

WHEATLAND NEWS

March 2024



"...as the waters cover the sea"

**News from the Diocese of Hereford and the
17 Parishes around Stottesdon, Ditton Priors
and Highley**

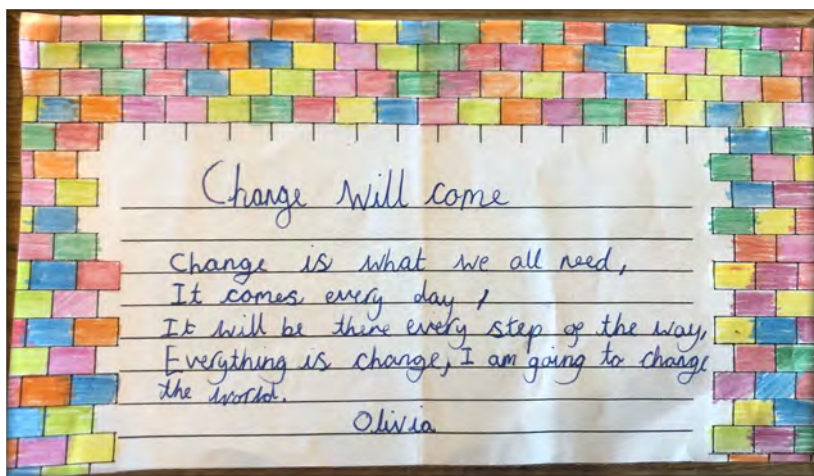
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Editorial

Easter this year is probably the earliest it can be so, combined with the changes of the season as spring also approaches, we are made aware that change is happening. The birds are singing and preparing to build their nests, the buds are appearing on the trees, shrubs and plants and the snowdrops are giving way to daffodils and other springtime flowers.

At a recent church service the following poem, written by an aspiring 9-year-old, was read and focussed our thoughts on the way we think as the years change. She has certainly shown us that, even at such a young age, change will happen!



With Mothering Sunday almost upon us, this month's Molecule is of particular relevance. Many of us – especially those who are not mothers – were unaware of the most severe effects of morning sickness in pregnancy until it was suffered by the Princess of Wales. In this edition's Molecule, the Revd David Poyner reveals the exciting latest news on the work being done in this area.

Bishop Richard could hardly have chosen a better topic, or one closer to our own concerns, for his maiden speech in the House of Lords on 22nd February. We have reproduced part of this speech on the back cover of this edition of WN, but do follow the links to YouTube where you can hear the power of his words as he spoke them, with subtitles if needed.

Finally – there is lots of news on pages 18 - 20 about Brown Clee Medical Practice from the Community Group and the Patient Participation Group which is relevant to a great many of us across the whole Wheatland area.

Happy Easter to all our readers

Ed

Please continue to send reports to your contact for your parishes listed below. The **deadline** for getting your contributions for the **APRIL 2024** edition of WN to the **EDITOR** will be **noon on Wednesday 27th March 2024**. Please, please help us to help our printer and our distributors so that we get WN to you in good time each month.

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Diocese of Hereford

March Newsletter from
the Bishop of Hereford



Dear Friends,

I have just read the Rule of St. Benedict, to my shame for the first time.

It is a monastic rule from the 6th century that sets out the disciplines and structures for the effective running of a monastery. The rules of poverty, chastity and obedience are highly restrictive; the punishments for violations severe; the lifestyle highly demanding. Praying at set offices eight times a day (including at 2 in the morning) meant that the monk would rarely get more than few hours of unbroken sleep. Central heating was for wimps and the diet uninspiring. Although eased in later centuries, it has been the basis for the monastic tradition in Western Europe ever since. It is not the sort of discipline that works in everyday life, but that doesn't mean it has no value. It is designed to foster Christian virtues of humility, and obedience (albeit expressed through submission to the Abbot), and a growing Christlikeness.

Most of March will be the season of Lent, when we Christians have traditionally given up things that give us pleasure to focus on our spiritual journey. As our world has changed it seems increasingly anachronistic. Our culture screams at us from the lifestyle sections that the way to real fulfilment is getting what you really desire. The idea that giving something up might be good for you, other than as a grudging acknowledgement of post-Christmas weight gain, is anathema. Consumerism works by creating desire and then offering to fulfil it.

But our strongest desires are not necessarily our deepest ones. Giving things up, or fasting, can get us in touch with these deeper desires that only God can satisfy. There is evidence that restricting calories by intermittent fasting or turning our mobiles off is actually good for us physically and psychologically. A good lent can be like leaving the Christmas presents unopened under the tree until Christmas day. There is a joy in the opening that is enhanced by the waiting.

So, as well as helping us grow closer to God, our Lenten restraint can amplify the joy of Christ risen when we get to that glorious Easter celebration. I once gave up tea and coffee for lent and had my first large cup on Easter morning. Before I knew it, I'd done three services and built a compost heap! Lent can be spiritual dynamite.

+ Richard



The Bishop's weekly video message

In this first of a short series, Bishop Richard reflects on peace-making, focusing on the characteristics and behaviours that peace-makers need and the pitfalls against which they must guard.

*Watch him on YouTube Hereford Diocese
or on the Diocese website, where the transcript also appears.*



Saint of the Month -

St David, Bishop of Menevia, Patron Saint of Wales

by Revd Joe Simons

Saint David (Welsh: Dewi Sant) was the Welsh Bishop of Menevia during the 6th century. Later after his death he became regarded as a saint, becoming the patron saint of Wales.

His life is celebrated on the 1st March. The earliest records of his life were written by Rhygyvarch, son of Julien bishop of St David's c.1090. His claim was that the history of Saint David was found in cathedral archives, although historians now believed that his motives were to further independence of the Welsh church, which had refused the Roman rite and now sought an independent status equal to that of Canterbury.

David was known as a renowned preacher and teacher and founded monastic settlements and churches in Wales, Dumnonia (present day Cornwall) and Brittany. St David's cathedral stands on the site of the monastery he founded in the Glyn Rhosyn valley of Pembrokeshire. Having visited this cathedral myself on many occasions, whilst staying on retreat just down the road at Saint Non's, on the coast, it is a truly beautiful and spiritual place, well worth a visit, especially if you arrive for evensong. One interesting feature of the building is the slope of the floor from east to west, it drops by some 14 feet!

Saint David is well-known for one particular miracle which took place at Llanddewi Brefi. It is said that whilst he was preaching the ground upon which he stood is reputed to have risen to form a small hill. A white dove, which became his emblem, settled on his shoulder. He is depicted wearing episcopal vestments standing on a mound with a dove at his shoulder.

The monastic rule of David was a simple one, monks had to pull the plough without the assistance of animals, drink only water and eat only bread with salt and herbs, spend evenings in prayer reading and writing. He was against personal possessions living a simple and ascetic life. The symbol of the leek has its genesis with St David's or more accurately, ascribed to St David referred to by Shakespeare in Henry V.

When he died it was said that the monastery was filled with angels as Christ received his soul, his last words translated from Welsh to English:

"be joyful, keep your faith and creed, and do the little things that you have seen me do and heard about. I will walk the path that our fathers have trod before us".

He was laid to rest at St David's cathedral which has become a place of pilgrimage over many centuries.

His life of simplicity and self-denial bring focus to all of us on where we should place our priorities. A monastic life may not be the result but allowing time and space to pray and giving back to God our lives is what we seek to achieve in our Lenten journey and a pattern for living thereafter.

As we approach Easter and remember the greatest sacrifice of all may we live in the life of our risen saviour Jesus and serve him and those around us by doing the little things well.

