

The Four Parishes News Magazine

BECKLEY
FOREST HILL
HORTON-cum-STUDLEY
STANTON St JOHN



Thirteenth century bellcote at St Nicolas, Forest Hill

May 2023

The editor writes



Spring is well and truly with us and summer is just around the corner, although with an overnight frost forecast again tonight, it sometimes feels a bit hard to believe.

Don't forget to check out the individual Village pages in the magazine (page 15 onwards) which contain details of a wide range of social and cultural events, all available on our doorstep and organised by local residents for the benefit of the whole community. If you are new to the area, village events provide a great opportunity to meet people in an informal way and of course you don't have to confine yourself to the village that you live in! Volunteering to get involved with things that particularly interest you is also a wonderful way to make new friends. It's all too easy to feel like an outsider if you have only recently moved into a village but you will generally find a friendly welcome at any of the events advertised.

If you feel the need of a quiet space, our churchyards and churches are all worth a visit. All our village churches are open during the day (see page 8 for opening times) and at this time of year they are often filled with displays of spring flowers. Our churchyards are also well cared for and are increasingly being managed with environmental considerations in mind.

Best wishes,

Julia

All contributions to this magazine are the sole responsibility of the author and do not imply or represent any official editorial view or endorsement.

Our cover photo

was taken by Peter Stutfield in May 2023.

See page 20 for an appreciation of the architecture of Forest Hill Church, dedicated to St Nicolas 850 years ago in 1272.

If you have taken a photo which you think might be suitable for the cover of the next magazine, please email it to 4parishesnewsletter@gmail.com

Benefice of Beckley, Forest Hill with Shotover, Horton-cum-Studley and Stanton St John

Vicar: Reverend Anthea Beresford

anthea@fourparishes.org.uk

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We welcome contributions for future issues, but please get in touch with the editorial team beforehand at 4parishesnewsletter@gmail.com to discuss any piece you'd like to write. Contributors typically live in the Four Parishes, or have a strong personal connection to the area. The editors reserve the right to reject any submitted content at any stage of the editorial process.

*Recent issues of the magazine are available to view online at
www.fourparishes.org.uk/magazine.*

The closing date for the June 2023 issue is 15 May 2023

**To advertise in the magazine please email JULIA
adverts.4parishesnewsletter@gmail.com**

News or notices for the individual 'Village pages' should be sent to:

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Horton-cum-Studley	Carol Welch 01865 358122 carol_welch20@hotmail.com
Stanton St John	Sue Baker 01865 351449 susanjbaker24@gmail.com

Benefice of Beckley, Forest Hill with Shotover, Horton-cum-Studley and Stanton St John

The Reverend Anthea Beresford is Vicar of the Church of The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Beckley, St Nicolas Church in Forest Hill, St Barnabas Church in Horton-cum-Studley, and St John the Baptist Church in Stanton St John. Anthea is supported by a team of voluntary clergy, lay ministers and churchwardens, whose details are listed below.

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Stanton St John

Vacant at present

The Four Parishes News Magazine has 10 issues per year and is distributed free of charge to approximately 850 addresses in Forest Hill, Horton-cum-Studley, Stanton St John and Beckley. It is funded by advertising revenue, which is used to cover the printing costs. We are dependent on volunteers to assemble the content, book and invoice the advertisers, compile and edit the magazine, collect it from the printers and distribute it throughout the four parishes.

