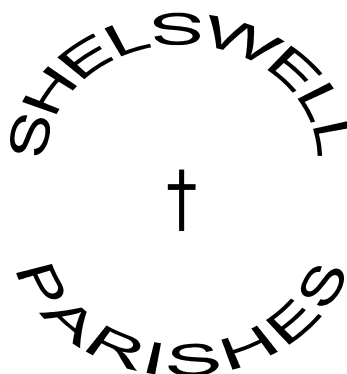


Shelswell News

The magazine of the Shelswell Group of Churches

Cottisford
Fringford
Hardwick
Mixbury
Stoke Lyne



Finmere
Godington
Hethe
Newton Purcell
Stratton Audley

FAMILY FUN IN MAY!

Our all-age Open Air Service and Picnic at Evenley Wood p.5

Finmere Fair p.5

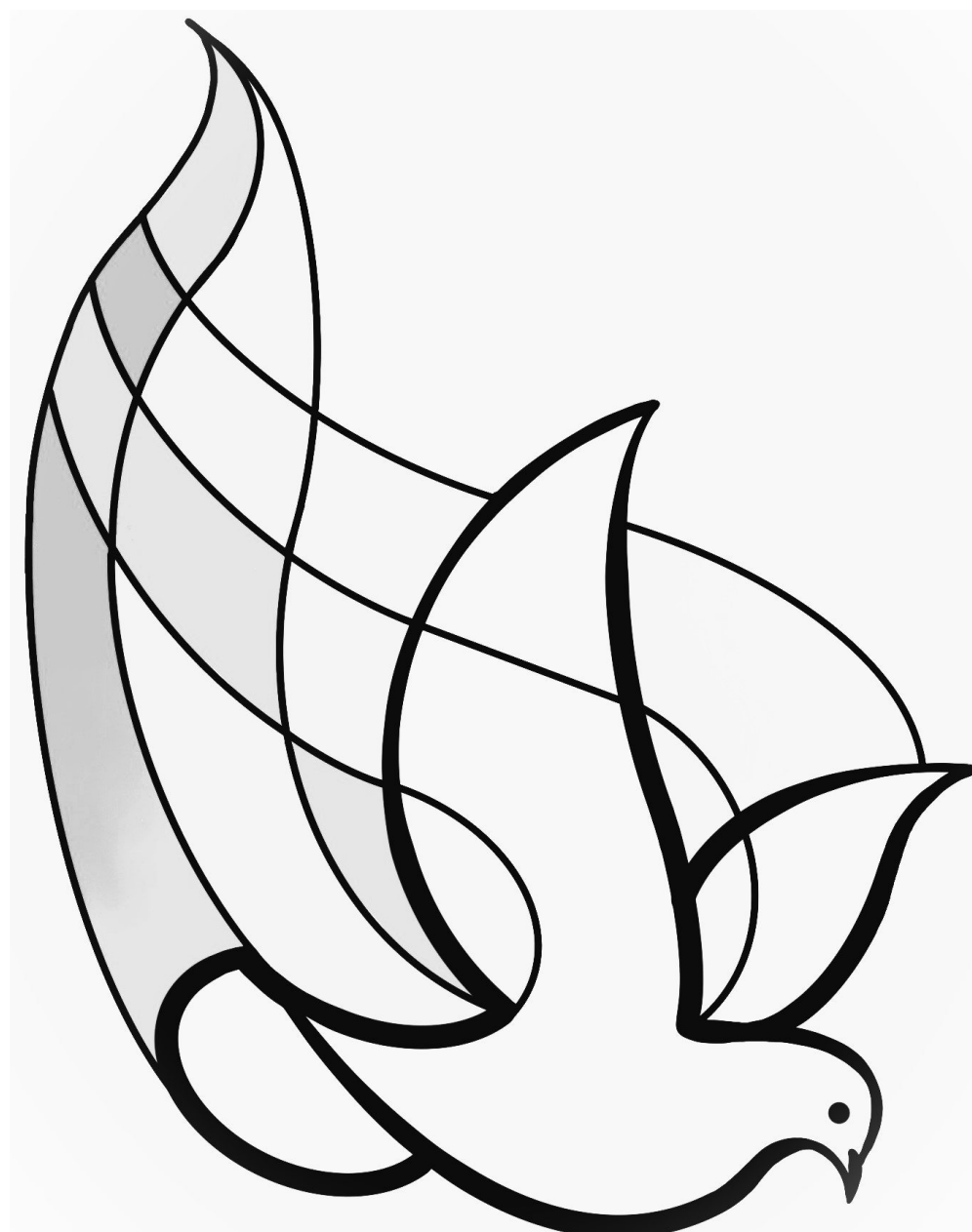
Hethe Fete p.7

LOCAL HISTORY

Gallows at Baynards Green? p.39

Real Fringfordians behind Flora Thompson's characters p.9

Lewis Coker of Fringford – joined the Royal Navy in 1872 aged twelve p.27



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 Administrator's normal office hours: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 9.00 am – 1.00 pm

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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.holytrinityhethes.co.uk/>

SHELLOWELL NEWS

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

To Magazine Correspondents: **Midday on Friday 15th May**

Correspondents to Editor: **Midday on Sunday 17th May** 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 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 .

NOT JUST FOR WHITSUN



Very occasionally, you may still hear people talking about the Spring Bank Holiday as the 'Whitsun' break. Until 1965, this national holiday took place on the Monday after Pentecost; but the inconvenience of its date, always 50 days after the moveable feast of Easter, finally argued for its replacement with a fixed 'day off'.



Our inherited cultural calendar understood the intimate connection between these two great feasts, which share an almost equal weight in the cycle of the Christian year.

Easter proclaims the resurrection of Christ from the grave, the transformation of humanity into something glorious after its passage through pain and death. It celebrates something fundamentally mysterious, defying explanation. The disciples are confounded by the risen Christ when they encounter him: as the gardener, the companion on the journey to Emmaus, or the stranger on the shoreline. Jesus is almost unrecognisable - until their eyes are opened, and they begin, fragmentarily, to understand. The risen Lord is no revived corpse. He is the flickering image of the human future, cast into the shadowy present of his friends for them to behold.

Fifty days after the resurrection, the disciples wait in the Upper Room. In the calendar of the Old Covenant it is the Feast of Weeks, Shavuot, commemorating the gift of the Law on Sinai. The disciples hear the wind and behold the flames, and then find they are able to speak and be understood by many as they are filled by the Holy Spirit. They receive something far greater than the Law this Pentecost, because God himself comes to inhabit them.

He comes as the advocate, source of consolation and giver of gifts, who will speak the truth through them to all who will hear. He comes as love to dwell in their hearts, making sense of the mystery of the Christ they have encountered, and enabling them to share that mystery with others. Pentecost gives the disciples all they need to pass on what they have received from the Lord, so that others too may believe, and be transformed.



The gift of Pentecost is not just for Whitsun. It flickers in every natural gift and skill we possess. It rises to a flame in Baptism, in the sharing of the Eucharist and the life of Christian discipleship. To us it gives the ability, and the boldness, to pass on what we have received, and to live faithfully and lovingly in hope of the glory which is to come.

Revd Dr Dominic Keech, taken with permission from The Sign

This year Pentecost (Whitsun) is on Sunday 24th May and is followed by what is now called the 'Spring Bank Holiday'. From being one of the principal days in the Christian calendar, Pentecost's prominence has sadly declined to almost nothing - but so far it has not been commercialized.



*Holy Spirit,
Blow away the things that keep people apart.
Light your flame of love and hope in us,
so that we can be your Pentecost people today.
Amen.*



BIBLE READINGS



Sunday 3 rd May	5 th Sunday of Easter	Acts 7 v55-end 1 Peter 2 v2-10 John 14 v1-14
Sunday 10 th May	6 th Sunday of Easter	Acts 17 v22-31 1 Peter 3 v13-end John 14 v15-21
Sunday 17 th May	7 th Sunday of Easter	Acts 1 v6-14 1 Peter 4 v12-14 & 5 v6-11 John 17 v1-11
Sunday 24 th May	Pentecost	Acts 2 v1-21 1 Corinthians 12 v3b-13 John 20 v19-23 or John 7 v37-39
Sunday 31 st May	Trinity Sunday	Isaiah 40 v12-17 and 27-end 2 Corinthians 13 v11-end Matthew 28 v16-20

MIDWEEK HOLY COMMUNION AND SOUP LUNCH



Due to elections in May
the next service will be on Thursday 4th June

12 noon

Stoke Lyne Church

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

Email admin@shelswellparishes.info



LIFE IS SHORT - SING LOUD!



Shelswell Benefice Choir is looking 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.

OUR POPULAR OUTDOOR SERVICE FOR AGES 0 - 100 RETURNS THIS MONTH...

You are invited to a Benefice Service in the beautiful setting of



Evenley Wood Garden
on Sunday 31st May
at 11am



followed by a picnic lunch

Please bring a chair or rug to sit on and some food
 for a bring-and-share picnic

Toilets are situated near the entrance to the Garden



Everyone welcome - previous services in the Garden
 have been much appreciated by all ages



Evenley Wood Garden, Evenley, Northamptonshire, NN13 5SH

SAVE THE DATE

**FINMERE VILLAGE
& SCHOOL FAIR**

SUNDAY 3RD MAY 2026 | 12PM TILL 7PM

AT FINMERE VILLAGE HALL AND PLAYING FIELDS

BEER TENT | RAFFLE | KIDS ENTERTAINER | AND MORE TO BE ANNOUNCED

**FOR MORE INFORMATION & SPONSORSHIP:
 DEBBIE.BLOOMFIELD1@GMAIL.COM**

WEAR GREEN DAY it

#WearItGreen

In aid of

MENTAL HEALTH
FOUNDATION

JOIN OUR WEAR IT GREEN DAY EVENT!

Come and join our event and raise funds and awareness to help create good mental health for all. All the money raised will go towards important research and fighting the stigma surrounding mental health.

