Bus Service



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

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

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

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

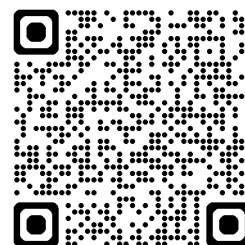
Our village web site (courtesy of the Parish Council): <https://www.hethe.org/>

Facebook Pages:

Community Spirit of the Hethens

Hethe Community

Hethe Allotments



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

Monuments in the Village Churchyard

At the time of writing, we were due a visit to St Edmund and St George Churchyard by the Monumental Inscriptions Group of the Oxfordshire Family History Society, to transcribe the inscriptions on the monuments in the churchyard. We look forward to seeing their results.

We know that one of the tombstones is Grade 2 Listed and commemorates the death of Friswed Whitehead in 1682.

The memorial can be found on the right of the path leading to the church. It is a tombstone erected by John “Whithead” to commemorate the burial of his wife Friswed in 1682.

The tombstone is Grade 2 Listed and described as being “Ironstone. Winged cherub’s head and Ionic columns in rustic style. Inscription to Friswed, wife of John Whithead”. The name Friswed was probably derived from Frithuswith, although better known as Frideswide (the name of the patron Saint of Oxford who lived from 680 to 727).



John was a member of the Whitehead family and owned property in Hethe. He died in 1683.

Mixbury All Saints

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

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

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

CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 9th August 9.15 am Mixbury Half Hour

Tuesday 1 September 7.30pm in Stratton Audley Church - Institution and Induction of Revd Dr Claire Maxim as the new Rector to the Benefice. All welcome to attend.

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.

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

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

Mixbury, continued

We are still looking for someone new to step up and take on the admin for this necessary and important role. This message goes out to the wider Mixbury community and not just those who currently give of their time.

It would be particularly appropriate if someone new to the village and / or from the younger generation were to volunteer.

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

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 Bosher



Forthcoming Marriage of Lottie Hollins and Jonathan Porter at Mixbury Church on 22nd August 2026

After moving down from North Yorkshire, Lottie grew up on Warren Farm, located just outside Finmere, where she attended Finmere Primary School and later attended Thornton College. Her fondness for the boarding lifestyle at Thornton led her to continue her education at Ampleforth College for sixth form, ahead of pursuing a Bachelors' degree of Science in Marine Biology at Newcastle University. During her time at university, she joined the Officer Training Corps which set her sights on joining the Army, going on to earn her commission into the Royal Regiment of Artillery in 2018.

During lockdown, while staying in the Officers' Mess, Lottie met Jonathan Porter, who was also a serving Officer. Jonathan was raised in Coventry, by Mark Porter, a consultant anaesthetist and his mother, Lynda, a research scientist.

Their relationship has blossomed since its start and has survived many separations through deployments; Estonia, the Falkland Islands and the USA in particular. However, with these have come opportunity for adventure as well. Jonathan flew out to Texas when Lottie was working out there so they could both undertake a road trip across the Southern States, and Lottie managed to visit the Falklands for a few days and experience life in the South Atlantic. With a self-build campervan project now in the works the adventures continue, alongside their two dogs, having enjoyed ski touring in Austria and exploring the Fjords of Norway!

The pair will marry at All Saint's Church, Mixbury, at 2pm on 22nd August 2026.





NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT

We have been made aware recently that there is criminal activity in Mixbury.

Several gateway locks have been cut recently, including the field gates at the A421 end of the village, opposite the entrance to Barrow Hill Farm and Swallows Nursery. The "what 3 words" for this gateway is "wildfires.falters.released". It was this gate that the burglars used when they stole from the sheds and outbuildings before; it is possible to gain access to the rear gardens of many of the houses on the right hand side of the village, coming in from the A421.

Of further concern is there are now two areas of new damage in the field hedging - possibly to give access or escape routes to vehicles to/from the field onto the main road. Please be very aware that it does appear that this is active reconnaissance. This has been reported to the police.

If you see or hear anything which you are not happy with please dial 999, mentioning that Mixbury has previously been targeted for burglaries. Please familiarise yourself with "what 3 words" to give an accurate location of where you are. We are covered by Thames Valley Police as we are in Oxfordshire, despite having a Northamptonshire postcode.