JS

Readings for March 2024

Sunday 3rd March – The Third Sunday of Lent (Purple or Lent array)

Psalm 19.7 – end; Exodus 20. 1 – 17; 1 Corinthians 1. 18 – 25; John 2. 13 – 22

Wednesday 6th March

Psalm 119.105 – 128; Genesis 49. 1 – 32; Hebrews 6. 13 – end

Sunday 10th – The Fourth Sunday of Lent – Mothering Sunday – Purple or Lent array

Psalm 107. 1 – 3, 17 – 22 (or 107. 1 – 9); Numbers 21. 4 – 9; Ephesians 2. 1 – 10; John 3. 14 – 21

Wednesday 13th March

Psalm 145. 8 – 18; Isaiah 49. 8 – 15; John 5. 17 – 30

Sunday 17th March – The Fifth Sunday of Lent – Passiontide begins – Purple or Lent array

Psalm 51. 1 – 13 or 119. 9 – 16; Jeremiah 31. 31 – 34; Hebrews 5. 5 – 10; John 12. 20 – 33

Wednesday 20th March

Psalm 55, 124 or 119. 153 – end; Exodus 9. 1 – 12; Hebrews 12.3 – 13

Sunday 24th March – Palm Sunday – Red

Liturgy of the Palms: Psalm 118. 1 – 2, 19 – end; Mark 11. 1 -11

Liturgy of the Passion: Psalm 31. 9 – 16; Isaiah 50. 4 – 9a; Philippians 2. 5 – 11, Mark 14. 1 – end of 15

Monday 25th March – Monday of Holy Week – Red

Psalm 36. 5 – 11; Isaiah 42. 1 – 9; Hebrews 9. 11 -15; John 12. 1 -11

Tuesday 26th March – Tuesday of Holy Week – Red

Psalm 71. 1 - 14 (or 71. 1 – 8); Isaiah 49. 1 – 7; 1 Corinthians 1. 18 – 31; John 12. 20 – 36

Thursday 28th March – Maundy Thursday – Red/White

Psalm 116. 1, 10 – end; Exodus 12. 1 – 4 (5 – 10) 11 – 14; 1 Corinthians 11. 23 – 26; John 13. 1 – 17, 31 b - 35

Friday 29th March – Good Friday – Hangings removed – Red for the Liturgy

Psalm 22; Isaiah 52. 13 – end of 53; Hebrews 10. 16 – 25; John 18. 1 – end of 19


Saturday 30th March – Easter Eve – Hangings removed

Sunday 31st March – Easter Day – Gold or White

Psalm 118. 1 – 2, 14 – 24; Acts 10. 34 – 43; 1 Corinthians 15. 1 – 11; John 20. 1 – 18

Sunday 7th April – The First Sunday after Easter – White

Psalm 133; Acts 4. 32 – 35; 1 John 1. 1 – 2.2; John 20. 19 - end

		<h2>Brown Clee Churches</h2> <p>Priest-in-Charge: Revd Joe Simons</p> <p>The Vicarage, Ditton Priors, Shropshire WV16 6SQ 01746-599217 07872-464276 browncleebenefice@outlook.com</p>
<p>St John the Baptist, Ditton Priors, and Holy Trinity, Wheathill & Loughton CHURCHWARDENS Carole Smith: 01746-712474 Mark Smith: 01746-712394</p>		<p>St Michael & All Angels, Aston Botterell CHURCHWARDEN Anne Preece: 01746-787237</p>
<p>St Giles, Chetton CHURCHWARDEN Sheila Millington: 01746-789443</p>	<p>SS Peter & Paul, Cleobury North CHURCHWARDENS Mike Bradbury: 01746-787676 Jane Bufton: 01746-787298</p>	<p>All Saints, Neenton CHURCHWARDEN Bobbie Jarvis: 01746-787093</p>

Lent Reflection

Do you ever feel that life is one big race and that each day is a cycle of trying to solve a myriad of different problems and issues? It is so easy for life to become so driven on resolving everything that we end up by resolving nothing. Lent is a time for us to reflect and to take stock to look up instead of down.

When Jesus was preaching the Sermon on The Mount he says to the crowd gathered around him:

*“So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own.
 Today’s trouble is enough for today.”*

This comes just after Jesus gives us the reassurance that we have a Father who knows what we need and will take care of our welfare. I am sure sometimes we may wonder when, but that is where allowing ourselves to be free for a while to focus on growing closer to him can be a real source of comfort.

Our issues and challenges have been common for years we only need to look back at the hardship and trials that our forebears have endured to know that this is the case. Faith does not downplay any of these trials, rather it offers us the real and tangible strength, support and love of a God that faces them with us. Jesus tries to bring a sense of perspective and ask us to look at what is in front of us in the context of a God that knows what we need.

So, this Lent, I would urge you to slow down and simply allow yourself to *be*, to focus on one task at a time and to trust God to be what he has always been, consistent and faithful. Focus on what truly satisfies, on what God provides, and our troubles will seem less daunting.

Victor Hugo said:

‘Have courage for the great sorrows of life, and patience for the small ones. And when you have laboriously accomplished your daily task, go to sleep in peace. God is awake.’

Revd Joe Simons

Services in Brown Clee Churches during March 2024

Please note the new earlier time for Holy Communion at Ditton Priors

Sunday 3 rd March – Third Sunday of Lent	9:45am	Holy Communion	Ditton Priors
	11:30am	Holy Communion	Aston Botterell
Wednesday 6 th March	10:00am	Morning Prayer	Ditton Priors
Sunday 10 th March – Mothering Sunday	10:00am	Group Holy Communion	Ditton Priors
Wednesday 13 th March	10:00am	Holy Communion	Ditton Priors
Sunday 17 th March – Passiontide	9:45am	Holy Communion	Ditton Priors
	11:30am	Holy Communion	Neenton
Wednesday 20 th March	10:00am	Holy Communion	Ditton Priors
Sunday 24 th March – Palm Sunday	10:00am	Group Holy Communion	Chetton
	6:00pm	Evening Prayer	Wheathill
Monday 25 th March	6:00pm	Evening Prayer	Neenton
Tuesday 26 th March	6:00pm	Evening Prayer	Aston Botterell
Wednesday 27 th March	6:00pm	Stations of the Cross	Chetton
Thursday 28 th March – Maundy Thursday	6:00pm	Passover Meal	Cleobury North Village Hall
Friday 29 th March – Good Friday	10:00	Reflection	Ditton Priors
Saturday 30 th March – Easter Eve	6:00pm	Reflective Compline and Vigil	Ditton Priors
Sunday 31 st March – Easter Day	10:00am	Group Holy Communion	Ditton Priors
Sunday 7 th April	9:30am	Holy Communion	Ditton Priors
	11:30am	Holy Communion	Aston Botterell

News for all Brown Clee Churches

Ash Wednesday - 14th February

Our Ashing Service to mark the start of our Lenten journey, as we travel with Christ to Easter, was extremely well attended. As a church we use this time to pray and reflect on the gospel allowing ourselves to once again put our God at the centre of our lives.

Stories of Faith - 17th February

At our seminar, held at Ditton Priors Village Hall, Revd Joe led us in a discussion on mission and ministry. It was great to hear the stories of faith from nearly all that attended, and we are hoping to hold a further seminar in the next couple of weeks for those who were unable to make it. If there is any aspect of your own faith journey or you would like to discuss any burning questions that you have in your heart about Jesus do please get in touch with Joe at browncleebenfice@outlook.com

From the Registers

- ✝ Ditton Priors –27th January - Baptism of Cody Cadfan Samuel Davis.
- ✝ Ditton Priors – 31st January – Funeral of Michael ‘Mick’ Neil Hamling, aged 91.



Thursday 14th March 8:00pm in Ditton Priors Village Hall

Early Maps of Shropshire

An evening of exploration with Dr. Patricia de Haan

PRESENTS

- The first ever map of Shropshire was made in 1577 ~ But who needed it?
- Who surveyed the county and drew the map? • Who paid for it and published it?
- Why are there no roads? What happened next? • Why did it take another century for a road map to appear?
- Why not come along to **see the 1577 map** ...and to hear the whole story?

Our guest speaker, Shropshire born Patricia de Haan, has had a fascination with maps since finding her first map of Shropshire at a jumble sale, when she was just 7 years old!

Over the years Patricia amassed a huge collection of maps of Shropshire and began a search for those showing the development of the Industrial Revolution, in this its birthplace. In 1995 she donated all the relevant maps to Ironbridge Gorge Museum, making them available for research.

Patricia has a BSc in Zoology, a Masters degree in History of Technology and a Doctorate in History of Medicine. She is also co-author of books on Thomas Telford, the Darbys and the Ironbridge Gorge. “Nothing like variety” she says!