EVENT	<u>Cake and Chat</u>
WHERE	<u>St Peter's Church, Stoke Lyne. OX27 8RU</u>
WHEN	<u>At 11:30am to 2pm on Saturday 30th May</u>
CONTACT	<u>Ali Miller, Phone 07762719198 for more info</u>

 Registered with
FR FOUNDRAISING
REGULATOR

Registered Charity No. England 801130, Scotland SC039714.
Company Registration No. 2350846.

MENTALHEALTH.ORG.UK

Hethe Village Fete

**Saturday
May 16th
at 2pm**



A traditional Village Fete with fantastic live music from Bicester Concert Band, Tombolas and Raffle, Children's Activities, BBQ, Beer and excellent teas.



Come and mingle with friends and neighbours to support your village organisations.



Open Gardens!

Cottisford and Juniper Hill

Sunday 14th June 2026, 2 - 5 pm

£5 per person, under 16s free, cash only please

Home-made cakes and teas in the church

All proceeds to charity *

The gardens, opening for only the second time, offer the lovely herbaceous border of Cottisford House, a walled garden abundant with perennials, cottage gardens with magnificent views over open countryside and a newly designed garden... all with lots of ideas for your own garden.

Cottisford, NN13 5SW

- CHARITIES: Cottisford PCC, Friends of Cottisford Church, Cottisford & Juniper Social Committee



LIGHTHOUSE TO BE DARK IN SHELSWELL THIS YEAR



Thank you to the children and adults who volunteered for Lighthouse Shelswell this summer. Volunteers are a critical part of the holiday week and make such a difference to the children who attend. We really appreciate the help given.

Unfortunately, we did not have enough adult volunteers to run this year. It is important that both the children and adults at Lighthouse are safe at all times.

The decision was reached after long deliberation and taking advice from three of



the Trustees who have been involved with holiday weeks for many years. A number of options were considered, and we are committed to holding an event next year (we have agreed dates - Monday 26th to Friday 30th July 2027), with possible changes to the management structure and the scope of activities.



If you still wish to take part in a holiday week, you may wish to consider volunteering with Lighthouse Bicester. They are running a holiday week this year at St Edburg's Primary School, from Monday 10th to Friday 14th August. The times are 0930 to 1300 each day. Registration is taking place now and up to 26th July.

Lighthouse Shelswell is a Registered Charity Number 1187651

FLORA THOMPSON 150 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Our series on the real Fringfordians behind the characters in *Lark Rise to Candleford* continues with Fred Plumb and Jimmy Grantham.

FREDERICK PLUMB (1860 - 1930), BLACKSMITH

Matthew, the blacksmith in *Lark Rise*, was based on Frederick Plumb, Kezia's foreman blacksmith at the Forge. She clearly relied on him and her son, George. On 9 September 1897, in a letter to George, she was concerned about money matters and seemed to need to raise some money. 'I have asked Fred [Plumb] if he would lend me £30 or 40 - by paying him the same interest as he gets from the Post Office Savings Bank, and he says he will.'

After Kezia's death on 11 February 1898, it was Fred who had to take out the left hand upstairs bedroom window, so that her coffin could be lowered down a ladder; it was too large to carry

down the narrow stairs. She was said to have weighed over 18 stone. After her death, her son, George, owned the Forge, while Frederick took over the tenancy.

In 1923, Frederick purchased the property for £500 from George, with a mortgage of £222 15s @ 5 ½% from the Grenville Lodge of the Oddfellows Friendly Society. He had seen a rent increase from £16 to £20 coming, and he paid the mortgage off in three years. After Frederick died in 1930, the forge was rented by Ernest Perrin who continued the business until he bought Albert Jackman's smithy near the cricket ground in 1953.

Frederick's son, William, continued to live at the Forge and he worked for Morris Motors at Cowley from 1926 to 1967. He worked in the Experimental Division, where he was involved with Alec Issigonis, the creator of the Mini. William Plumb was a brilliant mechanic and had a gift for repairing any type of machinery. In his spare time, he would

repair cars and other engines, including his old Bullnose Morris (bought from William Grantham for 90 shillings!).

After William's death in 1973, his own son, Bill (Frederick Plumb's grandson) lived at the Forge until the 1990s.



Fringford Forge in the 1890s. Frederick Plumb is driving the vehicle. On the right hand side, one of the blacksmiths (name unknown) shoes a horse. The two young boys in the picture are Kezia Whitton's grandsons Arthur and Cuthbert Whitton on a visit to their grandmother from their home in Liverpool. In the foreground, a plough has been brought in for repair.

JAMES 'JIMMY' GRANTHAM (1850 - 1913), CARRIER

Jimmy Grantham, the local carrier, did a regular run to the Old George in Banbury and back from c.1883 until at least 1911.

He lived at Fox Cottage (formerly Amberley) on Main Street. In 1876, he was listed as a baker and coal dealer. By 1911, he was listed as a farmer and carrier. He was followed by his sons, James Henry and William, who continued the service to the Old George until the 1920s. They would call at Cottisford, Juniper Hill, Hethe, and Stratton Audley on their weekly runs to Banbury (Thursday) and also go to market days at Bicester (Friday), Brackley (Wednesday) and Buckingham (Saturday). They also operated as coal dealers, a business that

William continued after he ceased being a carrier in the 1920s.

In Juniper Hill (*Lark Rise*) in the 1880s, 'it was thought quite dashing to ride with Old Jimmy, but frightfully extravagant, for the fare was sixpence (2 ½ p) [to Banbury]. Most people preferred to go on foot and keep the sixpence to spend when they got there.'

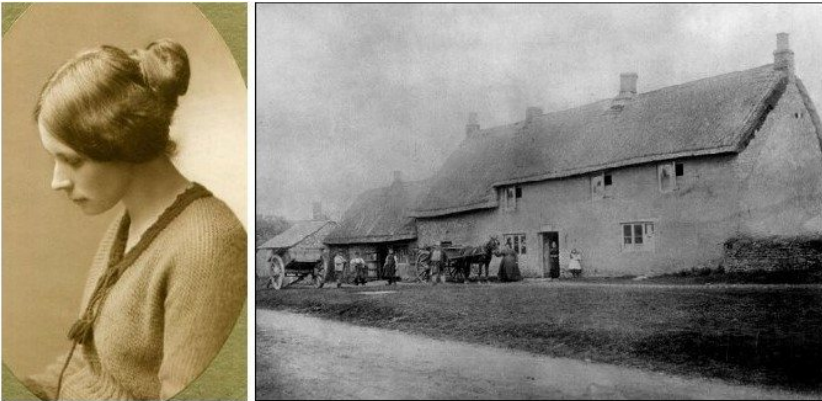
The carrier acted as shopping agent, so that you could give him your list and he would bring the items back to you on his return. Old Jimmy, for example, 'had a standing order to bring her (Kezia Whitton at the Forge a dozen of thos cakes

[Banbury ones] every market day.' Some carriers would bring goods, like shoes, on approval. Payment was often on tick and you paid the carrier what you could afford.

would have kept rough lists but much was simply from memory. Many shopkeepers and carriers tended to be generous to the poorer families and local pressures were such that there would have been few bad debts.

Few records of the carriers survive; no doubt they

Martin Greenwood



'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 demonstration 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**

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

**Short films & AVs to
view**

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

**Candleford Café for
tea & cake**

FRINGFORD VILLAGE HALL

The Green
Fringford
OX27 8DY

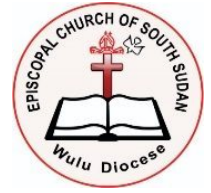
Saturday 19th September

11am to 4pm

NEWS FROM WULU

Report from Wulu Girls' Primary School, April 2026

This report is to inform the people of Shelswell Benefice of the school activities and the new plans and the challenges facing the school. The enrolment has increased this year and the teachers are performing their duties as expected due to the support from Shelswell Benefice through the Diocese. This support has boosted the moral of the teachers so much and has made them really love their profession of teaching as a good career. It also enables them to cater for the welfare of their beloved families.

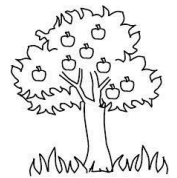


THE CHALLENGES

- The lack of fencing at the school has contributed to the destruction of the school buildings by nearby children and to the risk of school children being harmed due to the passing of motorcycle riders within the premises.
- Lack of funds to cater for school activities and development plans such as expanding the school garden, constructing more classes and adding to the number of teachers benefitting from the incentive scheme. The economic crisis in South Sudan has worsened the situation of all the public servants as there is no payment.
- There are no other donors or organizations supporting Wulu Girls Primary School *(continued overleaf)*
- Just as in Shelswell, the Iran war has caused inflation in the market in Wulu. The price of food and other commodities keeps increasing on a daily basis.
- Many organizations have moved out of South Sudan, especially those supporting health services.

THE NEW PLANS

- Fencing of the School.
- Expanding of the number of school children .
- Planting of 50 fruit trees in the school to mark the Bishop's achievements and the Shelswell Benefice's Incentive Scheme for teachers.
- Training of Church leaders on peace building and management in the community.
- Raising awareness of the rising number of suicides in our Beli Community.
- Seeking donors to fund the school through any links you may have.
- Construction of more classes and the school office.



A MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER



Some of the teachers and schoolgirls. The girls are holding posters with headings: *Appreciation, Challenges, Way Forward, Recommendations.*

In a WhatsApp video received on 16th April, the school's Headteacher says, 'It is a privilege to talk to you. Shelswell Parish, thank you for the support that you are doing for the primary school.

I want to add that, from my personal experience and what I have seen, if this school is left to the government, the school is not going to do well - it is going to collapse.

So I am appealing to the diocese and Shelswell Parish to take whole responsibility for this school and make it a private school, in order for service delivery to go well. Things like paying the teachers, providing school materials, seating arrangements within the school - the whole running of the school should be controlled by the diocese.