Stay safe

Melanie

MIXBURY POP UP PUB NIGHTS

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

BOOK EXCHANGE

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

MIXBURY DROP IN TEA/COFFEE/CHAT

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



A huge thank you to all the people who help maintain the flower planters when entering the village, they all look stunning and of course many thanks to Anna from Swallows for the plants.

A POEM FOR AUGUST
"Blackberry-Picking" by Seamus Heaney

"Late August, given heavy rain and sun
 For a full week, the blackberries would ripen.
 At first, just one, a glossy purple clot
 Among others, red, green, hard as a knot.
 You ate that first one and its flesh was sweet
 Like thickened wine: summer's blood was in it
 Leaving stains upon the tongue and lust for
 Picking. Then red ones inked up and that hunger
 Sent us out with milk cans, pea tins, jam-pots
 Where briars scratched and wet grass bleached our boots.
 Round hayfields, cornfields and potato-drills
 We trekked and picked until the cans were full,
 Until the tinkling bottom had been covered
 With green ones, and on top big dark blobs burned
 Like a plate of eyes. Our hands were peppered
 With thorn pricks, our palms sticky as Bluebeard's.

 We hoarded the fresh berries in the byre.
 But when the bath was filled we found a fur,
 A rat-grey fungus, glutting on our cache.
 The juice was stinking too. Once off the bush
 The fruit fermented, the sweet flesh would turn sour.
 I always felt like crying. It wasn't fair
 That all the lovely canfuls smelt of rot.
Each year I hoped they'd keep, knew they would not."

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 2nd August - 9.15 a.m. Holy Communion

Tuesday 1 September 7.30pm in Stratton Audley Church, Institution and Induction of Revd Dr Claire Maxim as the new Rector to the Benefice. All welcome to attend.

Bonus Ball Lotto:-

Our recent lucky winner was Carolyn Markham.

Pilgrim Paths Walk:-

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

The walk will take those taking part to the Church in Fringford where there will be a short talk on the history of the Church and then return to The Old School in Newton for refreshments at 5.00 p.m.

This will be followed by a talk on the history of our Church and a short service in the Church.
 Please note this service will replace our normal 1st Sunday of the month 9.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
 All are welcome to join the walk or just come along at 5.00 p.m. for refreshments, the talk and service but
 it would be helpful if you could let Ann von Maltzahn know in advance for catering plans.
 See flyer below and links for more information.

Bicester and Islip Deanery

Pilgrim Paths

Newton Purcell Circular Walk



Sunday 6th September

Distance: 5 miles

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

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

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

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

Follow us at:

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

Summer Fete:-

Plans are well underway for our Village Fete on **Saturday 12th September** from Midday to 5.00 p.m. It will be an event not to be missed with something for all the family and a Fun Dog Show!

If you are able to help on the day, provide tombola prizes, bric-a-brac, plants or bake a cake please contact Stuart Hinton on 07593784143 or Ann v M on 07773 628536.



Newton Purcell



Saturday, 12th September
From 2pm

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

£2 per entry

£5 for 3 entries

Stoke Lyne St Peter's

CHURCHWARDEN: Christopher Poole

Tel 01869 346020

CTP@oxford-educational.co.uk

CHURCHWARDEN: James Holden-White

kholdenwhite@aol.com

TREASURER: Janey Poole

Tel 07810 120457

janey@oxford-educational.co.uk

PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER Emma Brown

emmabrown911@gmail.com

MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Rena Andrews

Tel: 01869 346653

renaandrews820@gmail.com

PARISH ROOM BOOKINGS : Kelly and James Holden-White

Tel 01869 345211

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) copied to her assistant Brenda (brendahazel104@gmail.com) . The deadline is the second or third Friday of the month depending on the way the days fall – see inside the front cover of each issue.

St Peter's Church Stoke Lyne Services

Tuesday 1 September 7.30pm in Stratton Audley Church - Institution and Induction of Revd Dr Claire Maxim as the new Rector to the Benefice. All welcome to attend.

See back page for details of all Stoke Lyne services. Please also see the general section at the front of the magazine for reports on the previous and details of the forthcoming "Food for Thought" and "Midweek Communion and Soup Lunch" services which usually take place each month at St Peter's Church on the third Sunday (Food for Thought) and the first Thursday (Midweek Communion and Soup Lunch).