The event is FREE for members (and under 18's), £3 for non-members or take out an annual membership on the night

Event enquiries to: paul.wilson8992@gmail.com Membership enquiries to: markgregory963@gmail.com

Ditton Priors News

Marjorie Jones writes:

Lent Lunch

Despite the horrid rainy weather, 25 or so made it to our lunch. A big THANK YOU to all who provided soup, donated raffle prizes, and worked hard to make such a pleasant day. A donation is being sent to the charity 'SMILE'.

Easter Lilies

Easter will soon be here, and we wondered if anyone would like to donate towards lilies for our church. If so, could you please give your donation to a church warden or myself. THANK YOU. Shirley Wall – 07530 089808

Cleaning Rota for March

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sunday 3rd March - Mr & Mrs Graham Russell▪ Sunday 10th March – Mrs Shirley Wall & Mrs Anita Casswell▪ Sunday 17th March – Mrs Jennifer Lowe & Mrs Debbie Jones	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sunday 24th March – Mr & Mrs Dennis Griffiths▪ Sunday 31st March – Mr & Mrs John Ballard▪ Sunday 7th April – Mr & Mrs Tony Brown
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First Saturday of the Month Coffee Mornings

10:30 – 12:00 noon in church. There is no charge for this community event – and it is open to everyone! Next dates are Saturdays 2nd March, 6th April, 4th May, 1st June and 6th July.

Churchyards

The PCC would like to thank all who donated towards maintenance costs of the churchyards and thanks to all who tended family graves. If there are any Christmas wreaths left, we shall be removing them now as we are in Lent and in preparation for the mowing to begin at Easter time. Thank you.

Race Night at Ditton Priors Village Hall – Saturday 6 April, 7:00pm - raising money for new play equipment. Buy a horse for £3, or sponsor a race for £25! Tickets £7 including Jacket Potato and Chili – vegetarian option available. Licensed Bar. Tickets from dittonpriors@btinternet.com, or Ditton Priors Post Office or Parker Motors.

Dates for your Diary!

- ⇒ Sunday 28th April – Spring Lunch – 12:30 in Ditton Priors Village Hall
- ⇒ Monday 6th May – THE BRIDGNORTH WALK DAY!! Coffee and cake stalls in church
- ⇒ Saturday 18th May – Church Fete
- ⇒ Saturday 15th June – Teas in the Churchyard
- ⇒ Saturday 6th July – Pimms and Puds in the Vicarage Garden
- ⇒ Thursday 1st August – Burwarton Show Refreshment Tent
- ⇒ Saturday 14th September – Ride and Stride – Shropshire Historic Churches Trust
- ⇒ Saturday 21st September – Benefice Festival
- ⇒ Saturday 12th October – Harvest Supper in Ditton Priors Village Hall
- ⇒ Saturday 23rd November – Christmas Fair at the Pavilion

St John the Baptist 100 Club results - February 2024

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ £20 - Dennis Griffiths▪ £10 - Sophie Lloyd | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ £5 each to Andy Johnson, Dave Lowe, Marjorie Lautman |
|---|--|

Wheathill & Loughton News

Marjorie Jones writes

Church services March - April

- ✝ Sunday 24th March – 6:00pm Evening Prayer at Wheathill
- ✝ Sunday 21st April - 6.00pm at Loughton

Loughton Review – 3rd February

Many thanks to all who attended our workshop at The Three HorseShoes on the afternoon of 3rd February.

It was a great discussion as we seek to reflect on and imagine how we might open up the church for a wider community use along with a spiritual hub, which has been its focus for many centuries. There were a variety of ideas put forward and we will be sharing these with the community in the weeks to come: do please let us know what you think. If you would wish to make any comment or observations do please get in touch with Revd Joe at browncleebenfice@outlook.com

We are extremely grateful to Jayne for the loan of your committee room along with tea and coffee and also to Emma for the provision of cakes.

Aston Botterell News

Anne Preece writes

Church services

- ✝ Sunday 3rd March – 11:30 am – Holy Communion

Lottery winners – 50 Club results for February 2024

- £20 - Richard Jones - No 133
- £10 - Ian & Janet Preece - No 143
- £5 - Alan Jones - No 7
- £5 - Sue Vernon - No 226

Cleobury North & District Village Hall

CNVH remains open and available for hire. For enquiries about booking and using the hall, please call 01746-787093 and leave a message or send a TEXT MESSAGE to 07483-879763 (or both!).

Cleobury North News

- ✝ Maundy Thursday 28th March, 6:00pm, Passover Meal at Cleobury North Village Hall. Details from Churchwardens or Benefice Office.

DO YOU WANT TO FAST THIS LENT?
In the words of Pope Francis

- Fast from hurting words and say kind words.
- Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.
- Fast from anger and be filled with patience.
- Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.
- Fast from worries and have trust in God.
- Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.
- Fast from pressures and be prayerful.
- Fast from bitterness and fill your hearts with joy.
- Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others.
- Fast from grudges and be reconciled.
- Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.

pietrafitness.com

Chetton News

Pam Downing writes:

Services at St Giles' Church in March

- ✝ Sunday 24th March – Palm Sunday - Group Holy Communion – 10:00am
- ✝ Wednesday 27th March – Stations of the Holy Cross – 6:00pm

Flowers and Cleaning – Sheila, Elisabeth and Anne.

How lovely to see the daffodils appearing in the lane towards the Church, a good sign that Spring is not far away. How lovely too, to hear a regular peal of bells now that we have a team of enthusiastic ringers: thanks to all of you.

Thank you too to Paul and Sarah for kindly trimming the Church hedge for us before the birds establish their nests, we do appreciate it.

Midland Oil Engine Club - a date for your diaries - on Sunday 12th May the Midland Oil Engine Club will be holding an event at Lower Cockshutt Farm, WV16 6RF. This will include vintage engines and vehicles, military vehicles, vintage agricultural machines, lorries, bikes, aeroplanes and also a tractor run. There will also be several craft stalls. We just ask for donations on entry, all proceeds to St Giles Church, Chetton and the Midlands Air Ambulance.

Chetton 100 Club

Tricia Ward Jones, no 80; Lucia Lloyd, no 82.

Chetton Village Hall

Tea with the Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire!

We are hosting tea at on Monday 11th March following a talk by the Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire, Anna Turner. Start time 3:00pm. Tickets are free of charge. Please let Sue Bayliss know if you wish to attend, on 789239, and for any further information on events at the hall.



Flicks in the Sticks.

Our film season continues with **'The Shawshank Redemption'** starring Morgan Freeman, which is scheduled for Friday 1st March at 7.30pm. Doors open for refreshments at 7pm.

Due to the Easter break, we will be showing **'The King's Speech'** on Friday 12th April.

This will conclude the Spring season and we will resume in September.

Chetton Active Friends

Village Hall Diary for 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Pam's Pilates on Mondays and Tuesdays 9:30am, and also on Tuesdays 11:00am.■ Chetton Active Friends, Fitness-4-All. Monday afternoons from 2pm.■ Women's Institute meetings, second Wednesday of the month, 7pm.■ Bridgnorth Dog Club - Thursday evening, 6:00pm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Zumba with Lisa – Tuesdays - 2:30 pm■ Ballroom and Sequence Dancing, Tuesday evenings, 7:00pm.■ Chetton Folk dance club the last Wednesday of the month 7pm.
	Village Hall enquiries – for activities or hire at modest rates, contact Sue on 789239.	

Neenton News

Bobbie Jarvis writes:

Services at All Saints' Church during March

- ✝ Sunday 17th March – Passiontide – Holy Communion – 11:30am
- ✝ Monday 25th March – Evening Prayer – 6:00pm

It was with great pleasure that we welcomed back from retirement Revd Val Smith on Sunday 18th February for our service of Holy Communion. Val and the Local Ministry Development Group (LMDG) will be assisting Revd Joe in the Brown Cleve benefice.

IMPORTANT DATE for your diary!

All Saints' Church is Grade II Listed by Historic England, in part for the significance of its magnificent East Window.

This window is our village War Memorial to Frank Amies, John Leath and Harry Yapp, all Neenton men, all of whom died in WWI.

It was paid for by public subscription, designed and made by Messrs William Morris & Co of Merton Abbey, and dedicated in 1921.



Fundraising event – Saturday 15th June – Promise Auction at The Down to raise funds for protection for the Stained Glass window and repairs to its stonework.