Right now, the school is caught between two - it is controlled by the government, and it is controlled by the church - and when it is just left like that, the school will not move forward. On top of the challenges, I have written on the papers the girls are holding up, the appreciations and the way forward. Thank you very much. God bless you.'

Henry Logu Yuan

MORE THANKS

Both the Education Department of the County Government and the community of Wulu applaud Shelwell Benefice for their continuous wonderful support. The Incentive Scheme helps the pupils as well as the teachers, through the stability of their teachers. The school is for girls which is so amazing.

Bishop Zachariah says, 'I want to seize this golden opportunity to register my heartfelt words of appreciation and thankfulness to Shelswell Benefice for your usual support to our Diocese of Wulu'.

FUTURE COOPERATION

The school is requesting that we send our donations every two or three months so that the teachers receive more regular funding. In addition, they ask if we can increase the amount we give as the teachers are many and none of them receives any payment from the government.

We can't take responsibility for the school, but can we rise to the challenge of funding more teachers?

Date for your Diary: Cream Tea for Wulu on Sunday 5th July, 3-5 at Stratton Audley Church.

If you'd like to make a donation before then, the details are:

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

Ref: Wulu

Liz Welters

FOOD FOR THOUGHT - SUNDAY 15th MARCH

As this was Mothering Sunday, Ali spoke about its origins. When a lot of men and women went into service they only had one day off a year, this was when they could visit their mothers. It is so sad when you think they could only see their mother once a year. I personally think it has become too commercialised. It used to be that children would take a small bunch of wildflowers or daffodils to their mother.

The layout for this service was slightly different as we had to use the Lady Chapel to lay out the breakfast because part of the church was barricaded off but we still had the tables set up for

the service, with the usual pamphlets and word search words there.

When everyone had made their choices, they moved to the tables set aside for the service. When they had finished eating and plates cleared away Ali began the service. She welcomed all to the service. There were a lot more people attending the service and it was nice to see new faces and others we hadn't seen for a while. She began with prayers for those suffering illness of any kind be it mental or physical, the recently bereaved and others known only us. We prayed for peace across the world, King Charles, and the Commonwealth, also our own Government. We

were also asked to remember in our prayers the three children who were recently baptised: Malcolm, Frederick, and Rory Kerr.

Moses in the Bulrushes

Ali read a passage about the birth of Moses; he was born to Hebrew parents in Egypt during a time when the Pharaoh ordered all newborn Israelite boys to be killed. His mother Jochebed hid him for three months, to save him from Pharaoh's decree.



Moses in the Bulrushes

To save him she created a basket made of papyrus reeds and placed him in it and placed the basket in the river reeds.

The Pharaoh's daughter was bathing by the river and found the crying baby and took pity on him and one of her handmaidens asked if she would like a nursing mother to take care of the baby. This was agreed and the nursing mother that came was the mother of Moses. The Pharaoh's daughter adopted the baby and named him Moses (meaning he who was pulled from the water) because she drew him out of the water. Ali then invited questions and reflections on the story and we had quite a varied discussion on the story.

We had two hymns with Flora accompanying on the organ. Caroline handed out Mother's Day posies to all who were there which were gratefully received. Ali and Kelly were thanked for preparing a lovely service, Caroline and Harriet for making the posies and everyone else for the food and helping in any way.

Please note that the 17th May "Food for Thought" will exceptionally be at 3 pm and not the usual time of 10 am.

Rena Andrews

MIDWEEK COMMUNION AND SOUP LUNCH - THURSDAY 2nd APRIL

This is a short service for people who are unable to get to a Sunday service or unable to sit through a normal Communion. This being Maundy Thursday we had a few more visitors. The Rev. Liz Welters began the service with prayers for people across the world, who live in fear, because of flooding, famine, wars, and other atrocities, that these countries can find peace. Prayers were also said for our King Charles, the government, 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 13 verses 1 - 17, 34 - 35, read by Rena.

Liz began her service with a reflection for Maundy Thursday. Maundy Thursday commemorates and celebrates two key events in Jesus's life: the last supper and the washing of the disciples' feet.

Absorb the words of Jesus, 'Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

Go with Jesus to the garden of Gethsemane, sit with the others and wait while Jesus prays his agonised prayer. Will you fall asleep? Or will you watch with him?

Keep us safe, O Lord, while we are awake, and guard us as we sleep, so that we can watch with Christ and rest in peace. Amen.

These are demonstrations of the great, extravagant, generous love that Jesus has for all humanity. Mathew, Mark and Luke tell us about Jesus sharing a meal with his friends in an upper room in Jerusalem. It was at this meal that Jesus instituted what Christians call the Lord's Supper, Holy Communion, the Eucharistic, or the Mass. Only in John's gospel do we hear of how Jesus bends down and washes his disciples' feet. This speaks clearly of his servant attitude and self-giving love.


"Love one another as I have loved you."

In Latin this is '*mandatum novum*' from which we get Maundy Thursday, the day of the commandment. Jesus is preparing the disciples for the task of carrying on his mission and

declaring God's love for all the world. Both the holy meal and the foot washing are not just head experiences, but heart and soul experiences.

Liz then began the short service of communion, after which we moved to the tables set for lunch, there was the usual chatting about what was happening across the Benefice. I introduced Sylvia, who is the editor of the magazines and who puts all the little pictures throughout the magazine.

Thank you Liz, for keeping this service going, also to who provided food and helped in any way. There will be no Midweek Communion in May as there will be elections in the church. The next one will be on Thursday, June 4th at 12.00 noon.

Rena Andrews 

MAY BE NOT TOO LATE TO PLANT A GARDEN...

By now, we are all aware that the Strait of Hormuz, which normally carries 20% of the world's oil supplies, has been closed during March and April due to the conflict between the US/Israel and Iran. Disruption in the area also affects gas and derived products such as carbon dioxide (CO2) and fertiliser.

CO2

CO2 is widely used in the food industry, including to enrich the atmosphere in greenhouses to produce bigger crops, given that normal atmospheric CO2 today is far below the optimum level needed for plant growth. Fertiliser is needed by farmers at this time of year to maximise yield.

The government has already taken steps to protect the UK's supply of CO2. We pray for the war to end, however significant worldwide disruption has already been caused on top of damage and casualty in the region. The food that we are consuming now was produced before the conflict began.

Fertiliser

In March, the National Farmers' Union was quoted on the BBC as warning of food price rises due to higher fertiliser and fuel prices if the closure continued.

In a BBC article on 6th April, the Head of the

Agricultural Industries Confederation, Jo Gilberton spoke about "a potential food crisis, if the fertiliser and the fuel costs are too much."

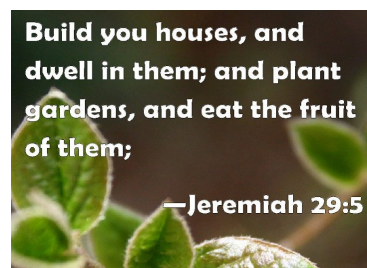
Food Security

Due to a mixture of our government's domestic policies and impact of the middle east conflict, the IMF warned in its April 2026 update that Britain could be hardest hit of all western economies.

Locally, some farmland in the Shelswell Benefice has been taken out of food production in recent years for other uses like housing development, HS2 or solar power.

Chickens kept at home must be registered with the authorities since October 2024 while lab-grown meat is due to be launched in Britain next year if it gains approval from the Food Standards Agency.

However the expansion of Green Farm Shop in Hethe shows that there is an appetite for high quality locally produced food.



(continued overleaf)

Increasing the food supply

Faced with higher food prices and possible empty shelves by the end of the year, why not plant a garden or start keeping chickens now if you can? More food in the system increases food security for everyone.

It doesn't have to cost a lot. Produce fresh from the garden or allotment tastes better too - and no diesel is wasted transporting it!

In May, the soil is warm and seedlings will catch up quickly. Beans, tomatoes and courgettes shine during the summer, while purple sprouting broccoli, Savoys, leeks and stored potatoes will be giving you food over the winter and into next spring.

Shelswell News has a regular update from our Finmere allotment correspondent Jean, who advises on what the allotment holders are doing each month (p 23). Local experience is particularly valuable - we seem to have our own microclimate here in Shelswell, getting every late frost on our frequently sodden spring clay soil!



Look for tips in internet videos about how to produce food from the garden cheaply. Growing herbs, potato towers, companion planting, chicken-keeping, pest control, money-saving tricks - there's a video for everything on Youtube or Rumble.

Books of gardening wisdom and science can be picked up for a few pounds each at charity shops.

Sylvia List

REGISTRY

Funeral

Marion Joan CROWTHER

1 February 1940 - 2 March 2026

St Michael & All Angels, Fringford

Marion Crowther was a longstanding resident of Fringford. Her funeral took place in the parish church and was attended by 170 people. The following Tribute to her was prepared by her family and read by her daughter.

"Marion was born on the 1st of February 1940 in Watford, Hertfordshire. She was one of 9 children born to Roland and Ivy. When asked what number child she was, Marion would say that she was 6th in line to the throne.

As you can imagine, living in a 3 bedroom home with her parents and siblings, Marion would talk about looking to her eldest sister Pat as a mother and would follow her around, at times to the annoyance of Pat. Marion would share the story that one night whilst using her father's garden coat as a blanket, to try and gain some attention she found a broad bean seed in one of the pockets. Marion then quietly inserted this bean into one of her nostrils. Unfortunately, the only attention she gained was being repeatedly told off for sniffing.

Despite being part of a large family Marion shared stories of family holidays.

One story that used to make her smile was how the children were made to hide behind a bush whilst their



*Marion Crowther,
1st February 1940 -
2nd March 2026*

father thumbed a lift. Once a willing vehicle stopped at the side of the road, Roland would then call all 9 children to appear and jump in, much to the horror of the driver.

Marion went to school at Leavesden Road Girls school where she passed her eleven plus and then attended Watford Grammar school.