Flower Duty for August

Donita Read

Stoke Lyne 100 Club – July Results

The results of the 100 Club for July are as follows

1 st Prize	Membership No 30	Nikki Popoola
2 nd Prize	Membership No 59	Phil Elliot
3 rd Prize	Membership No 32	Kelly Holden-White

Thank you all for your support. Contact me janey@oxford-educational.co.uk for details on how to join the Stoke Lyne 100 Club, drawn each month.

Janey Poole

Treasurer

St Peter's Church PCC

Out of The Blue – 19th June 2026, St Peter's Church

St Peter's Church was delighted to welcome Out of The Blue, an Oxford University A cappella band. A beautiful summer's evening created the perfect backdrop to this wonderful event.



Out of the Blue (Photo courtesy of Anoushka Clark-Dunn)

We began the evening with Clive's renowned homemade pies and Mick The Hat's gorgeous beer. A delightful Macon was available for those who couldn't manage one of Mick's finest ales.

The band were a true delight and entertained us with their renditions of Snowman and The Proclaimers – I'm Gonna Be. They had an audience of 92 people clapping and singing along. Such an amazing band.

A total sum of £1690 was raised for Helen & Douglas and St Peter's Church.

Watch this space as Out of Blue have asked to come back to St Peter's, tickets have already been reserved by their followers.

Thank you to all who supported and to those who couldn't make the event but gave to the charity in their absence. Much thanks to Clive Fretwell and Mick The Hat for their kind donations of pies and beer.

Janey Poole
Treasurer
St Peter's Church



Open Mic Night – 29th August 2026, St Peter's Church

Ped is planning another one of his popular Open Mic Nights for Saturday 29th August 7-11pm.

If you would like to perform, please get in touch with Ped: 07926 590035

Kelly Holden-White

Stoke Lyne information:

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

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St Mary and St Edburga; Holy Trinity

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CHURCHWARDEN: Penny Oakey, Grange Farm, Godington

TREASURER: Fai Li

PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Maxine Ling

MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Vacant (Stratton Audley)

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editor@shelswellparishes.info

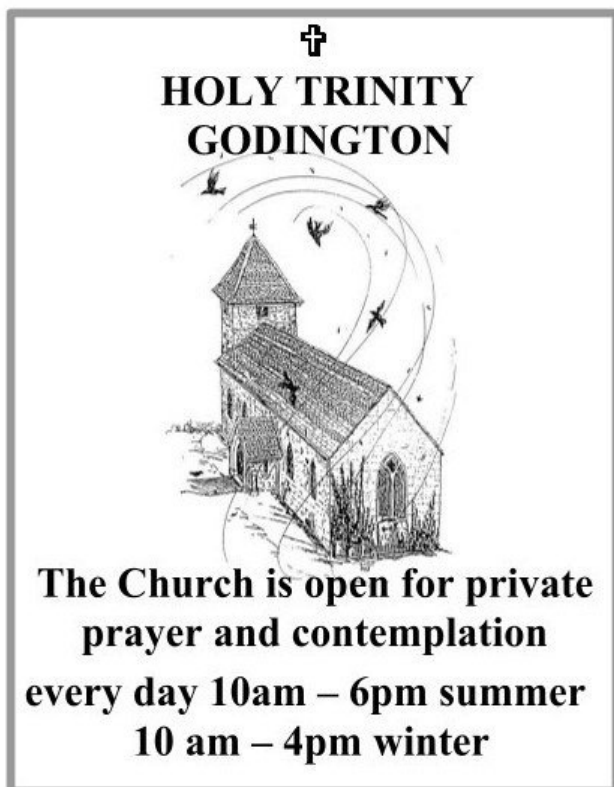
CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 2nd August 6.00 pm Compline at Stratton Audley

Sunday 9th August 10.45 am Holy Communion at Stratton Audley

Sunday 23rd August 9.15 am Holy Communion at Stratton Audley

Tuesday 1 September 7.30pm at Stratton Audley - Institution and Induction of Revd Dr Claire Maxim as the new Rector to the Benefice. All welcome to attend.



'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

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

BOULES TOURNAMENT

A great Boules competition courtesy of Emma and Mark Ter Haar at Stratton Audley Park raised over £455 before Gift Aid is taken into consideration. The raised funds are for the fabric of Stratton Audley Church building as it always costs so much more than one can raise so important to be prepared for the quote!