All Promises donated will be very much appreciated!

Neenton Fete and Duck Race – Saturday 14th September

All Saints' Tote – February

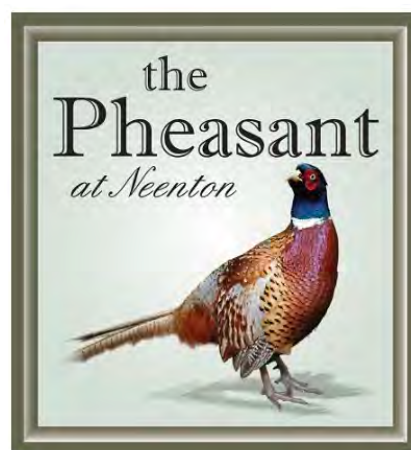
- 1st prize – Jeremy Cale
- 2nd prize – Sue Teague

Dates for your Diary – don't forget:

Sunday 10th March – Mothering Sunday – please ring for table bookings!

Friday 29th March – Good Friday Evening – fish supper celebrating different fish dishes.

Monday 1st April – Easter Monday – live music with “The Beautiful Ways” – 5:00pm



Please call 01746-787955 or email info@pheasantatneenton.co.uk to discuss times and your requirements or book direct on the website.

Opening times



Wednesday / Thursday – 12 noon – 3pm, 6pm – 11pm

Friday / Saturday – 12 noon – 11pm

Sunday lunch 12 noon – 4.30pm

Why sing??

Revd David Poyner offers this insight into the effects and benefits of singing!

One Sunday, the vicar, Pat Brock, preached on the valley of the dry bones; the prophet Ezekiel has a vision of a valley full of scattered human bones that miraculously come together to become again living people. Pat was a marvellous preacher and he finished his vivid description of this with a detail of his own; "I know, that once it had happened, there would be singing".

Pat was drawing on his own experience as a soldier in the "Desert Rats", the 8th Army that fought in North Africa in the Second World War. He had been in the great battles, for four days he had been adrift in boat, escaping the advancing German army. Pat knew how people respond to crisis, death and danger.

Singing is an important part of that; it releases emotions, binds us to others. Through the music, it communicates in ways that spoken words alone cannot, it connects those singing. There is no such thing as a person who cannot sing; some may be better able to hold a tune than others, but we all can make our own music when we open our mouths and that is precious.

We sing hymns in church for a reason. There have been many services where the only thing that has spoken to me has been the hymns. We of course, do not need to go to church to sing; just go to a football match to see the power of singing. And in church, we do not restrict singing to services. Some churches host community choirs, where people can sing all kinds of music, simply for the joy of singing.

In our local churches, we have the **Daddy's Hat** events. From Spring to Autumn, usually on the third Saturday of the month, for an hour from 3pm, local musicians will come to one of our churches to perform. They do so for the joy of making music. And at all those events, we sing together; it may be a hymn, something from Leonard Cohen or the sounds of sixties; it has even been "Just one cornetto". It really does matter. It uplifts all of us who take part. Just sing.

Daddy's Hat returns!

Yes, on the third Saturday of each month during the good weather! At 3:00 pm, for about an hour, and often followed with some very light refreshment, a chance to meet and chat and enjoy churches with which we may not be familiar and which can be full of wonderful things.

Here are the first three dates for 2024:

- **16th March – Aston Botterell** – welcome return of the brilliant Cleve Liberty Band (Marcia, Ami, Penny & Paul) seen here performing at Claverley last summer) plus Samuel Cooper (see WN April 2022).



- **20th April – St Peter's Chelmarsh – Deborah Rose**

- **18th May – Neenton** – artists to be announced in April WN, and the event will make a contribution to the All Saints' window fund (see page 13).



"...a Welsh singer / songwriter whose emotive, timeless voice has been described by folk legend Judy Collins as 'one of the finest I've heard' "

<https://www.deborahrose.co.uk>

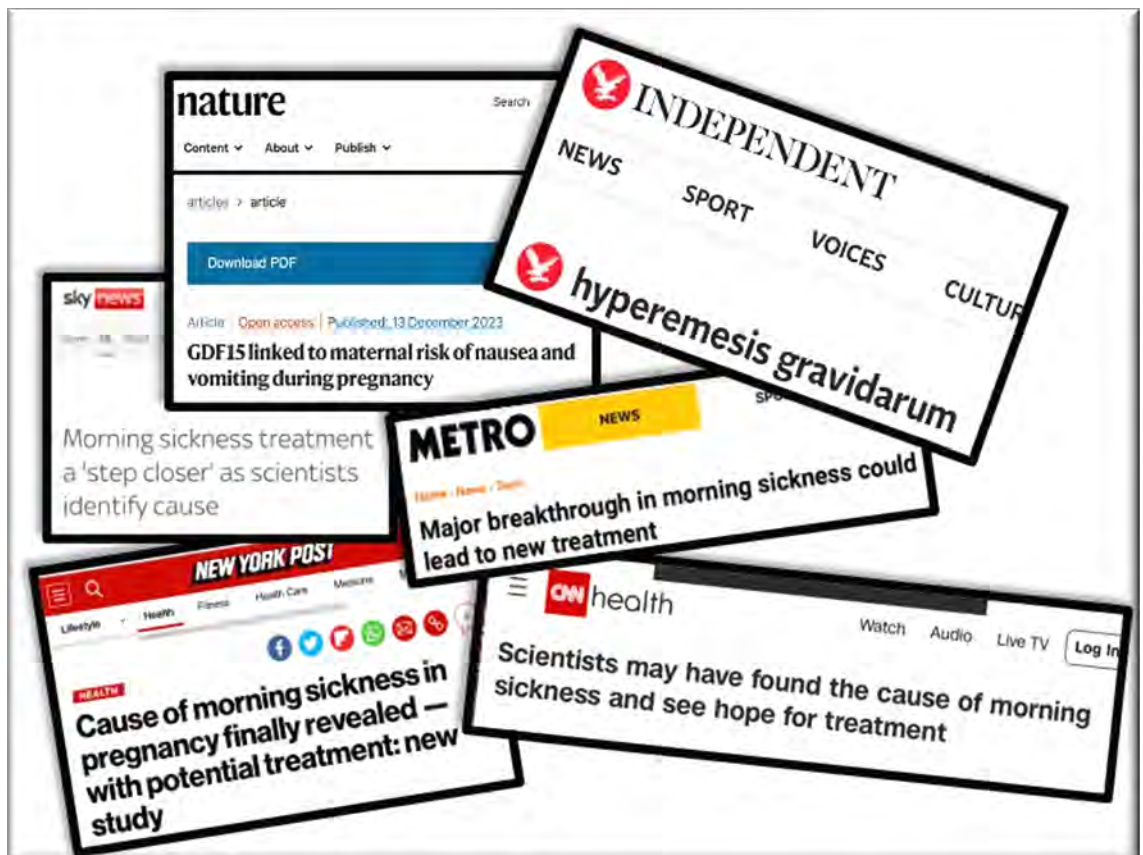
Molecule of the month - GDF15



A hormone is a chemical messenger that allows one part of the body to communicate with another. It is a chemical that is transported in the blood. We have known about hormones since the 19th century and most people will be familiar with examples such as insulin. However, new hormones are still being discovered and new functions of old hormones are being uncovered.

One of the most recent hormones to be discovered is known as GDF15. As this stands for growth differentiation factor 15, you may understand why it is usually abbreviated. GDF15 is produced in many places in the body and often just has actions close to where it is made. Technically when this happens is acting as a type of messenger called an autocrine, rather than a hormone which acts some distance from its site of production. It seems to be a protective factor that helps the body to fight infection. However, in some situations it does act as a hormone; it can activate cells in the brain to reduce food intake and body weight.