Her working career commenced at Odhams printing where she worked in the accounts office with her sister Gill and her sister in law Irene who worked in the typing office. We have Marion's brother John to thank for introducing her to the love of her life Doug. John was a carpenter and at the time Doug was working as a plumber. Apparently Doug said to John, "Who is that lovely looking girl in the office?" to which John replied, "that's my sister Marion". They met, and the rest is history.

Marion and Doug were married in Watford in 1961 when Marion was 21 and Doug 20. They actually got married on April Fools' day which always amused Doug when recalling their wedding day. It would have been their 65th Wedding Anniversary this Wednesday. Marion and Doug moved to Fringford in 1967 when Steven was only 2 weeks old, Helen was born 2 years later and their family was complete. As a family they really enjoyed village life and would have frequent visits from family members.

Whilst Steven and Helen were growing up Marion worked at the village school as a dinner lady. After this Marion joined the team at Bicester community hospital as an auxiliary nurse. It was here that Marion made many lifelong friendships and the stories of what they used to get up to should be written down and would be an amusing read.

Sadly, Marion was widowed at the age of 46 when Doug was taken too early at the age of 45. They did manage to celebrate their silver wedding anniversary the year that Doug died. Marion never recovered from losing "My Doug" and Steven and Helen now have the comfort that they are back together again.

Marion grew a great number of friends over the years and recently they have shared stories of her dry sense of humor and wit, her willingness to listen and that she made the lives of her friends richer. She would often arrange to take them out on mystery tours with a picnic and a flask of tea. One of her favorite trips would be to sit at the top of Brill Hill with fish and chips. She also ensured that she got the full use of her bus pass by having plenty of days out with friends going to some obscure places just to come back home the same day.

Mum had a long lasting friendship with Pat Stephens. When Pat found out about Marion passing away, she sent a very kind note to Helen which I would like to read to you now as unfortunately Pat can't be with us today.

"To Marion from Pat"

It's hard to come to terms with the loss of Marion. She has been a part of my life since I was five years old when we started school and were in the same class. Since then we have always been friends and kept in touch throughout our lives. We both married and spent time together as our children grew up and I have happy memories of our visits to each other with our families during that time.

We had some memorable holidays together and I remember coming here to Wales and booking into a bird watching course at the Snowdonia Study Centre. We joined a dedicated group of bird watching enthusiasts and felt somewhat out of our depth when we noticed our fellow watchers were all dressed in sombre shades of green and brown to blend in with the scenery and we wore sweatshirts of white and bright red. We stood out like sore thumbs.

(continued overleaf)

One of the many qualities I admired about Marion was that she was ever forgiving and I never knew her to bear a grudge. She was always ready to help anyone and I'm sure her many friends can vouch for that. She was always a loyal and trusted friend to me and I will miss her so much.

I have planted a Mahonia in the garden in her memory. It is evergreen and fragrant and flowers in February, her birthday month so I will always have that to enjoy and remind me of our long friendship as I know she would want me to. Marion will always have a special place in my heart."

Marion enjoyed her garden and the birds that would visit, at times getting very excited when birds chose to nest in a bird box outside her lounge window. She was an excellent baker and would often be seen outside the community hospital selling cakes from the boot of her car to her colleagues, the most popular being her chocolate cake.

To say Marion enjoyed sport was an understatement. When she was younger, she enjoyed playing badminton and table tennis at Fringford village hall and was always a very competitive participant. Football was also a passion for Marion, and she constantly followed her club Watford and managed to watch lots of games with Doug even when she was heavily pregnant with Steven.

Knitting also played a major part in her life as she took great delight in helping the village coordinate clothing for children from Ukraine. If you ask her grandchildren what fond, memories they have of their Nanny it will involve muller yogurt pots. Marion was very resourceful when it came to entertaining them and you wouldn't believe how many hours of fun they had with these.

Christmas presents for the grandchildren were also a well thought out process. Marion would start looking for presents in January and throughout the year which would result in there being a significant amount of presents to be opened on Christmas day, some of which did get a questionable reaction from them.

Marion was fiercely independent and strong and despite her challenges with poor health this never wavered, even in her 80's she would be up a ladder cutting Ivy off the roof of her shed. This strength continued through to the end; she spent her last 6 weeks in Katharine House Hospice where she remained in control whilst being cared for with dignity and respect in a beautiful setting. Marion had her own room that looked out onto the garden, and she was able to watch the birds and the spring flowers starting to bloom.

I'm going to end on what Marion described as her greatest achievement and that was her family. Her children Steven and Helen. Her grandchildren Amy, Max, Ellie and Samuel and her two little great grandsons Oliver and Alfie. Marion was so proud of them, all and their achievements. She loved them so much.

Marion had the biggest of hearts, she has always been there and will be greatly missed. Our lives will never be the same again."

Club News



SHELLOW WI



April saw us welcome Bruce Wakely whose talk "Tax, Care and the New Partner" was very informative.

In May we are going on our annual walk; this year's venue is Weston-on-the-Green. We will also be making our final vote for this year's resolution, which will be taken forward to the National AGM in June.

In June our speaker is Christine Farmer and her presentation 'The Repair Shop and Me'. Earlier in the day members will be given the chance to come together in the village hall to watch this year's National AGM.

In July we are hosting open evening to which we welcome everyone, so if you are interested in joining our vibrant group come along. The evenings talk is "Shellcraft from the Philippines" – Analiza Jones.

The WI has an enormous amount to offer not just at a local level but at county and national as well. We have the opportunity to take part in social events, trips and holidays, have access to both online and in person learning. There really is something for everyone.

We meet on the first Thursday of each month in Fringford Village hall at 7.30pm

If you would like more information please contact sandra at 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 07770 220605.

Our next book club meetings are:

- Wednesday 20th May, 7.30 pm, at St Fergus Cottage, Cottisford
- Monday 22nd June, 7.30 pm at 6 Hethe View, Cottisford
- Wednesday 22 July, 7.30 pm (Venue TBC)

Our next book is **'A Thousand Ships' by Natalie Hayes.**

'Frozen River' by Ariel Lawhon really split our group. Some of us felt it was a great yarn, with relatable characters, great relationships (Martha and Ephraim) and made even more compelling as it was based on the diaries of a real-life midwife. There were difficult themes of murder and rape, which made difficult reading at times, but the insights into midwifery, the justice system, and rural life in the early years of America were fascinating.

However, many of us also felt the book was somewhat contrived, 'cheesy, and we were left wanting to know more, especially about the native Indians, which was really only touched upon.. Whilst we felt it was a good yarn; it was seen as an 'airport read' rather than a serious piece of literature. We all agreed that there are still tensions between midwives and doctors (gynaecologists), and that many of the practices are still used today (herbal remedies etc). And there were certainly symbolism (Shakespeare references, magical realism, myths). Many of us enjoyed the description of Martha's family life (although others felt that some family members were too good to be true!). The ending was either predictable .. or a real shock – so maybe that's what we can say about the book – it can be what you want it to be!

Other books discussed:

Kristen Hannah books (Four Winds, The Women, The Nightingale)

Angle of Repose - Wallace Stegner

Orbital – Samantha Harvey

The Persians - by [Sanam Mahloudji](#) (Lauren to ask her Persian friend for other book recommendations about Iran/Persia)

Throne of Glass / Court of Roses Series (Sarah J Maas)
 Theo of Golden – Allen Levy
 House of the Cerean sea – TJ Klune
 Wrong time, Wrong Place – Gillian McAllister
 Seacraiper – Benjamin Wood
 Slouching Towards Bethlehem – Joan Didion (Essays)
 Lark Rise to Candleford – Flora Thompson
 The Year of Magical Thinking – Joan Didion
 American Wife – Curtis Sittenfield
 Temple of Fortune – Elodie Harper



SHELLOW POETRY APPRECIATION GROUP

Our April meeting focused on the theme of Farming and Farm Animals.

In ***Autumn Ploughing, Gloucestershire 1895***, the contemporary poet John Curtis takes us back to a past when shire horses pulled the plough. He creates a vivid account of a traditional pastime he briefly witnessed and was also told about by his grandfather. ***A Horse's Tale of 'Could'***, by another contemporary poet, J D Maxwell, features a retired horse resentful of his new life, until he is reminded that the alternative fate is being turned into glue! In ***The Shire Horse*** by Zoe Maynard (extant) the reader can appreciate a retired animal's freedom after years of hard work. Edward Thomas (1878-1917) who died in the First World War, wrote ***As the Team's Head Brass***, a poem in which he talks of war and farming with an old ploughman.

The modern American poet Daniel Larson wrote ***'Twas a Prairie Life***, a lament from a worn-out and disenchanted farmer who has no-one to take on the farm after him. The final line – 'This farm belongs to yesterday' sounds like a knell of doom. In ***The Cow and the Pig and the Hen***, A H Upham (1877-1945) mocks farmers who try to make quick profits by turning from animal husbandry to cereals. A more light-hearted approach is found in ***The Farm Yard*** by Eliza Lee Follen (1787-1860), who conjures up a farm through all the sounds heard there.

Cattle of one sort or another have provided many poems. One many will remember from childhood is ***The Cow*** by Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-94). The friendly and obliging subject in that poem is a great contrast to the poor cattle driven across the baking plains of Australia by Banjo Patterson (1864-1941) and his fellow drovers in the poem ***With the Cattle***. Ted Hughes (1930-98) was a farmer in Devon as well as a poet. The poems ***Feeding Out-Wintering Cattle at Twilight*** and ***Turning Out*** are both based on his experiences. Another farmer-poet was Robert Frost (1874-1963), who wrote the short poem ***The Cow in Apple Time***, about a cow preferring to graze on alcoholic cider apples rather than grass. An Irish bull takes centre stage in ***The Outlaw*** by Seamus Heaney (1939-2013), who recounts watching a bull servicing a cow when he was a boy. In ***The Moo-Cow-Moo***, Edmund Vance Cooke (1866-1932) takes on the persona of a child fascinated by his father's cow. August Derleth (1907-91) obviously watched the behaviour of cows closely before he wrote ***The New Cow***. Cows are used to represent one sort of natural beauty in ***Pied Beauty*** by Gerald Manley Hopkins (1844-89).