Editor: Julia Stutfield

Assistant Editors: Jonathan Barker, Anthea Beresford

Church Services in the Four Parishes, May 2023

	St Nicolas, Forest Hill with Shotover	St John the Baptist, Stanton St John	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Beckley	St Barnabas, Horton-cum- Studley
5 May <i>Eve of the Coronation</i>	7.30pm A Celebratory Service of Prayer at St Barnabas, Horton-cum-Studley ahead of the Coronation of King Charles III			
7 May <i>5th Sunday of Easter</i> Special Services marking the Coronation	11am Holy Communion	9.30am Holy Communion	9.30am Morning Prayer	11am Morning Prayer
	4pm Children's Service at St Nicolas			
	6pm Taizé Service on Zoom			
14 May <i>6th Sunday of Easter</i>		9.30am Holy Communion	9.30am Morning Prayer	11am Holy Communion
	11am Benefice Zoom Service			
	4pm Messy Church at Stanton St John Village Hall			
	6pm BCP Choral Evensong at St Nicolas			
18 May <i>Ascension Day</i>	7am Benefice Service of Holy Communion at Studley Farm House, Horton-cum-Studley			
21 May <i>Sunday after Ascension Day</i>	11am BCP Morning Prayer	9.30am Morning Prayer	9.30am BCP Holy Communion	11am Holy Communion
	6pm Iona Service at Beckley			
28 May <i>Pentecost</i>	10am Benefice Holy Communion Service at Stanton St John			
	4pm Family Church does Forest Church at Bernwood Forest, Horton-cum-Studley			
	6pm Church Without Walls at Stanton St John Village Hall			

A letter from Anthea

Hi everyone,



Alleluia Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, alleluia! The stone has been rolled away, and the tomb has been found empty. The initial distress and disappointment of the first disciples has been replaced by their joy and celebration, from the time of their discovery, to the time they gradually, individually, met the risen Lord – as he was recognised having opened up the scriptures on the road to Emmaus, as he broke bread with them; as he stood amongst them in the locked room; as they saw the holes in his wrists and believed it was him, and so on.

The story might sound unbelievable, but we know it to be true – the fulfilment of the scriptures! Why would the first disciples have made up the story? After all, most of them suffered awful deaths for continuing to follow Jesus. We are fortunate in this country not to suffer persecution for our faith.



We are joyfully continuing our celebrations, as our churches still look resplendent in their Easter glory. And we look forward to Ascension Day, when once again we celebrate receiving the Holy Spirit, the comforter Jesus promised to leave with us, before ascending to be with his Father.

Before we get to Ascension Day, we have a wonderful event in the life of our country, the Commonwealth and indeed the world, to look forward to – the Coronation of King Charles III. I appreciate that for some, it is an irrelevance, but for many, it is a significant event. Anyone under about seventy-five will have no memory of the Coronation of the Queen in 1953, so this is a unique event in some of our lifetimes to date. There are various celebrations planned around our communities, shared lunches, talent shows, street parties etc, as well as special services in our churches (see page 8). It is an opportunity for communities to come together in joyful celebration.

The Coronation marks the formal beginning a new era. For the Church of England, we will have a new Supreme Governor, but Charles as our King,

will serve all his people, of all faiths and none.

I am sure many of us will be glued to television screens, whether in community settings or at home with family and friends on 6 May to watch the coverage. How much of the solemn parts of the service from Westminster Abbey will we get to see? There is much speculation – will the anointing of King Charles be seen – the Queen, whilst adamant that her Coronation was televised, indeed, the first to be so, requested that her anointing be private. These are solemn and significant moments.

Whatever you might be doing that weekend, I hope you have a lovely time. You might just be enjoying some extra time with family and friends.

As we think of Charles, we think of the enormous shoes he has to fill. Whether republican or royalist, many respected the Queen, and her service to her people. Like any human, mistakes were made, but the outpouring of love at her funeral showed how much she was loved by many, many people. News of difficulties within the royal family, as there often are within any family if we get a glimpse inside, has cast shadows over the occasion, but may these be put aside for this special day. My prayer for Charles is that he recognises his risen Lord, and that he calls upon him for guidance and support, and may the Holy Spirit guide him in wisdom and truth.

I wish you all a wonderful month of May. I hope the Bank Holidays provide you with special and precious time to spend with loved ones, relaxing, enjoying each other's company and having fun. Please do get in touch if life is hard and you need someone to talk to. Take great care and God bless you and your loved ones.