GDF15 is unusual it can be produced by the growing foetus in the womb and it sends signals to the pregnant mother to ensure her body acts to nurture the foetus. It is an important player in pregnancy, to ensure that at the end, a healthy baby is born. Of course, one of the common features in pregnancy is sickness; around



two thirds of mothers will experience this. Normally this is mild, but in something like 1% of pregnancies a condition called hyperemesis gravidarum (HG) develops, where the vomiting is severe and can result in hospitalisation. New research has linked this to GDF15. It seems that women who suffer from severe vomiting normally have low levels of GDF15 prior to pregnancy. When the foetus starts producing GDF15, the cells in the brain that respond to this are very sensitive to the hormone and become over-activated. By contrast, those women who had higher levels of GDF15 before pregnancy will have adapted to the hormone and will not respond in such a drastic way to a further elevation. There is some evidence that in women who develop serious hyperemesis gravidarum, the foetuses may be genetically programmed to produce large amounts of GDF15.

The research opens new ways to treat severe vomiting in pregnancy, perhaps by adding drugs that will stop GDF15 from acting. We would need to be sure that these agents did not leave women more vulnerable to infection, as that is one of the main functions of GDF15. This is likely to be explored in further research.

DRP

The Severn Valley Group of Parishes



Severn Valley Benefice

Rector: Revd Kina Robertshaw

Revkinarobertshaw@gmail.com

~

Revd David Poyner, Associate Minister

Tel 01562 68638 (home) or 0121 204 3997 (work); email

D.R.Poyner@aston.ac.uk

St Mary, Highley CHURCHWARDEN Canev Clayton	St Mary, Billingsley CHURCHWARDEN Vacant	St Peter, Chelmarsh CHURCHWARDEN Vacant	St Bartholomew, Glazeley CHURCHWARDEN Laura Jones – 07714-432836, laura@laj.me.uk
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Glazeley News

Services at St Bartholomew's Church

- ✝ Sunday 17th March, Holy Communion at 10:00am
- ✝ Palm Sunday 24th March – we hope to support Chetton at their Group Holy Communion service, 10:00am
- ✝ Easter Sunday, 31st March – Holy Communion at 11:00am

Revd David Poyner – Tel 01562-68638

Email D.R.Poyner@aston.ac.uk

**Glazeley & Deuxhill: St Bartholomew
- A Church Near You**

Marion Corfield – Tel 01746-764585

Marion.corfield@talktalk.net

Work continues to maintain the church building. We have a couple of ideas of how to fix the floor that has rotted at the back of the church. We could replace with a wooden floor, as at present but with floorboards not chipboard and carpet and with better ventilation to stop the rot happening again. The other option would be a solid concrete floor covered with either tiles or floorboards. We are currently looking to find the appropriate architect to draw up the specifications at a reasonable budget. We have also had a visit from an electrician who will repair the wall heaters; these seem to be operating under half their capacity, where they work at all. It is hardly surprising the church is cold.

Breakfast at The Down!	9:00am Saturday 16th March £8	All profits to local charities – so PLEASE BRING LOTS OF CASH!!
Please pre-book with Marion on	01746-764585 or 07918-559043	



For railway enthusiasts! Lyn Parnaby has donated four models of the **railway trucks** that used to serve Billingsley Colliery. These have been divided into two sets and both put in display cases with an inscription commemorating the workers of Billingsley Colliery. One is in Billingsley church and the other is in Glazeley.

Billingsley News

The Revd David Poyner writes:

We are still in the period of our winter services, when we just have one Holy Communion a month, at 8am on the fourth Sunday of the month. Numbers have been increasing at this, which is encouraging and we have a small but enthusiastic band of volunteers who clean the church before the service. It was very encouraging to read a comment in the visitor book, praising the church for being so well looked-after; many thanks to all those who do the work!

Our work at Billingsley is made much easier by the efforts of the **St Mary's 100 Club**. This was introduced by our former treasurer, Sue Bates; for £4 a month, people get a number which is entered into a monthly draw. The takings are split equally between three prizes and income used to maintain the church and also for community events. We have used this to pay to repair loose tiles and pointing around the roof; essential work to keep the building weather-proof. It has also been used to create flower beds in the church, to pay for the Platinum Jubilee party and refreshments at the open-air carol singing at Lincoln Fields. If you would like a number, please contact me.

We will have a service at 8am on Easter Sunday morning, 31st March, when we will empty the Easter Sepulchre, the wall tomb which was at the centre of the medieval Easter day celebrations in Billingsley. In this, we will be following in the footsteps of Billingsley folk for the last 700 years.

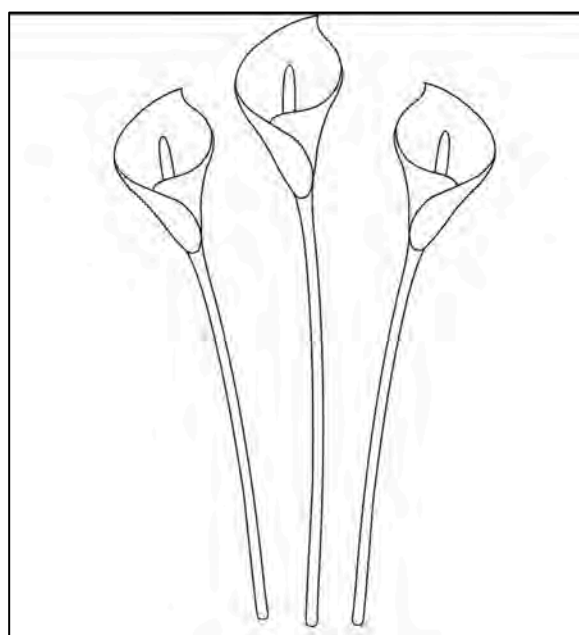
[Billingsley: St Mary - A Church Near You](#)
[\(20+\) St Mary's Billingsley | Bridgnorth | Facebook](#)

David Poyner – Associate Minister
 Tel 01562-68638 or 0780-100-9693

email D.R.Poyner@aston.ac.uk

Chelmarsh and Highley

We have no updates from Chelmarsh or Highley this month, but we wish them all a very happy and blessed Easter.



Brown Clee Medical Practice – updates

BCMP Community Group Public Update - January 2024

The BCMP Community Group Committee would like to wish all the patients of the Brown Clee Medical Practice a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous 2024. We would like to especially like to thank all those patients who came to the various Roadshows. Your participation and feedback has made an invaluable contribution to the initiative.

We're delighted to see there is clearly a great deal of support for the path the Group is taking. The review of the comments received at the Roadshows indicates almost 90% of attendees were "very happy" with the approach being taken.

A similar number supported the features proposed for the new "incorporated" Community Benefit Society (CBS) needed to own the premises. The CBS model meets the criteria of being community-owned, for community benefit and not-for-profit, while being able to issue community shares and, if so decided, to have charitable status.

There was a great deal of interest in being able to invest in 'community shares' as well as to make donations or loans. The indications people gave on the forms they completed at the end of the roadshow about the extent of financial support they would be willing to provide gives us real confidence that, together with grants obtainable to support community investment, we will be able to raise the sums of money necessary to purchase the premises and equip them for the future.

One final piece of feedback received from some of those attending the Roadshows suggests there is sometimes confusion between the roles of the BCMP Community Group and the Brown Clee Medical Practice Patient Group (PPG), currently chaired by Tina Ranson. Both groups recognise this and may issue a joint statement in early 2024 to further add clarity. However, our new Community Benefit Society will have a new name and will supersede the BCMP Community Group and this should help in differentiating the activities going forward.

The Community Group will be soon at the stage where it requires funds so that it can meet the fees associated with the forming of a legal entity. In the first instance we have requested a small grant from each of the Parish Councils within the surgery catchment area. If this request does not raise the required amounts then we will look to organising some fund raising events in the spring.

The BCMP Community Group will be holding an event, provisionally 9th June 2024 and will be at Pam's Pools in Underton. Pam Yuille has kindly offered the venue for the event and we thank her for her generosity. The date will be confirmed early next year. In addition it is hoped that there will be an "open garden" event kindly hosted by Bob Browning in July 2024.

A small group of patients from Ditton Priors have suggested an event to raise awareness of the initiative by organising a "Climb Everest" walk to the top of Brown Clee. The idea being that if the required number of people participate it would be the equivalent of climbing Everest. The Group wholly supports this and we look forward to this event in the autumn of 2024.

The next milestone of registering the incorporated legal entity, CBS, should conclude during the first quarter of this year and this will be announced once completed. Many thanks for your continued interest and support.