Poems about sheep are ***Couples Under Cover*** by Ted Hughes (ibid); ***Sheep*** by Robert Francis (1901-87); ***Sheep in Winter*** by John Clare (1793-1864) and ***A Difficult Birth*** by Gillian Clarke (extant). An infamous rogue of a goat features in a popular Irish song from the 1920s: ***Paddy McGinty's Goat***, by Weston and Lee.

Pigs, often figures of fun, appear in ***Pigs*** by Charles Guigna (extant); ***The Pig*** by Ted Hughes (ibid) and ***A Pair of Porcine Poems*** (anon). Poultry gets a look-in in ***Ducks*** by F W Harvey (1888-1957), and in the two

anonymous poems *Chicken Rights* and *The Rooster's Dawn*. The turkeys we encounter are dead and dishonoured in *Turkeys* by Seamus Heaney (ibid).

The most exotic farm animal we met with was a llama, which causes consternation in *The New Farm Animal* by John Williams (1922-94).

If you would like to join the next meeting, contact me on 01865 811994 or at judith.harvey@live.co.uk

Judith Harvey

REPORTS FROM THE PARISHES

Cottisford and Juniper Hill St Mary the Virgin

CHURCHWARDEN: Charles Jackson, Cottisford House, Cottisford
TREASURER: David Barnes, Honeysuckle Cottage, 11 Hardwick

Tel 01280 848247
Tel 01869 277690

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

Tel: 01869 277366
sandrambickmore@gmail.com

SERVICES

Sunday 3rd May 9.15 am Holy Communion

Sunday 17th May 10.45 am Pet Service

Sunday 31st May 11.00 am Outdoor Service at Evenley Wood followed by Bring and Share Picnic

Pet Service

Sunday 17th May 2026
St Mary the Virgin Church, Cottisford



COTTISFORD AND JUNIPER HILL SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The church looked stunning at Easter; thank you to those who came on the Saturday morning to decorate it.

We have also had the first pop up pub of the year, thank you to Jane and David who hosted a very enjoyable event.

We are looking forward to our Open Garden event on Sunday 14 June 2 -4pm. We are still looking for helpers so if you are available please let us know.

If you would like to help in any way please do not hesitate to contact us.

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 17th May 9.15 am Holy Communion

Sunday 31st May 11.00 am Outdoor Service at Evenley Wood followed by Bring and Share Picnic

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

May is time to sow seeds and hopefully start earthing up the early potatoes. Of course, hoping for no late frosts. Keep weeding (always weeding) and construct the runner bean support structures.

Also time to plan / design / construct those anti-rabbit fences. It is a constant battle with the rabbits and I have often wondered if the best defence is to only plant those plants that the rabbits do not particularly like (courgettes and pumpkins). I do suspect that the Finmere rabbits are developing somewhat more sophisticated tastes, since this winter they seem to have developed a taste for garlic plants.



We still have a few plots 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 (Allotment correspondent)

Some Finmere related links:

Finmere facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/finmereandlittletingewick/>
 Shelswell Parishes website at – www.shelswellparishes.info/finmere
 Finmere Parish Council website at – www.finmerepc.org
 Village hall news at – www.myfinmere.com
 Finmere Poor's Plot – www.myfinmere.com/poorsplot
 Old Finmere history website – www.myfinmere.com/history
 Finmere on Wikipedia - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finmereipedia> Finmere Primary School - www.finmere.oxon.sch.uk



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 12th May 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**



Fringford

St Michael and All Angels

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

Tel 07936 760684
 Tel 07867 515207
 Tel 01869 277310
 Tel 01869 278949

FRINGFORD CONTRIBUTION – FOR MAY 2026 ST MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS, SERVICES & EVENTS

SERVICES

- Sunday 3 May – 10.45am Morning Prayer
- Sunday 10 May – 6.00pm Evening Communion
- Sunday 17 May – 10.45am Holy Communion
- Sunday 31 May – Trinity Sunday – 11.00am Benefice Service at Evenley Wood Garden – followed by a bring and share picnic.

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]

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.

EVENTS - Looking Ahead

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.comchristina.skarbek@talk21.com

'FLORA'S FRINGFORD'

SATURDAY 19th

September

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

See full page advert on page 16.

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 £61, 2nd £37, 3rd £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 . [Volunteers always needed to help at Little Lambs – could you help?]

FRINGFORD VILLAGE COFFEE MORNING

Village Coffee Mornings usually take place on the third Monday of each month. In May we will meet on Monday 18th. 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 or create craft albums.

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:

Sunday May 17th
 Sunday July 19th
 Wednesday September 16th
 Wednesday November 18th
 Sunday January 17th 2027

Wednesday June 17th
 August no meeting
 Sunday October 18th
 Sunday December 13th

Everyone welcome

No need to book – just come and join us!

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

REGULAR ACTIVITIES HELD IN FRINGFORD VILLAGE HALL

To find out more or book a place, please contact the hirer direct.	
Weekly Activities	Monthly Activities
<p>FS Dance</p> <p>Wednesday (term time) After school classes BALLET • TAP • MODERN • STREET leah.fsd@gmail.com or 07885827592</p>	<p>Village Coffee Morning</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>Parish Council Meeting</p> <p>All villagers welcome Third Monday in the month 7.45pm Contact 01844 237766 or fringford.pariahclerk@gmail.com</p>	<p>Just Puppies</p> <p>Puppy Training Tuesday evening, Sunday afternoon – various classes Contact Kerri 07720 891489 www.justpuppies.training</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Fringford Yoga</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wednesday morning 9.30am – 11am Carolyn White 07763 817078</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Shelswell WI</p> <p style="text-align: center;">First Thursday of the month 7.30pm Contact Sandra Bickmore 07961 828571</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Pilates</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Thursday at 10.00am natashaflowerspilates@gmail.com or 07545 525820</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Fringford Sewcial</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sew and Chat! All welcome Monthly Wednesday from 7pm Or Sunday from 3pm Contact Irene at ireneethomas@btinternet.com</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Mindfulness Meditation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Monthly Sunday 11am to 12.30pm janerainey17@gmail.com or 07971 008337</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Village Hall Team Meeting</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Please contact for dates Open meetings – all welcome fringford.hall@gmail.com or 07936 879175</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">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</p>	

THE LEWIS COKER MEMORIAL IN FRINGFORD CHURCHYARD

Nestled in the tranquil cemetery of Saint Michael's and All Angels Church, Fringford, stands a stone cross—a poignant memorial to nineteen year old Lewis Cadwallader Coker who died in the Anglo-Zulu war of 1879. Born in 1860, Lewis was the son of Reverend Cadwallader Coker, who served as Rector of the parish for over two decades, and his wife Emily Harrie.

Lewis's journey from the Oxfordshire countryside to the battlefields of southern Africa began at the age of twelve, when he entered the Royal Navy. He commenced his training aboard the ship Britannia, spending two formative years learning the discipline and skills of naval service. His career quickly advanced; he served on HMS Invincible, an iron screw ship, from July 1874 to October 1877 and was promoted to Midshipman in October 1876. Lewis then joined HMS Tourmaline, a composite screw corvette, before transferring to HMS Active, where he would see action during the Zulu War.



By eighteen, Lewis was already a veteran of six years at sea. His technical expertise and leadership were recognized when he was entrusted with the Brigade's Gatling gun—a ten-barrelled, hand-cranked machine gun capable of firing up to 400 rounds a minute, a cutting-edge weapon at the time. As part of Colonel Pearson's Number One Column, Lewis and the Naval Brigade advanced through hazardous terrain, shadowed by a formidable Zulu force. The tension culminated in the clash at Inyezane on January 22nd, 1879, where Lewis's determination and resourcefulness were put to the test. Despite technical setbacks,

his handling of the Gatling gun was praised. He was asked to write the action report, something unusual for a lowly Midshipman:

“Sir, I have the honour to report I was placed in rear of the leading column with the Gatling gun. About two hours and a half after leaving the camping-grounds the head of the column was engaged. A report having come in that the [Zulus] were threatening the rear of the column, I brought my gun into action, no [Zulus] appearing I moved on with the wagons. On arriving at the foot of the hill, where the headquarters were, I was ordered by Colonel Pearson to bring the gun up and place it opposite a hill where some [Zulus] had taken up a position. I immediately opened fire on them; they retiring in the bush, I ceased firing, having expended about 300 rounds. Through the clumsiness of my driver my ‘distle-boom’ was damaged. I repaired it as quickly as possible but because of the distle-boom I was very much delayed.’



*Lewis Coker aged 12
on joining the Navy
in 1872*

The Centre Column was severely mauled at Isandlwana and could not make further progress leaving Pearson’s column isolated and finally besieged on 23rd January at an old missionary station at Eshowe. The garrison was held awaiting orders and had to wait for nearly three months before communication could be established and it was relieved.

During the time there, conditions quickly deteriorated, with disease and fever thriving in the overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. Over a hundred men a day were answering sick call and the hospital was crowded. More than twenty had died, including Midshipman Coker, then nineteen years old. The doctor’s report stated that he met his death by sleeping in a wet ditch, guarding the Gatling gun for which he was responsible. Coker was buried in the cemetery compound at Eshowe where later a stone was placed over his grave.

Kevin Tobin

Hardwick

St Mary the Virgin

CHURCHWARDEN: David Barnes, Honeysuckle Cottage, 11 Hardwick

Tel 01869 277690

TREASURER: David Barnes, Honeysuckle Cottage, 11 Hardwick

Tel 01869 277690

PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER Flora Skinner

Tel: 01869 277366

MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Veronica Barnes, Honeysuckle Cottage, 11 Hardwick

Tel 01869 277690

WEBSITE: <http://hardwickvillage.btck.co.uk>

CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 24th May 6.00 pm Evensong with the Shelswell Group Choir

Sunday 31st May – Trinity Sunday – 11.00am Evenley Wood Garden, followed by a bring and share picnic

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

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

ST EDMUND & ST GEORGE CHURCH



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

Church Services and Events

Good news - the church is now open again for visitors and private prayer. There is still plenty of work to be done, but that will wait until our five yearly inspection has identified the highest priorities - and what we can afford!