Well done, you all said you had a great time, including the children. Those that didn't have to leave before early evening, watched a great final between Dympna & Richard Walker and Pamela & Robert Spencelayh with Pam & Rob finally winning in the end by a whisper - well done to both teams!



Left: Plate winners Martin and Caleb Rowe

Right: Winners Pamela and Robert Spencelayh being presented with the cup by Emma Ter Haar



The plate was a family final with the Grandfather Martin Rowe & Grandson Caleb Rowe beating Granny Sally Rowe and Granddaughter. Rowe. Well done to you both, no hard feelings in their household post event :-)

The atmosphere was one of fun and friendship lasting well into the early evening alongside tea and a fantastic spread whipped up by Emma Ter Haar with the later aid of Mark and his cocktails, both non alcoholic and those with a twist of Prosecco. The evening ended with the Kite Whisperer calling in the kites to swoop in and out of the lower lawns, quite majestic in flight.

Many thanks to all those who came to support the church and play, to those who came to attend and have tea whilst supporting family and friends, the church represented by PCC member Ruth Krause and also Penny Wood. And finally, huge thank to Emma and Mark for opening up their gardens to us all!

Sarah Noujaim

The Last Word

According to a study 83% won't notice if a word is replaced by a musical instrument.

4th August – Saint Jean-Baptiste Vianney, Curé d'Ars - spiritual guide



Statue of Jean-Baptiste Vianney, Curé d'Ars; photo by Benoit Prieur

Jean-Baptiste Vianney was born near Lyons in France in 1786, the son of a peasant farmer. With no money for schooling, he first became a shepherd. But, like David in the Bible, his deep personal faith and zeal soon drew him away from guiding sheep to guiding people.

It took Vianney nine long years to become a priest. For one thing, he just couldn't learn Latin, but also he had to hide for a year to avoid being conscripted into Napoleon's army. But eventually, in 1815, at the age of 29, he was ordained, and after a curacy, was sent to the tiny village of Ars-en-Dombes near Lyons. Here he remained for the next 40 years, becoming known simply as the 'Curé d'Ars'.