Dear Patients,

As some of you may be aware, Brown Clee Medical Practice will shortly be entering a period of change following the news that Dr Railton will be retiring in the next couple of months and sadly leaving the practice.

We would like to take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks to Dr Railton for the many years of service and support to the local community.

We would also like to reassure patients that GP services will be continuing and that the same great care will be provided by our General Practice team during this period.

Dr Bassett has confirmed his intention to continue practicing as a GP and, as part of future planning for the practice, is now looking at several possible options and proposals.

In addition to this, a partnership to support Brown Clee Medical Practice over the coming months has been established. This will include representatives from the South-East Shropshire Primary Care Network (PCN), NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire Council.

The partnership will be working with the Brown Clee Patient Participation Group (PPG) and other interested parties within the community during this period to ensure the continuity of GP services in the area, as well as a smooth transition for any necessary change.

During this period of planning, there may be some new faces in practice who will be working with the team as extra support. These will be healthcare professionals of different specialisms who can assist with appointments and ensure that patients get the help they need in the quickest amount of time.

To keep you updated on any progress, we will be sharing information via the 'Brown Clee Medical Practice – patient page' Facebook account and to all members of the PPG via email lists and the wider community dissemination network. If you would like to get more involved in this work, please contact the PPG by emailing: tina.ranson@outlook.com.

We know there has already been a great amount of interest in the future of the practice and we would like to thank you for your support so far. We will keep you updated on our progress over the coming months.

Kind regards,

Brown Clee Medical Practice, South-East Shropshire Primary Care Network (PCN),
NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire Council.

Patient Participation Group Meeting – 20th February

The warmest good wishes from the Patient Participation Group were given to Dr Railton for her forthcoming retirement as a Partner in the Brown Clee Medical Practice. She also received a glorious and very fragrant floral arrangement from the PPG Interim Committee, and a beautiful hand-turned wood fruit bowl from an appreciative patient, plus a rendering of 'for she's a jolly good doctor' from the audience of nearly 100 patients - a 'full house' for Ditton Priors Village Hall.



Dr Railton

PPG chair Tina Ranson hiding, and hiding behind, Dr Railton's wonderful flowers in DPVH kitchen in readiness for her presentation!



Nina and Clare from the Practice Dispensary gave an informative talk on their work and how the dispensary operates, which was very well received. They, together with Dr Railton and Practice Manager Vicki Brassington provided updates on future plans for the practice resulting from retirements, current policy on 'out of area' patients, hearing views and answering questions from the floor and explaining matters which are not necessarily clear from the patients' point of view. It is hoped that the PPG can hear from other Practice teams at future meetings.

A patient-wide collection for a leaving gift for Dr Railton is open until 22nd March, with cash collection pots in the Surgeries at Ditton Priors and Stottesdon, and a dedicated bank account for online payments (please email browncleppg@gmail.com for bank account details).

The next PPG meeting will be on Tuesday 21st May at Ditton Priors Village Hall (*please remember to book your seat in advance!*) when, amongst other business, PPG members will be invited to endorse the new Constitution that has been in preparation by the Interim Committee for several months now. The Constitution will provide a clear and democratic mechanism for the running of the PPG, and in particular for election of its Committee at each AGM, which could then be used at the **AGM planned for October 2024**, when the Interim Committee will stand down.

Don't forget that all patients of Brown Clee Medical Practice are automatically members of its PPG, and welcome (subject to space!!) to attend the Open Meetings and the AGM. If you want to receive information from the PPG and are not yet on the mailing list, then please either contact the Committee as below, or join the "Brown Clee Medical Practice – Patient Page" on Facebook.

Finally - **the PPG now has its own email address**, which members can use at any time to contact the Committee, for information, or on matters of concern, or to express views. Email browncleppg@gmail.com or telephone 01584 878707. We look forward to hearing from you!

The Stottesdon Group of Parishes

Rector: *post vacant* so for the coming months please contact the churchwardens as below

St Mary, Stottesdon CHURCHWARDEN Clare Tibbits: 01746-718007	St Giles, Farlow CHURCHWARDENS Nigel Savage-Bailey - 07989-308599	Holy Trinity, Sidbury CHURCHWARDEN Andrew Sierakowski - 07934-714149
St Mary, Cleeton St Mary CHURCHWARDEN Sue Dolphin: - 01584 890583	St John, Middleton Scriven CHURCHWARDEN - vacant – so contact Parish Rep Ann Constable	St Michael, Silvington CHURCHWARDEN - vacant – so contact Parish Rep Katie Hickman
<i>In an emergency, please call Rev Joe Simons (01746-464276) for advice.</i>		

February message

Keeping the Show on the Road during the vacancy – part 5

Six months into the interregnum in our six parishes, there is much activity ‘behind the scenes’ as the recruitment process for our new rector is actively underway:

- ⇒ the Adverts were published; then applications closed at the end of February.
- ⇒ the selection processes – shortlisting and interviews – are top of a busy agenda in March, with our reps involved alongside Bishop Richard and Archdeacon Fiona.
- ⇒ we are on track, if all goes smoothly, for the Rector’s planned licensing in July.

With Easter almost as early in the calendar as it can be, March is a busy month in the churches, with Mothering Sunday and then the liturgies of Palm Sunday, and Holy Week as we reflect on the Crucifixion and, on Easter Day, the Resurrection.

So as we continue to strive for a flourishing Christian presence in our parishes, the two schools and in the wider communities we serve, let’s all take time-out to:

- ✚ celebrate and support the volunteers who work so hard to sustain the church here – the Churchwardens and members of the PCC’s;
and to
- ✚ thank the volunteers (the visiting clergy) who are routinely and willingly facilitating our Sunday worship, and Revd Joe Simons for being ‘next door’.

and, above all, have a blessed and very Happy Easter!!

Clare and Chris Tibbits

Benefice website

We will be trying to keep this updated as necessary during the coming months, so if you need something added to it - or spot an error which needs correcting - please get in touch by email to chris@stottystores.co.uk . Thanks!

Stottesdon Benefice Group News

-	-	-	-
Sunday 3rd March			
09:00	MP with Revd Justin Bailey	Farlow	
10:30	Holy Communion with Revd Justin Bailey	Stottesdon	
Sunday 10th March - Mothering Sunday			
09:00	Holy Communion with Revd John Daniels	Cleeton St Mary	
10:30	Holy Communion with Revd John Daniels	Stottesdon	
Sunday 17th March			
10:30	IW with Revd Justin Bailey	Stottesdon	
1145	Holy Communion with Revd Justin Bailey	Sidbury	
Sunday 24th March – Palm Sunday			
09:00	Holy Communion with Ven Fiona Gibson	Silvington	
10:30	Holy Communion with Ven Fiona Gibson	Stottesdon	
Sunday 31st March – Easter Day			
10:30	Holy Communion with Revd Justin Bailey	Stottesdon	
10:30	Lay-led Service	Middleton Scriven	
Sunday 7th April			
09:00	Holy Communion with Revd Justin Bailey	Farlow	
10:30	Morning Prayer with Revd Justin Bailey	Stottesdon	
Sunday 14th April			
09:00	Holy Communion with Revd David Poyner	Cleeton St Mary	
10:30	Holy Communion with Revd David Poyner	Stottesdon	
-	-	-	-

Services for March in the Stottesdon Churches

During the interregnum there will be some changes to the usual service pattern - these times are correct at the time of going to print, but it's always worth checking on our website (A church near you: Stottesdon benefice) or with your churchwarden.

HC
Holy Communion

MP
Morning Prayer

IW
Informal Worship

From the Registers

There were no new entries to report as this edition went to press.

If you are, or someone you know is, in need of prayer or a visit, or Communion at home or elsewhere, during the interregnum, please contact your churchwarden (details above), who will endeavour to help you to arrange this.

Stottesdon News

Clare Tibbits writes:

Churchyard wreaths

Thanks to everyone who removed these before Lent. Just a few remain and may have been overlooked? Please help keep the churchyard looking tidy and well-cared-for by clearing away any tired or weather-beaten tributes. Thank you.

100 Club Subscriptions for 2024.

Renewal notices were sent out last month - be sure to get yours back to us by 10th March at the latest if you'd like to be entered into the "double-money" £100 Easter draw. Many thanks!!