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>.

We had a very busy April, with services on Easter Sunday and our regular services of Holy Communion and Morning Prayer. Many thanks to the volunteers who prepared the church for these services and donated and arranged a wonderful display of flowers.

Following our annual church meetings, Flora was re-elected as our Church Warden and Safeguarding Officer and Mike as Secretary and Treasurer.

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

Love your Burial Ground Week with Churches Count on Nature 2026

An opportunity to help monitor the wildlife in the churchyard. Registrations are open on the Caring for God's Acre website for Love Your Burial Ground Week with Churches Count on Nature, to observe and record the wildlife to be found in churchyards. The dates this year are Saturday 6th to Sunday 14th June. If you wish to take part, please contact Flora or Mike.

Hethe Village Fete

**Saturday
May 16th
at 2pm**



A traditional Village Fete with fantastic live music from Bicester Concert Band, Tombolas and Raffle, Children's Activities, BBQ, Beer and excellent teas.



Come and mingle with friends and neighbours to support your village organisations.

St Edmund & St George Church Mega Raffle at Hethe Village Fete on Saturday 16th May

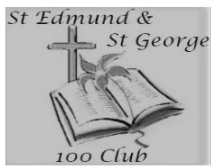


Many fantastic prizes,
including
**£100 in cash and a crate
of wine**



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

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



St Edmund & St George 100 Club

Results of the 87th draw held
on 9th March 2026

1st Prize No 51 Lisa Soper
2nd Prize No 2 Flora Skinner
3rd Prize No 59 Perry Stuart

Many thanks to our members
Hethe PCC



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 the Village Hall

Monday 11th May from 10.00am to 12.00pm

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



Parish Council. The following councillors have been re-elected:

Jill Elkington
Sandra Hartwell

Dean Overton
Jean Ramsey
Mark Tweedale
Sam Wallace

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. For customers who do not have access to the internet, they can call the customer service centre on 01865 519800.

Pop-up Pub. Friday 1st May in the Village Hall, from 7.00 to 10.00pm. Everyone welcome. Bring your own drinks of choice, snacks, and games!

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

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/>

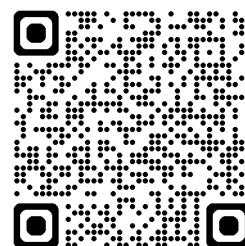
Facebook Pages:

Community Spirit of the Hethens

Hethe Community

Hethe Allotments

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



Flying the Flag

The church provides a space in the churchyard for a flagpole used for flying a flag on behalf of and maintained by the Parish Council. The flag usually flown is for St George. The church is dedicated to St Edmund, the original patron saint for England, and St George, the current patron saint, therefore the PCC has in the past believed that the flag is acceptable.

Last summer, these flags popped up everywhere — on zebra crossings, roundabouts, and lampposts. This was known as “Operation Raise the Colours” which was ostensibly non-partisan and all about inspiring patriotism; but it was hard not to connect it to the protests outside asylum hotels and view the nationalism that it promoted as exclusionary.



The flying of the flag outside the church should be seen as an opportunity to reflect on how we can foster a healthy kind of patriotism. Healthy patriotism should include honesty, particularity without exclusion, and an orientation towards the common good. If you have any opinions about the flying of the flag, please let us know.

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 10th May 9.15 am Mixbury Half Hour

Sunday 31 May – Trinity Sunday – 11.00am Evenley Wood Garden, followed by a bring and share picnic

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.

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

MIXBURY CHURCH CLEANING ROTA 2026

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

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



MAY Alison Bailey, Pam Burrill and Jules Channon

JUNE Nicola Adams and Anna Howard & Sue Boshier

JULY 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 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! 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

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.

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).

We look forward to seeing you! Best regards Anna

CASTLE FIELD SURVEY

You will remember that back in November last year we had a magnetometry survey of Castle Field, made possible with the invaluable assistance of James Barnes, Managing Director of Metrology UK Ltd., and David Griffiths, Professor of Archæology at Oxford University OUDC. They have now kindly agreed to come back to the village to show us the results, to make some tentative analysis of the features so far revealed, and to make suggestions as to how we might like to proceed.

We have therefore arranged to have a meeting in the church on Tuesday 12th May, at 7.30 pm, when all will be revealed! If you are at all interested in the very early history of our village I'm sure you will find this fascinating and instructive, and maybe inspire you to further research our past.

So please save the date in your calendar now, and I shall send a reminder in the beginning of May. It would be great if we could get the whole village involved and pack-out the church.

Ray Brunton T. 01280 847036



Save the date. Mixbury is again organising the village Big Lunch which will be held on Sunday 7th June. This is a lovely informal, sociable village event and villagers are encouraged to bring their own picnic and food for the sharing table. We hope to have live music, games and much more! There is a small group meeting soon to plan the day. More information to come! "

MIXBURY CHURCH FETE

Mixbury Church Fete will be in Castle Field on 5th September, 12 noon to 4pm. More details to follow.

THE LAMB by William Blake

Little Lamb who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee
Gave thee life & bid thee feed.
By the stream & o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing wooly bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice!
Little Lamb who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee



Little Lamb I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb I'll tell thee!
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb:
He is meek & he is mild,
He became a little child:
I a child & thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.
Little Lamb God bless thee.
Little Lamb God bless thee.

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 3rd May - 9.15 a.m. Holy Communion

Bonus Ball Lotto:-

Recent lucky winners were Stuart Hinton and Hugo von Maltzahn

Artists in the Countryside:-

Plans are well underway for this years exhibition which promises to be better than ever and will include the 'Countryside Artist of the Year' competition! We look forward to welcoming all who are able to come and enjoy this special event.

Hall to Let:-

Our newly refurbished Old School is available for hire at very competitive prices.

For details and to make your booking please contact Jackie Le Fevre on 07544 985117 or jackielefevre@btinternet.com

Summer Fete:-

This years Fete will be on **Saturday 12th September**. If you haven't already saved the date in your diary please do so now! It will be a great day out with something for all the family.

ARTISTS

IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

An exhibition featuring local artists
celebrating the British countryside

PRIVATE VIEW
Friday 12 June
6pm – 9pm

OPEN DAY EXHIBITION
Saturday 13 June
10am – 6pm
+ *Countryside Artist of the Year competition*

The Old School
Newton Purcell MK18 4AY

For entry details or Private View tickets vis

<http://bit.ly/4cuolbp>



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

See back page for details. 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 May

Pippa Elliot

Stoke Lyne 100 Club – April Results

The results of the 100 Club for April are as follows

First Prize	Membership No 04	Pam Adams
Second Prize	Membership No 27	James Lewis
Third Prize	Membership No 19	Ali Miller

Thank you once again for your continued support. Contact me janey@oxford-educational.co.uk for details on how to join the Stoke Lyne 100 Club.

Janey Poole

Treasurer

St Peter's Church PCC

Stoke Lyne WhatsApp Group

Phil and I have started a Stoke Lyne WhatsApp group in order to be able to quickly share useful information and comments. This is particularly useful for those of us who don't use social media, though of course all are very welcome to join.

Please contact Phil on: philelliot2002@yahoo.co.uk if you would like to join.

Pippa Elliot

Easter Day - Halleluiah He is Risen

St Peter's Church welcomed friends and families on a beautiful sunny morning to celebrate Easter and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The church looked fresh and springlike with a wonderful huge array of flowers throughout, a sign that new life and Spring were here and the darker nights of winter were finally behind us. The church had been cleaned after long roof renovations, so our spirits were lifted on this happiest of Easter days.

Father Alex once again led an inspiring service with a very energetic sermon holding the attention of even the youngest of the congregation (9 months old).

Our service was followed by simnel cake and coffee and of course the ever-present large basket of easter eggs. All 45 crème eggs were eagerly acquired leaving an empty basket ready for next year's celebrations. Thank goodness I didn't have to take any home to consume.

Thank you to all for your continued support at St Peter's Church and a Happy Easter.

Janey Poole
Treasurer

Open Mic Night – Saturday, 2nd May 7-11pm, St Peter's Church

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) There will be bar snacks and drinks, with a Temporary Events Notice in place.

"Cake and Chat" Event for "Wear It Green Day" – Saturday, 30th May, 11.30 am – 2 pm, St Peter's Church

See advertisement in the front section of the magazine for more information.

A FURTHER LOOK AT BAYNARDS GREEN

In February when Rena updated a former Stoke Lyne WI colleague with the latest news about the proposed warehousing developments at Baynards Green, her friend said,

"There used to be gallows there, where they hung highwaymen."

Rena then asked me if I knew about this and I confessed that when I did the research for my previous "Look at" on Baynards Green in March 2022 I had not come across any references to a gallows. This of course inspired me to try and find out more.

Highwaymen at Stoke Lyne

An internet search produced only a vaguely relevant story of a highwayman ghost seen in the area. This is from "The Paranormal Database" website:

"Highwayman

Location: Baynards Green (Oxfordshire) – General area

Type: Haunting Manifestation

Date/Time: Unknown

Further Comments: Killed in the seventeenth century, this highwayman refused to leave and continued to ride around the area to the annoyance of locals."

The Haunted Hosts website adds further embellishments (but not apostrophes!)

"Baynards Green Highwayman Ghost

Baynards Green is a small village in Oxfordshire, but dont let its size fool you – the rural spot has a ghostly resident who refuses to leave. A highwayman was killed in the seventeenth century, and his spirit has been riding around the area ever since, much to the annoyance of locals. They say he still rides his horse, a spectral figure on the roads and lanes around Baynards Green.