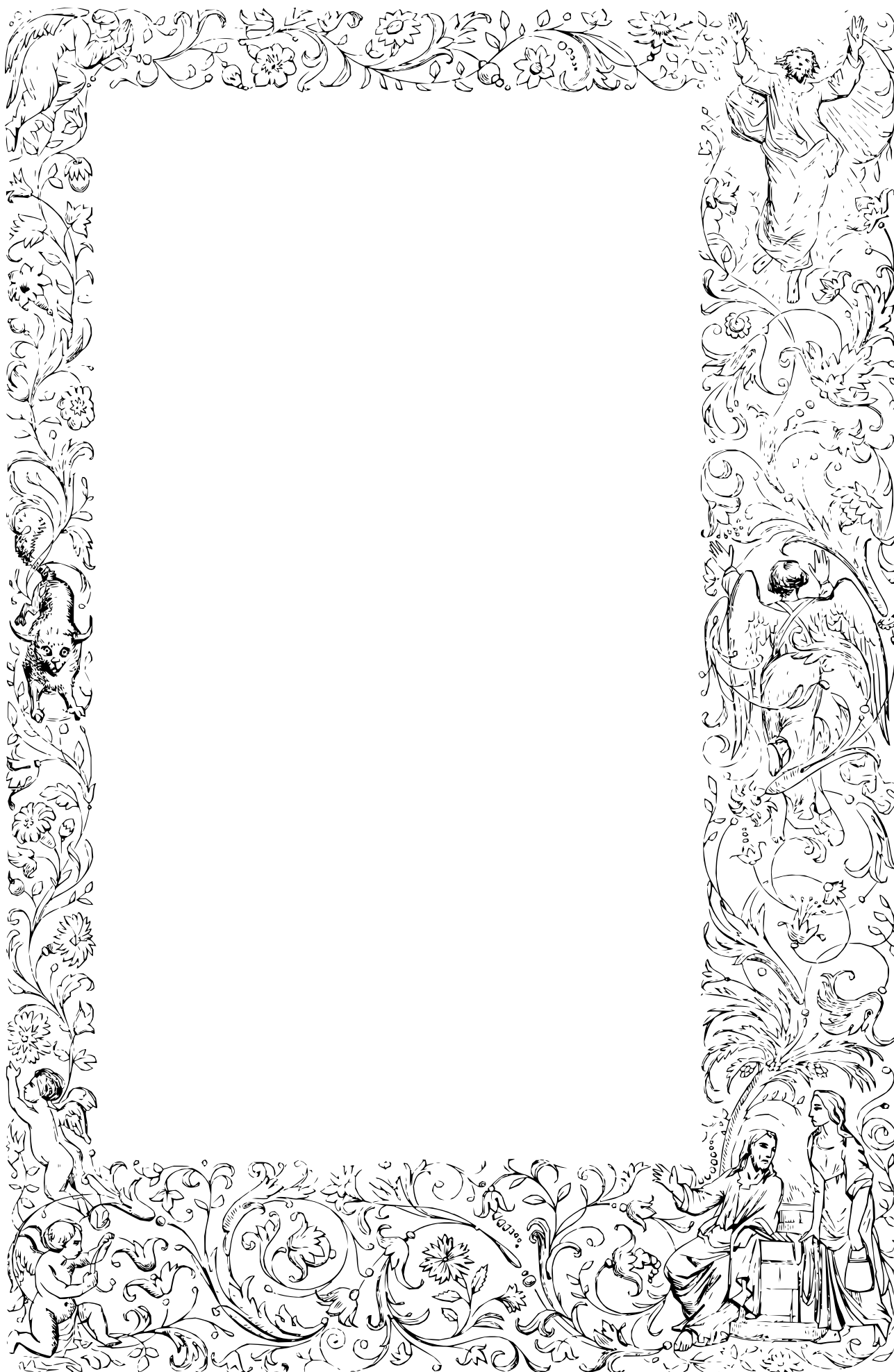
Vianney soon proved that it did not take Latin to be an excellent parish priest. His ability to preach with simplicity and passion, and his gifts as a truly outstanding spiritual director soon had the people flocking to him for help.

As the years went by, Vianney's fame spread, and tens of thousands of people came to the Curé of Ars-en-Dombes. (20,000 in 1855 alone.). At one stage in Vianney's ministry, he was spending up to 16 hours a day hearing confessions and counselling people. He seems to have had a God-given ability to discern the real issues in a person's life, and to put his finger on the real causes of their problems.

It was an exhausting routine, but Vianney felt he could not retire. And so eventually he died at work in his parish, on 4th August 1859. By then he was widely loved and respected by Roman Catholics and Protestants alike.

POINTS TO PONDER...



COLOURING IN - A FRAME FOR YOUR OWN PICTURE

The TEN YOUNG WOMEN



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS - WE CALL THEM "PARABLES".



JESUS ONCE SPOKE ABOUT TEN YOUNG WOMEN



THEY HAD BEEN INVITED TO A WEDDING - AND THEY WERE WAITING FOR THE BRIDEGROOM.



EACH ONE HAD AN OIL LAMP.



BUT ONLY FIVE OF THEM HAD BROUGHT ALONG SOME SPARE OIL.



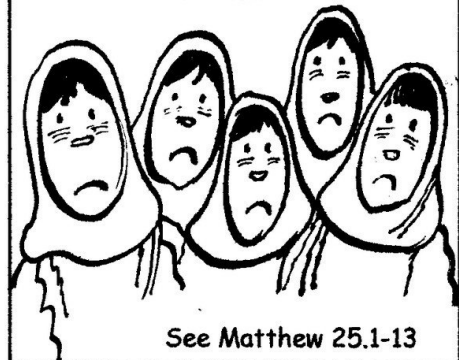
LATE AT NIGHT THE BRIDEGROOM ARRIVED



FIVE YOUNG WOMEN COULD LIGHT HIS WAY.



THE OTHER FIVE FELT VERY FOOLISH - THEIR LAMPS HAD RUN OUT OF OIL!!



See Matthew 25.1-13

BOOK REVIEWS

The Lion Book of Five-Minute Animal Stories

By John Goodwin, SPCK, £9.99

The best lessons come wrapped in the best stories. And The Lion Book of Five-Minute Animal Stories brings ten timeless tales from around the world to life with humour, heart, and unforgettable animal characters children will adore.