Anthea



The Reverend Anthea Beresford is Vicar of the Church of The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Beckley, St Nicolas Church in Forest Hill, St Barnabas Church in Horton-cum-Studley, and St John the Baptist Church in Stanton St John.

CHURCH MATTERS

All the churches in the benefice are open daily. Beckley: 10am-6pm; Forest Hill, Horton-cum-Studley and Stanton St John: 10am-4pm.

Thank you for Holy Week and Easter

I would like to say a huge thank you to all those who cleaned and decorated the churches and tidied the churchyards in the benefice so beautifully for Easter. It is so joyful after the appropriate sombreness of Lent, to go into the churches on Easter morning to see them looking so resplendent.

Thank you also to all those who played, sang, led, read, prayed, reflected and preached for our Holy Week and Easter services and other activities. It was wonderful to walk that journey with you.



Huge congratulations to Lydia Hinks for winning the Easter Garden competition with her papier-mâché creation this year.

Well done Lydia!

Celebration of the Coronation of King Charles III in our churches



We begin the special Bank Holiday weekend with a **Celebratory Service of prayer** ahead of the Coronation of King Charles III at **7.30pm on the eve of the Coronation, 5 May in Horton**. This will be a short service of hymns and prayers in preparation for the Coronation on 6 May.

On **7 May**, we will have **celebratory services of morning prayer and Holy Communion** across our churches in the benefice at the usual service times as follows:

Beckley:	9.30am Coronation Commemorative Service of Morning Prayer
Forest Hill:	11am Coronation Commemorative Service of Holy Communion
Horton:	11am Coronation Commemorative Service of Morning Prayer
Stanton:	9.30am Coronation Commemorative Service of Holy Communion

Ascension Day Service: 7am at Annie and Andrew Payne's Studley Farm House, Brill Road, Horton-cum-Studley

This service is the time when we commemorate the story from the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, where Jesus had been talking with his friends on the Mount of Olives, when suddenly he was 'lifted up' and a cloud took him out of their sight, and they were left gazing up towards heaven.

Once again, Annie and Andrew Payne have invited us to their garden for this wonderful service. They are again offering a generous invitation to coffee, bacon rolls or croissants afterwards, to entice us to the early service. This enticement has worked wonders in the past! All are welcome to the service and refreshments afterwards. There is plenty of parking on site.

Advent challenge and beyond

I hope you enjoyed reading through the stories of 1 Chronicles last month. As I forwarned you last month, I suggest we read 2 Chronicles this month. There are 36 chapters, so one a day and a further five popped in somewhere. Happy reading! Please do let me know how you get on.

Ongoing midweek activities on Zoom

We are continuing Morning and Evening Prayer and the Benefice Book Group on Zoom as detailed. Please do get in touch for invitations if you wish to be included.

	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Morning Prayer at 9am		✓		✓
Evening Prayer at 6pm	✓		✓	
Benefice Book Group at 7.30pm			✓	

Book Group

We will be starting a new book in May, but this is yet to be decided as we went to print. If anyone would like to join us, please do get in touch with me. All are welcome.

Please email me (Anthea) anthea@fourparishes.org.uk if you would like to know more about any of the above.

Home Group Study on the Gospel of John

The recently commenced study of the Gospel of John continues. It is held on Monday's in Horton-cum-Studley, beginning at 2.30pm. If you are interested in being involved, and have not already done so, please contact Annie Payne on 01865 351018, leaving a message if there is no reply, or by email at anniefpayne@gmail.com.

Prayers for Peace

As the war continues in Ukraine, and as God's peace is not present throughout the world, we continue to pray for peace. We meet for 15 minutes at 12pm on Wednesdays and Saturdays in May as follows:

Beckley	6, 24	Forest Hill	17, 27
Horton-cum-Studley	3, 13, 31	Stanton St John	10, 20

Annual Parochial Church Meetings

The dates of the Annual Parochial Church Meetings (APCM) are listed in each of the relevant village pages.