The story of this ghostly highwayman dates back to the 17th century, a time of lawlessness and banditry on Englands roads. Highwaymen were a common threat, and this particular individual met his end in the area. But his spirit didn't rest – instead, he continued to haunt the roads, a mischievous presence who didnt fade away. Locals have reported seeing him ride by, a fleeting glimpse of a man on horseback, vanishing into thin air."

The only newspaper story I had previously come across about a highwayman operating in the area was from the Bicester Herald of 18th April 1879, much too late for the above.

"AN ADVENTURE WITH A HIGHWAYMAN. – We have to report another encounter with a highwayman. On Thursday night, April 17, William Wakenell, cabman in the employ of Mr. Stowe, Crown Hotel, Bicester, was driving home, with his Hansom, from Stoke Lyne, when having reached a lonely spot known as the "Banbury Gullies", between Caversfield and Stoke Lyne, a man sprang from the road side to his horse's head and demanded money of him. Wakenell made use of his whip to defend himself with, and broke it in the scuffle. Having dismounted a struggle ensued. Ultimately Wakenell got the horse to move on, and freeing himself from his assailant, ran after the cab, mounted, and drove off."

Not a gallows, but a gibbet

I decided to have another look at the newspapers database on the FindMyPast website and found

one mention, not of a gallows, but a gibbet. What is the difference between the two? A gallows generally consisted of a wooden upright post or posts and a horizontal crossbeam to which one end of the rope was affixed with the noose at the other. The victim's head would be put in the noose and his body would "drop" when his support (such as a stool, horse or cart) was removed and he was left hanging, the weight of the body tightening the noose causing strangulation and death which might not be instantaneous. A new more humane method was devised in the 18th century involving a platform with a trapdoor which would open allowing the body to fall perpendicularly a greater distance causing dislocation of the vertebra and a swifter death.

A gibbet was a gallows-like structure from which the dead or dying bodies of criminals were hung on public display in chains or some sort of iron framework to deter others from committing similar offences. For this reason the structures were often placed next to public highways, particularly at crossroads or on higher ground so that those passing by could not miss seeing them.

The mention of a gibbet at Stoke Lyne was made in the Notes and Queries column in the Supplement to the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle of 15th February 1890 in an article entitled "*The Gallows, The Drop, and The Gibbet*" by Robert Gibbs FSA, of Aylesbury (1816-1893). Gibbs was the founder and editor of the Bucks Advertiser and a well-known local historian. At the end of his article he states:

"The last gibbet we read of in Buckinghamshire was erected at Bierton, a village near Aylesbury, in 1773. It was placed in a very public place and near the high road; there hung the rotting remains of the malefactor until limb by limb it fell from decay, or was eaten by birds and vermin. A gibbet remained at Stoke-on-the-Lyne until 1856, when it was demolished."

I assume that Gibbs meant Stoke Lyne although I have never seen the village referred to as "Stoke-on-the-Lyne" before. Perhaps it was an error by the Tyneside typesetters who would certainly not have heard of the village.

It therefore seems so far entirely plausible that a gallows or gibbet might have been erected at the busy crossroads of Baynards Green but

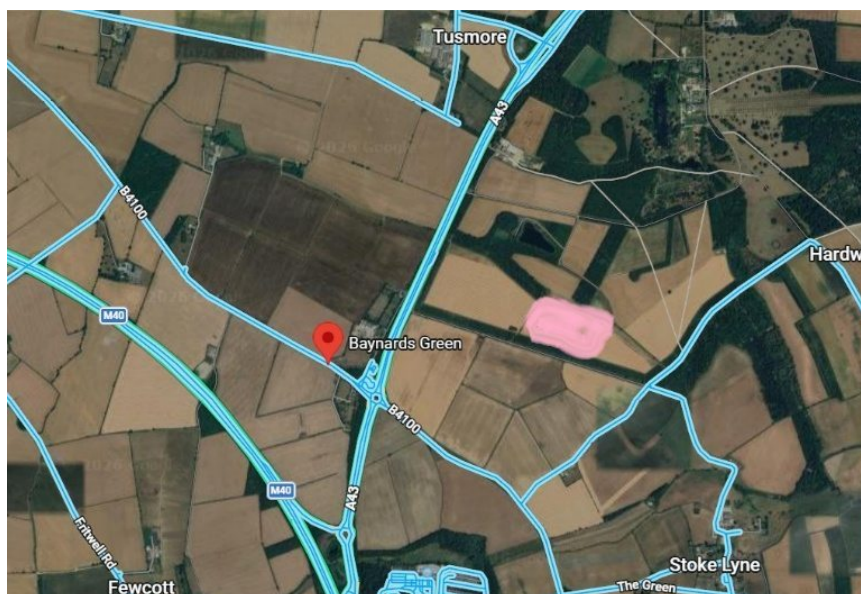
Clues in field names

I then remembered that David Woodhead in his book "Stoke Lyne: Portrait of a North Oxfordshire Village" had included a map "The Four Farms of the Stoke Lyne Purchase" which I assume dates from the Peyton purchase in 1860. In the middle at the top is a field called "Gallows Hill". The map is very faint but it is clear that the field is not at the roundabout we know today as Baynards Green. Using OS Pathfinder 1069 it looks like it was just to the north of the closed off length of road which used to lead from Stoke Lyne to the A43 before it was dualled.

a book (now out of print) entitled "A Backward Glance: A reconstruction of Oxfordshire country life and countryside in 1793" ie just before the land was enclosed. In the book, he created two imaginary riders touring the Ploughley area on horseback in October 1793.

Wyndham has his characters ride from the Stoke Lyne crossroads down to what today is the junction with the Hardwick Road but was in 1793 a track.

"When they got to the track junction our two friends halted to survey the scene. As the Banbury road stretched forward to the north-west across the level stone brash land, the many ruts scored it became less formidable on thin covering of light soil on top of the foundation of soft stone."



Imagery c2026 Airbus, Landsat/Copernicus, Maxar Technologies, Map data c2026 Google

Above is a satellite image from Google where I've put a blob to show where Gallows Hill Field seems to have been.

Why would a gallows or gibbet be placed there? To work out why we have to look to pre-Enclosure times.

Pre-Enclosure Paths and Ways

The Stoke Lyne and Fewcott Enclosure Act dates from 1793. Humphrey Wyndham in 1950 wrote

The other two tracks showed few signs of wheel traffic, but were beaten hard by the feet of men and animals. Parallel to the track leading northwards and between it and the Banbury road stretched the arable strips of Stoke Lyne Open Field. Between the northward track and the track to Hardwick was a tangle of rough grass, briars, furze bushes, and thorn trees."

They ride down the track and "A quarter of a mile farther on they came to a spot where five tracks met. The south-west quadrant of this circle with

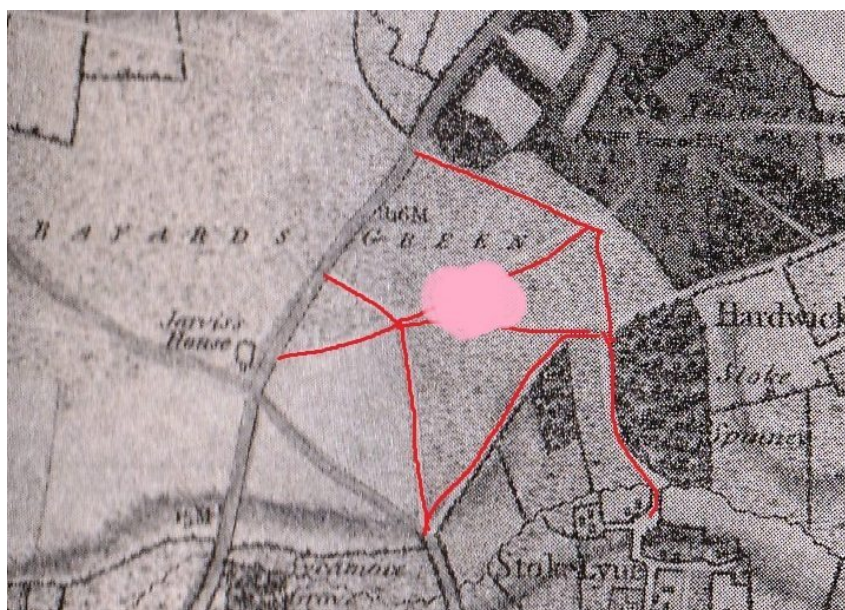
five radii consisted of the arable strips already mentioned. The remainder of the circle was all rough grass, briars, furze, and thorn."

"Yes," said John. "I'm sure I'm right. We are standing here at the Clapham Junction of the lines of supply of a community dependent for their livelihood and subsistence on agriculture and the gifts of nature. The track we have just followed served to bring the crops from the arable strips to our left and fuel provided by all this brushwood in front and to our right to Stoke Lyne. The track across our front affords like facilities to Tusmore and Jarvis' House, and the track over our right shoulders lets the people of Hardwick get their whack at this source of fuel All these tracks

disappeared when the land was enclosed because there was no further need for them."

The book helpfully includes a pull out copy of the Davis Map of the Ploughley Hundred from 1793 on which all the above tracks can easily be seen.

The Gallows Hill field created as a result of the enclosures I think would be just north of what Wyndham has his character John describe above as "Clapham Junction" meeting of five tracks, which would fit the bill of a gallows or gibbet being near a crossroads where passers by could not avoid seeing it. I guess we will never know for sure.



Baynards Green in 1793. Pre-Enclosure paths have been added by hand (in red if you're viewing the digital article). The (pink) blob near the junction of paths is where I think the gallows may have been.