St Mary's Heritage Project

Chris Tibbits adds

The 40 new 'video shorts' showcasing our heritage treasures and (in time-team style) taking visitors 'behind the scenes' at St Mary's are all signed off and are being uploaded to the dedicated "V BOX" wi-fi which will be available in church soon.

Keep an eye out for this and also for the new interpretation displays and self-guided tour booklets - funded by the Lottery Heritage Fund- which have now been delivered; as time allows, we expect to have the majority of this and a display of the archaeological "finds" from the recent building works 'up and running' for Easter.

Farlow News

Caroline Billson writes:

100 Club Winners - February

- £20 to Ken Howells;
- £10 to Jan & Steve Freeman, and to Sally Evans;
- £5 to Jean Oliver, and to Joan Evans.

Easter Village Market

We are having a stall for the Church at the Easter Village Market – taking place at Farlow & Oretton Village Hall on Saturday 23rd March 10:30 – 2pm.

Cleeton St Mary News

Sue Dolphin writes:

New activities and events in the church

NEW Knit and Natter every Wednesday in the church 10:00 till 12:00.

NEW Saturday Monthly Coffee morning in church 10:00 till 12:00.

100 Club Results

- £20 - Marilyn Wood No 29
- £10 - Larry Wilks No 88, Alan Price No 105,
- £5 – Keith Bowen No 89.

Sidbury and Silvington

Regrettably, we have no news this month from either Sidbury or Silvington.

Middleton Scriven News

Ann Constable writes:

Church Service

- ✝ **Easter Sunday** – March 31st at 10:30, service led by Ann Constable. All are most welcome.

Community events

Coffee mornings 10am – 12noon in church on Saturday 9th March. Everyone is welcome for 'Bring and Buy' cakes, plants or produce.

Quiz night - Saturday 16th March, 7:00pm in church

Teams of up to 4 people. £7 per person includes Lite Bite Supper. Bring your own drink and glasses. Raffle. Please book a place for your team with Donna Picken on 07724-125358, stating any dietary requirements too.

Burns Night celebration in January

A great success, and a very happy time was had by all! We hope to run this event again next year – see photos on page 24.



Addressing the Haggis

Sharing a taste of Scotland together

Community Noticeboard

Farmers' Market on 16th March

is "under and around the crooked spire" at St Mary's Church, Cleobury Mortimer, on the THIRD SATURDAY each month from 09.30-12.30.

Our Local Food Banks

Both are always in need of donations of foodstuffs and other goods, and of money to sustain their services: **and never more so than in wintertime!!**

Find them on Facebook or call 07960 285520 for BRIDGNORTH or 07519 885943 for CLEOBURY MORTIMER

Wheatland Diary

Fri	1	Mar	Flicks in the Sticks, "The Shawshank Redemption" Chetton VH, doors open 7:00pm – see page 12
Sat	2	Mar	Coffee morning, St John's Church, Ditton Priors, 10:30 – 12:00. All welcome, see page 10
Sat	9	Mar	Coffee morning, Middleton Scriven church, 10:00am – 12:00noon. All welcome - see page 23
Mon	11	Mar	Tea with the Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire – Chetton VH – 3:00pm - see page 12
Thur	14	Mar	Ditton Priors History Group – "Early Maps of Shropshire" – DPVH, 8:00pm - see page 9
Sat	16	Mar	Breakfast at the Down – with Glazeley Church, 09:00 - see page 16
Sat	16	Mar	Quiz Night – Middleton Scriven church – see page 23
Sat	16	Mar	Daddy's Hat at Aston Botterell Church – 3:00pm – see page 14
Sat	16	Mar	Glazeley Church Breakfast at The Down 9:00am – see page 17 for booking information
Sat	23	Mar	Easter Village Market – Farlow & Oretton VH, 10:30am – 2:00pm – see page 23
Mon	1	Apr	Live music at The Pheasant at Neenton – 5:00pm – see page 13
Sat	6	Apr	Coffee morning, St John's Church, Ditton Priors, 10:30 – 12:00. All welcome - see page 10
Fri	12	Apr	Flicks in the Sticks – The King's Speech, Chetton Village Hall – see page 12
Sat	20	Apr	Daddy's Hat at St Peter's Church Chelmarsh – 3:00pm – see page 14
Sun	28	Apr	Spring Lunch – 12:30pm in Ditton Priors Village Hall – see page 10
Sat	4	May	Coffee morning, St John's Church, Ditton Priors, 10:30 – 12:00. All welcome, see page 10
Mon	6	May	BRIDGNORTH WALK! – see page 10
Sun	12	May	Midland Oil Engine Club event at Lower Cockshutt Farm – see page 12
Sat	18	May	Ditton Priors Church Fete – see page 10
Sat	18	May	Daddy's Hat at Neenton Church – 3:00pm – see page 14

Shropshire Churches Tourism Group

Newsletter - February 2024



Membership subscriptions are due NOW. Yes it's year 1 of your 3 year membership, the year we collect the fees which cover the costs of the excellent brochure. We print and distribute 30,000 copies over 3 years, we run a website, a Facebook page and this year we are adding an Instagram account. We need the whole sum in year 1 (2024) as we pull together a new brochure delivered at the AGM in year 2 (2025). This is the major expense. We have kept the cost down for ten years at £60 (£20 per year is good value) but it will be impossible to do this again. We are looking for outside contributions to alleviate this for 2027. The third year (2026) gives the volunteers who run SCTG, a chance to look at the wider picture of Tourism and the part we play in the economy of Shropshire. The brochure lasts until the next production in 2028.

We will help if you have queries or need support in doing something new. We can advise on develop of trails for visitors or anything else you have ideas about. SCTG is here to support you.

sctgoffice@gmail.com

ABTA's 10 Destinations to Watch in 2024 includes Shropshire

"This idyllic English county on the Welsh borders has some of the country's most beautiful landscapes, towns and villages. Shropshire is not only a rural gem, it was also the birthplace of the industrial revolution." It's the only UK destination on the ABTA list which includes Aruba, Vietnam, Crete and Zambia among other places. SCTG is aiming to build on this in our work this year. Remember lots of people will be searching online for our county so make sure your website is looking good and if on Facebook keep posting. (ABTA= Association of British Travel Agents)

SCTG Website www.discovershropshirechurches.co.uk

Your excellent website is looking really good and each church page (if you are a member you have a page) is being checked and updated, ensuring all links are working. If you want to add more information, send info and photos to sctgoffice@gmail.com. Follow us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/discovershropshirechurches

The SCTG new Instagram account will be @discovershropshirechurches

Tourist Season starts early in 2024

Traditionally the Tourist Season starts at Easter and this year is no different, except Easter Sunday is the 31st March 2024, so an earlier start than usual. Make sure your church is ready. A tidy up at the back of the church, a visitor book open and a church information leaflet nearby with a few cheap pens available. A laminated sheet saying CHURCH OPEN DAILY and fixed to Dahlia sticks - available from garden centres and DIY outlets - and displayed clearly in the Churchyard is very welcoming too. Go to <https://www.discovershropshirechurches.co.uk/resources/> where you will find lots of ideas, from welcome suggestions, to information leaflets, to catering for children and a Church Open Daily sheet to download. Have you got enough brochures for this year? If not contact at sctgoffice@gmail.com - do not be mean with them - get them out there.

Please forward to PCC members and print out for church notice boards

Caring for God's Acre – the song of the Mistle Thrush



The Storm Cock sings in March

March is a great month to search for and listen to mistle thrushes. They start to breed in February and by March can be heard proclaiming from the tops of tall trees. Unlike other thrushes such as song thrush or blackbird, mistle thrushes are known for singing during stormy weather, hence the name storm cock. They are also called Throstles, an old word for thrush. By perching high to sing, they amplify their already loud song which can be heard up to 2km away. Compared to other thrushes the mistle thrushes' song is more monotonous and piercing but still a joyful sound to hear and a herald of spring. You can identify the three thrushes by their song and, once you have learned the difference, they are quite easy to separate. Have a listen on the RSPB website as a starting point.