Each story teaches valuable lessons about friendship, kindness, courage, honesty, and discovering your unique talents. All delivered with the perfect dose of fun!

Why your family might enjoy this collection:

Ten diverse animal stories from global folklore and literature

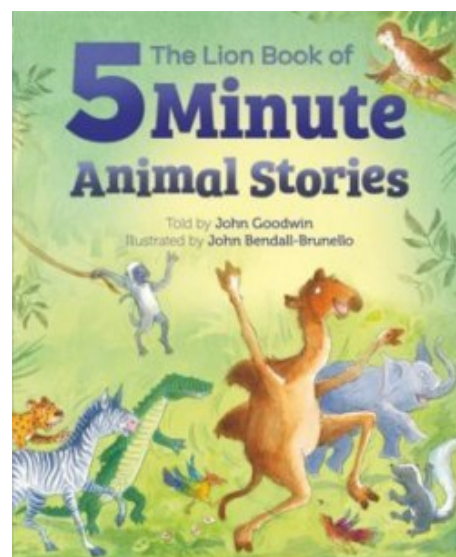
Each story takes just 5 minutes, ideal for busy schedules

Retold with humour and liveliness that keeps kids engaged

Vibrant, detail-rich illustrations.

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Perfect for ages 3-7



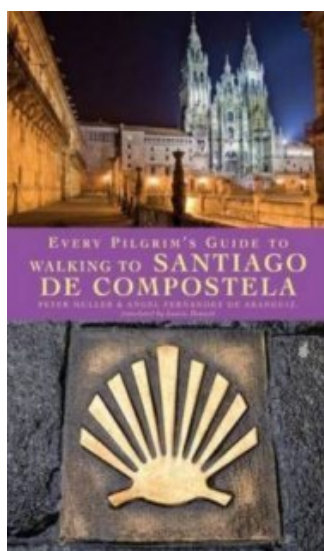
Every Pilgrim's Guide to Walking to Santiago de Compostela

By Peter Muller, Angel Fernandez de Aranguiz, & Laurie Bennett, Canterbury Press, £12.99

Every year, some 200,000 people set out on the world's most famous pilgrimage route – 'the Camino', designated a World Heritage Site in 1993.

Actually it is a network of paths, with numerous starting places in France and throughout Europe, and all routes converge to lead along Spain's northern coast to Santiago de Compostela. Here the shrine of St James, the patron saint of pilgrimage, was discovered in the 9th century.

Already the preferred guide for German and Spanish pilgrims, this new English edition is co-published with the Confraternity of St James, the UK's leading organisation for promoting pilgrimage to Santiago.

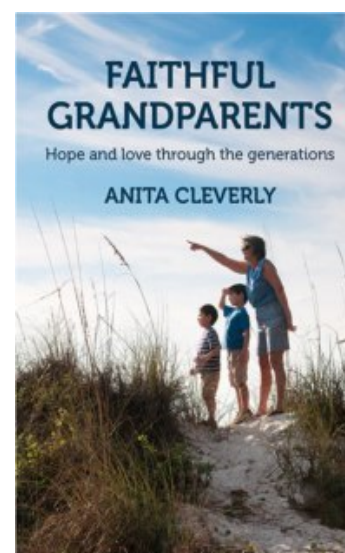


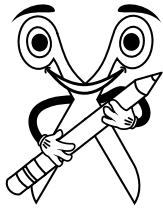
The book offers a mix of practical information and spiritual inspiration for walkers, a stage-by-stage guide pointing out places of interest along the way; practical tips for walkers; prayers, blessings and spiritual exercises to nourish the pilgrim spirit and deepen the pilgrimage experience. It is illustrated throughout with maps and photographs, and conveniently pocket sized.