Brenda Hazel

Stoke Lyne information:

Stoke Lyne Village Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/StokeLyneVillage>
 Village Email & WhatsApp Group: Contact: philelliott2002@yahoo.co.uk
 Stoke Lyne Diggers (Allotments)j: Contact: pippa.elliott@yahoo.co.uk
 Stoke Lyne Parish Council: <https://stokelyne.org/>
 Stoke Lyne Stories: <https://stokelynestories.webador.co.uk/>
 Victoria County History: <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol6/pp312-323>

Stratton Audley and Godington St Mary and St Edburga; Holy Trinity

CHURCHWARDEN: Sarah Noujaim, 15 Cavendish Place, Stratton Audley

CHURCHWARDEN: Penny Oakey, Grange Farm, Godington

TREASURER: Fai Li

PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Maxine Ling

MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Vacant (Stratton Audley)

MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENT: Sylvia List (Godington)

Tel 07941 273145

Tel 01869 278778

Tel 07725 009838

editor@shelswellparishes.info

CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday 3rd May 6.00 pm Compline at Godington

Sunday 10th May 10.45 am Morning Service at Stratton Audley

Sunday 24th May 9.15 am Holy Communion at Stratton Audley

Sunday 31 May – Trinity Sunday – 11.00am Evenley Wood Garden, followed by a bring and share picnic

CREAM TEA FOR WULU

There will be a Cream Tea in aid of the Girls' School in Wulu on Sunday 5th July, 3-5 pm. Can you bake a cake or help out on the day? If so, please do contact Revd. Liz (email lizwelters@yahoo.co.uk)

Stratton Audley Local History Society
*Would you like to know more about Stratton Audley?
The Village, The People, The Buildings, The History?*

Then come along to our 20th anniversary

OPEN DAY

SATURDAY 9th MAY

11.00 – 15.00

In Stratton Audley Church


We have archived the material collected over the last 20 years and this is your opportunity to browse, flick through or look more in depth at the many records, photographs, maps and original documents that we hold.

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

✠

**HOLY TRINITY
GODINGTON**



**The Church is open for private
prayer and contemplation
every day 10am – 6pm summer
10 am – 4pm winter**



**'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

The Last Word

"Today is the oldest you've ever been, yet the youngest you'll ever be, so enjoy this day while it lasts. "

25th MAY - SAINT ANDHELM

Aldhelm was born in 640, into a wealthy Anglo-Saxon family.

Educated at the monastic community in Malmesbury in Wiltshire, he went for further study in Canterbury. He proved a brilliant student and was sent back to Malmesbury as Abbot.

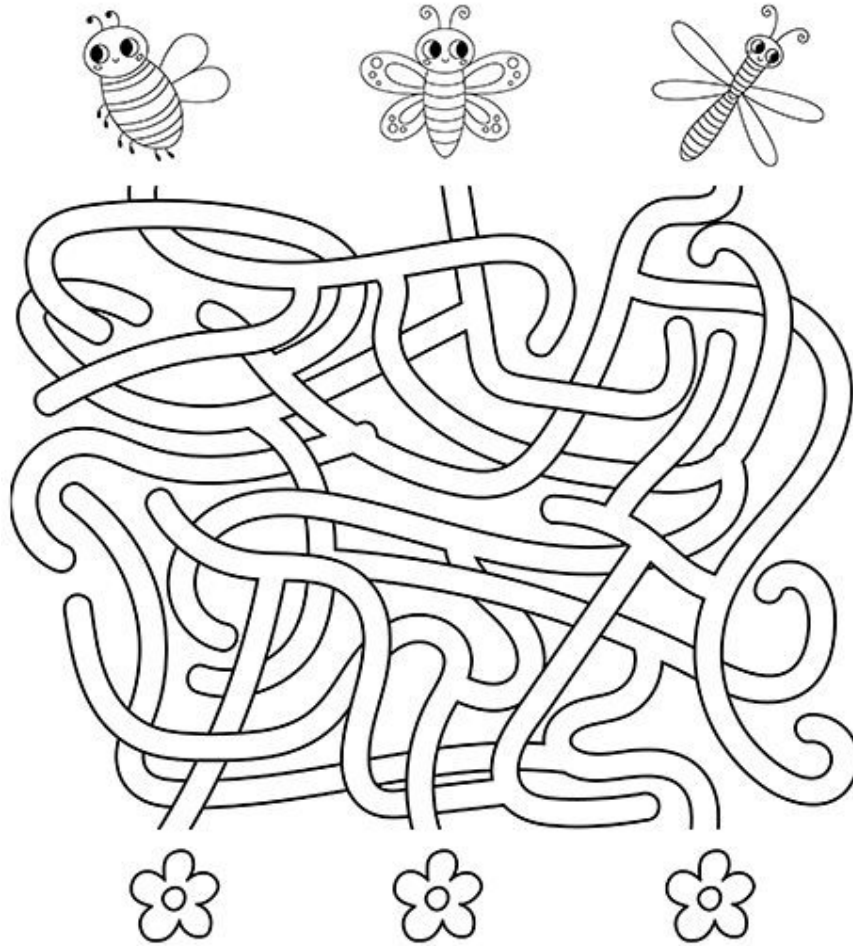
Aldhelm was known for writing scholarly letters that were so full of similes and metaphors as to be incomprehensible and highly complex riddles on biblical themes.

But he seems to have simply enjoyed word-play and clowning. When preaching to the poor and illiterate, Andhelm would play the harp, or break off his sermon to joke and sing songs that he wrote himself. Clearly his methods were successful, as he became the first Bishop of Sherborne in 705.

Aldhelm himself said simply that he wanted to "win men's ears, and then their souls."



*Weeks after the Pet's Service, nobody
had claimed the monkey*



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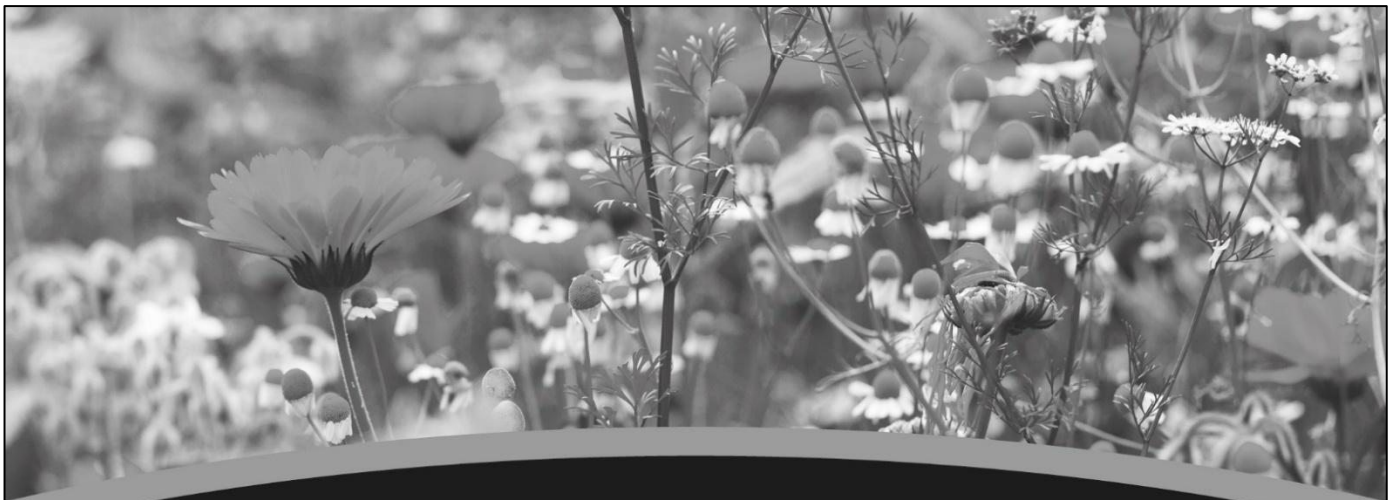
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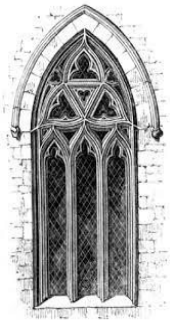
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**SHELLOWELL GROUP SERVICES: MAY 2026**

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

| DATE     | 3 <sup>rd</sup> May<br>5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter    | 10 <sup>th</sup> May<br>6 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter | 17 <sup>th</sup> May<br>7 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter                       | 24 <sup>th</sup> May<br>Pentecost                                | 31 <sup>st</sup> May<br>Trinity                                                                     |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ALTAR    | White                                                      | White                                                    | White                                                                          | Red                                                              | White                                                                                               |
| 8.00 am  |                                                            |                                                          |                                                                                | Holy Communion<br>(BCP)<br>HETHE<br>AM                           |                                                                                                     |
| 9.15 am  | Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>COTTISFORD<br>LW      | Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>HETHE<br>AM         | Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>FINMERE<br>AM/John Alderdice              | Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>STRATTON AUDLEY<br>LW       |                                                                                                     |
|          | Holy Communion<br>with hymns (BCP)<br>NEWTON PURCELL<br>AM | Mixbury Half Hour<br>PW                                  |                                                                                | Morning Service<br>FINMERE<br>PW                                 |                                                                                                     |
| 10.45 am | 10.45am<br>'Connect' Informal Worship<br>STOKE LYNE<br>AM  | Morning Service<br>STRATTON AUDLEY<br>PW                 | 10.45am<br>Pet Service<br>COTTISFORD<br>PW                                     | 10.45am<br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>STOKE LYNE<br>AM | 11am<br>Benefice Service<br>at<br>Evenley Wood Garden<br>with 'Bring and Share' picnic<br>to follow |
|          | 10.45am<br>Morning Service<br>FRINGFORD<br>PW              |                                                          | 10.45am<br>Holy Communion<br>with hymns (CW)<br>FRINGFORD<br>AM/John Alderdice |                                                                  |                                                                                                     |
| 6.00 pm  | Compline<br>GODINGTON<br>PW                                | Evening Communion<br>FRINGFORD<br>AM                     | 3-5pm<br>'Food for Thought'<br>STOKE LYNE<br>Lay-led                           | Evensong with<br>the Shelswell Group Choir<br>HARDWICK<br>PW     |                                                                                                     |

AM: Revd Alex Mahlava

LW: Revd Liz Welters

PW: Mrs Penny Wood (LLM)