Mistle thrushes favour parkland conditions with big trees and grassland, where they feed on a wide variety of invertebrates. Churchyards and cemeteries can be perfect for them having mature soils full of invertebrates, few or no pesticides and mature trees for perching and nesting. Many burial grounds contain evergreen trees which were planted during the nineteenth century, these are now mature and offer excellent habitat for thrushes as well as other birds and animals.

Mistle thrushes are currently in decline in the UK and churchyards and cemeteries may be important strongholds for them. We would love to know how many churchyards have mistle thrushes breeding in them, and if you hear one singing, this will be a male who is proclaiming his territory so a good indicator of breeding. Please let Caring for God's Acre know by making a record on iNaturalist, you can do this by recording the song or taking a photo of the bird. Alternatively, you can email wildlife@cfga.org.uk.

All the best,

Harriet Carty

Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor

www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk – individuals and groups in the diocese receive 20% members discount on all CfGA materials. Use the discount code diomem22.

Useful Community Contacts - updated August 2023

Brown Clee Walkers	Meeting Place for walks - Ditton Priors Church. 01746-712662
Burwarton & District Garden Club	Meets on the 2 nd Thursday of each month at 8.00 pm. Contact 01584-823723 for details of topic and venue
Burwarton & District WI	Contact the Secretary, Helen Groves, on 01746-712466
Burwarton & District Wives Group	Meeting 8pm 1st Wednesday of the month. Contact Debbie Jones 01746-712421 or Gill Severn 01746-712231
Buzzard community bus	Shrewsbury Dial-a-Ride – 01743-450270 Mon-Fri 09:30 – 15:00
Chelmarsh Crown Green Bowling Club	Welcomes old and new members. Contact Sue Jackman 01746-862850
Chelmarsh Friends	Meet every 2nd Wednesday 7.30pm Chelmarsh Parish Hall. Jenny Green 01746-862191
Chelmarsh Indoor Short Mat Bowling	Welcomes old and new members. The sessions are every Tuesday evening from 7.30-10.00pm. Further details Sue Jackman 01746-862850
Chelmarsh Jubilee Club	Parish Hall 01746-86525 Jean Davis
Chelmarsh Parent & Toddler Group	Every Tuesday during term time 9.30 – 11.30 Chelmarsh Parish Hall. Contact Pam Baker 07846-692323
Chelmarsh Parish Hall	Available for hire - booking@chelmarshparishhall.co.uk
Chelmarsh Walking for Health	Monday 10.00am except Bank Holidays. Parish Hall. Eleanor Haddon 01746-862884. 2 levels of walking available
Chetton & Gazeley WI	Meets in Chetton Village Hall on the 2nd Wednesday of the month 7.30pm Sam O'Sullivan 01746-868225
Chetton Folk Dance Club	Meets Chetton Village Hall, last Wednesday of month except August Tel. Janice Burton 01584-823802
Chetton Village Hall	Enquiries - Sue on 01746-789239
Chorley Village Hall	Available for Hire (fully equipped kitchen, digital projection equipment and large screen) contact 07726-763883 – NEW DEDICATED NUMBER DECEMBER 2022
Cleeton & Silvington V H	Zumba - Thursdays 6.30pm 7.30pm all year Ula 01584-890200
Cleobury North Village Hall	Enquiries to 01746-787093 please
Ditton Priors Art Group	Village Hall Wednesday morning (except Christmas) 9.30 – 12.30pm all welcome Various visual art forms eg Water Colour, Oils & Acrylics. Contact Gloria Blair on 07794-225532
Ditton Priors Book Club	Jenny -01746-712665
Ditton Priors History Group	Please contact paul.wilson8992@gmail.com
Ditton Priors Village Hall	Bookings - 07766 392 105 - dittonpriorsfalls@gmail.com
Domestic Abuse Hotline	Telephone Number 08448-044999
Fun & Fitness for 50+	Cleobury North Village Hall - low impact fitness programme working the whole body every Tuesday 10.00 – 11.15am. Contact 01584-823640
Knowle Sports Club	Second hand sales held every first Saturday of the month, 7.30am – 11am proceeds to Children's Football Field 01584-890644
Little Explorers Pre-School, Ditton Priors	Open Monday to Friday 9.00am – 3.00pm. Contact Wendy Lloyd 01746-712506 / 787549
Short Mat Bowling	Every Monday & Thursday 2.30 – 4.30pm at Cleeton & Silvington Village Hall, October to end of April. Pam 01584-89261
Short Mat Bowling – Ditton Priors	Ditton Priors Village Hall Every Tuesday afternoon 2.00 - 4.00pm Wednesday 7.30-10.00pm except the second Wednesday in the month when it will be Thursday at 8.00 – 10.00pm. Everyone is welcome - try at no charge. Contact Clive Jackson on 01746-718046
Stoke St Milborough Dance	Mike 01746-712774 - Betty 01746-77515
Stottesdon & District W.I.	Meets in various venues on the 3rd Wednesday in each month details from Helena Hale 01746 718012 or Clare Tibbits 01746-718007
Stottesdon Gateway Nursery	Pre-school, holiday club and wraparound sessions. An integral part of Stottesdon Primary School, Contact 01746-718769
Tae kwon-do	Chelmarsh Parish Hall Tuesday evening. Suitable for children & Adults. Neil Morris Thursday 5.45pm. 07969-996055



Bishop Richard in the House of Lords

The new Lord Bishop of Hereford made his maiden speech in the House of Lords on 22nd February 2024.

“Hereford is the smallest and most rural diocese in England. We comprise the counties of Herefordshire and the southern half of Shropshire, one parish in Worcestershire and 14 in Wales. Sustaining a diocesan infrastructure with such a small base presents its challenges. For every 800 people who live here, we have one church building, and three-quarters of them are grade 1 listed.

I am grateful to be the Bishop of Hereford, not least because of my agricultural interests. My first degree was in agriculture and forest sciences, followed by a master’s in soil and water engineering. Prior to ordination, I spent a number of happy years as an agronomist, advising farming clients in the south of England. I also married into a farming family, so the success of the agricultural sector and the health of the rural economy is a particular interest. I am probably the only Bishop on this Bench who can tell you both how to grow an excellent wheat crop and how to build a ventilated improved pit latrine.

Rural poverty is often hidden and can be affected by a wide variety of policy areas. It can also be concealed by statistics. Average income figures for the county of Herefordshire are unremarkable; however, they conceal a huge gulf between the wealthiest and the rest. Recent statistics show that 60% of the population were earning £1,000 a month or less. One-third of 18-year-olds leave the county never to return. There are few opportunities for a well-paid career locally.

The agricultural sector in my diocese is innovative and pioneering, and is one of our largest employers, both directly and in its support industries. However, smaller farmers are struggling. The transition from basic farm payment support to environmental land management schemes post Brexit, while welcome in many of its aims, has not been seamless. The gap in funding, particularly that which occurred at the transition last summer, added to the stress. Access to these schemes is more difficult for tenant and upland farms, in particular. Suicides in the farming community in my area approach one per month despite the best efforts of local charities such as We are Farming Minds. This regular tragedy reminds us of the importance of personal welfare, which includes the certainty that we all need in order to plan for the future. It is essential for farmers, and essential for the rest of us as they seek to run viable and profitable businesses which produce food for all of us. This is a public good.

Competitiveness must be a level playing field. For example, the UK-Australia free trade deal, the first agreed under the UK’s independent trade policy, opens up UK agricultural markets for Australian produce, regardless of whether or not it is produced to the same standards that are required by law of UK farmers. Henry Dimbleby, who led the Government’s national food strategy, said that a failure to adopt a “core standards” approach to animal welfare and the environment in our pursuit of free trade deals risks “exporting the cruelty and the carbon emissions abroad”. I urge the Government to be mindful of these risks in future trade deals.

I hope I may have opportunity to speak in debates on these issues in the future. Poverty is an issue that affects all communities, but in rural areas it runs the risk of being neglected in policy because of a smaller, more dispersed population. I look forward to being a voice in your Lordships’ House for the people of the diocese of Hereford and the thriving of our rural communities.”

With apologies to Bishop Richard, this is only just over half of his maiden speech. You can read the full version on Hansard: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-02-22/debates/10BA4305-14DE-4A6A-B10A-AFF8C848A71F/PovertyReduction>, and you can watch and hear him deliver the speech, and also see a transcript, on YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWPXAssb-hU>