Faithful Grandparents: Hope and love through the generations

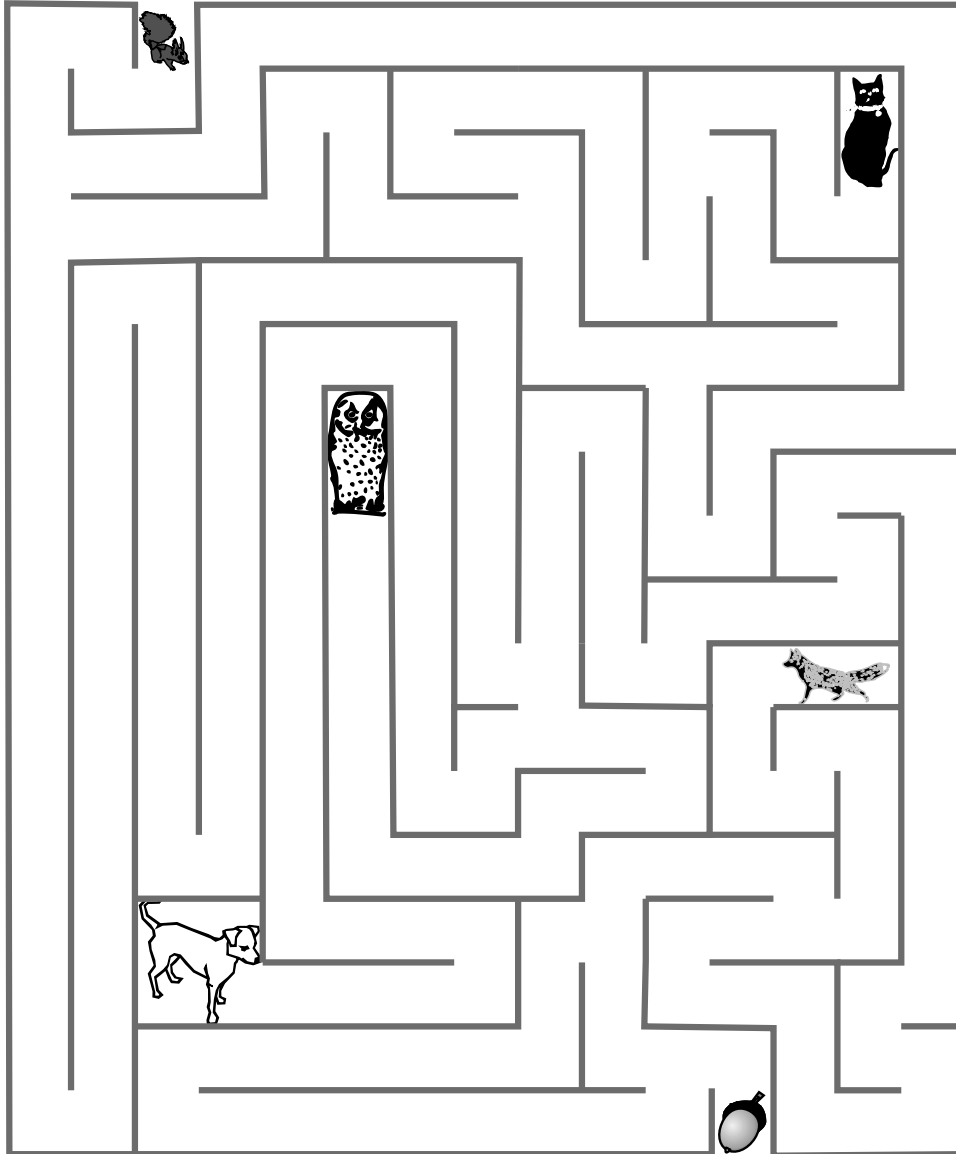
By Anita Cleverly, BRF, £9.99

There has never been a more important time to find meaningful and acceptable ways of passing on faith from one generation to the next. Part of this privilege and responsibility lies with grandparents who live authentic Christian lives. They can be the vital link between the gospel and the faith of a younger generation.





Help the squirrel find its acorn.
Watch out for predators!



TORTOISE

Martin was a slow-working employee and found it difficult to hold a job. Finally, he found work at the Zoo. The zookeeper, aware of his reputation, assigned him to the tortoise section. Later, the zookeeper dropped by and found Martin standing by an empty enclosure.

"Where are the tortoises?" the zookeeper asked.

"I can't believe it!" said Martin. "I just opened the door and then ... Whoooooosh!"

NATIONAL ALLOTMENT WEEK 10th - 16th AUGUST

If you like allotments, then this week is for you! It raises awareness of the very practical good that renting an allotment can do, enabling you to grow both your own food and your local network.

This year the theme is 'Grow to Learn – Lifelong Lessons from the Allotment'. This highlights how time on the plot acts as a living classroom, teaching vital life skills such as resilience, patience, and creative problem-solving.

The allotment movement began in 1901. It grew rapidly, until by the time of WW2, from 1939 to 1945 there were 1.4 million plots supporting the 'Dig for Victory' campaign. More than eighty years on, food shortages are once again being predicted in Britain.

There are some **330,000 allotment plots** across the UK, managed by hundreds of different independent societies or local councils. The average rent is about £45 a year for a 5-pole plot (125 sq. metres).

Demand for plots is currently at an all-time high, making the average wait 37 months. London is averaging 69 months, while in Islington, some people have been on the list for more than a decade. How to get started on an allotment? Read our Allotment Correspondent, Jean, who brings you local tips and recommendations each month in the Finmere section of Shelswell News! (page 17 of this issue).

Information is also available on the website of the National Allotment Society thenas.org.uk.

from Parish Pump

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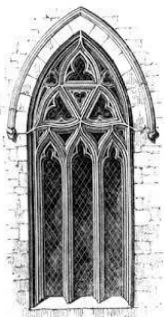
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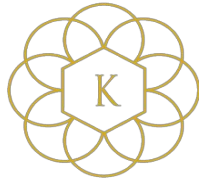
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**SHELSWELL GROUP SERVICES: AUGUST 2026**

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

| DATE                                                                                             | 2 <sup>nd</sup> August<br>9 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity                                                        |                                                                   |                                                                      |                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ALTAR                                                                                            | Green                                                                                                                 |                                                                   |                                                                      |                                                                    |
| 8.00 am                                                                                          |                                                                                                                       |                                                                   |                                                                      |                                                                    |
| 9.15 am                                                                                          | Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>HARDWICK<br>LV<br><br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (BCP)<br>NEWTON PURCELL<br>AM |                                                                   |                                                                      |                                                                    |
| 10.45 am                                                                                         | 'Connect' Informal Worship<br>FINNERE VILLAGE HALL<br>AM<br><br>Morning Service<br>FRINGFORD<br>PV                    |                                                                   |                                                                      |                                                                    |
| 6.00 pm                                                                                          | Compline<br>STRATTON AUDLEY<br>PV                                                                                     |                                                                   |                                                                      |                                                                    |
| Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> August (12 noon)<br>Midweek Holy Communion and Soup Lunch<br>STOKE LYNE |                                                                                                                       |                                                                   |                                                                      |                                                                    |
|                                                                                                  | 9 <sup>th</sup> August<br>10 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity                                                       | 16 <sup>th</sup> August<br>11 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity  | 23 <sup>rd</sup> August<br>12 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity     | 30 <sup>th</sup> August<br>13 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity   |
|                                                                                                  | Green                                                                                                                 | Green                                                             | Green                                                                | Green                                                              |
|                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                       |                                                                   | Holy Communion<br>(BCP)<br>FINNERE AM                                |                                                                    |
|                                                                                                  | Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>HETHE<br>AM<br><br>Mixbury Half Hour<br>PV                                       | 9.15am<br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>FINNERE<br>AM      | 9.15am<br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>STRATTON AUDLEY<br>MK |                                                                    |
|                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                       | 10am<br>'Food for Thought'<br>STOKE LYNE<br>Lay-led               | 9.30am<br>Morning Service<br>HETHE<br>PV                             |                                                                    |
|                                                                                                  | Morning Service<br>STRATTON AUDLEY<br>DG                                                                              | 10.45am<br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (BCP)<br>COTTISFORD<br>AM | 10.45am<br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>STOKE LYNE<br>MK     | 10.45am<br>Benefice Service of<br>Holy Communion<br>HETHE<br>LV/PV |
|                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                       | 10.45am<br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>FRINGFORD<br>CP   |                                                                      |                                                                    |
|                                                                                                  | Evening Communion<br>STOKE LYNE<br>AM                                                                                 |                                                                   | 4pm<br>Evensong with<br>the Shelswell Group Choir<br>HARDWICK<br>PV  |                                                                    |

MK: The Revd Canon Michael Kingston      AM: Revd Alex Mahlava      CP: Revd Celia Parkes      LV: Revd Liz Welters      PV: Mrs Penny Wood (LLM)