Revisions of Electoral Rolls

If your name is not currently on the roll, but you would like to be included, then you must complete a form. Forms are available in each of the Churches in the Benefice. To qualify for inclusion on the electoral roll of a Parish Church, you must be living in the Parish, or be a regular worshipper in that Parish. After the revision of each of the electoral rolls, an updated copy will be exhibited for inspection at each Church. Here is the timetable for the electoral roll reviews:

Beckley:	25 April – 8 May
Forest Hill:	18 April – 1 May
Horton-cum-Studley:	revision already completed
Stanton St John:	26 April – 9 May

For further information, contact the Electoral Roll Officer of your Church:

Beckley:	Gina Robson (01865 351637)
Forest Hill:	Pat Fraser (01865 875679)
Horton-cum-Studley:	David Slingo (stbarnabaspcchcs@gmail.com or 07850 004700)
Stanton St John:	Sue Baker (01865 351449)

Messy Church in June

Our June Messy Church will be in the **Churchyard at Horton-cum-Studley**. See page 22 for more information.

Children's craft workshops in Beckley Church

The next Children's craft workshop in Beckley Church will be on **Wednesday 24 May from 3.30-4.30pm**. We will be looking at Nature in the Churchyard, where we are planning to make bug homes to hang in the churchyard or the children can take them home, and to sow some suitable wild flower seeds.

A second workshop is planned for **Wednesday 21 June from 3.30-4.30pm** and will be looking at God of the Solar System, where we will be making solar system mobiles. The workshops are aimed at primary school children and are run by the 'Open the Book' and 'Messy Church' teams, and other helpers – but you don't need to have attended either of those to come and join in the fun. Children must be accompanied by an adult please. There will be light refreshments. Please do book in by emailing me beforehand.

Betty Dye betty.dye10@gmail.com

GENERAL

The Otmoor Flyer Bus Service into Headington and Oxford

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Mondays & Thursdays
Forest Hill and Stanton St John
Picks up at 10.30am in Forest Hill
<i>Bus stop in Powell Close and Stanton Road</i>
Picks up at 10.40am in Stanton St. John
<i>Bus stop outside the village shop</i>

Tuesdays & Fridays
Horton-cum-Studley and Beckley
Picks up at 10.30am in Horton-cum-Studley
<i>Bus stop is the bus shelter on the Brill Road</i>
Picks up at 10.40am in Beckley
<i>Bus stop next to red post box on the High Street</i>

Bus stops on the London Road in Headington and at the Town Hall in St Aldates

Return Journey from Oxford and Headington:

Picks up from Broad Street outside Balliol College at 1.15pm

Picks up in Headington at the main gate into Bury Knowle Park at 1.30pm

TRAVEL CARDS COST £15 FOR 10 SINGLE JOURNEYS, obtainable from:

The Village Shop, Stanton St John – Tel: 01865 351532

Malcolm Leeding, Forest Hill – Tel: 01865 872034

The Abingdon Arms, Beckley – Tel: 01865 655667

Jill Meyjes, Horton cum Studley – Tel: 01865 351496

Other wings

by Lyn Ebbs

What do you know about moths? They fly at night, they are drab, especially compared with butterflies, and they eat your favourite woolly sweaters. Actually only two of the 2500 UK species of moth eat natural fibres. Many moths are just as colourful and eye-catching as butterflies and you can see a surprising number of different species of moth before dark, some of them in our gardens. Like butterflies, moths have four different life stages. During their short lifetime they undergo a complete change, or metamorphosis. They begin life as an egg, hatch into a caterpillar, pupate, often within a cocoon, and emerge as adults.

The garden tiger is one of the dramatic looking moths. Its forewings are chocolate-brown with cream patterns. But if disturbed the moth displays its orange hindwings with blue-black spots. Bright colours in the insect world act as a warning to predators that the prey tastes unpleasant. Adult garden tigers drink nectar from flowers and fly in July and August. Garden tiger caterpillars, brown and black and exceedingly hairy, are often called a “woolly bear” and eat low-growing vegetation such as nettles and docks. The hairs are irritant and protect it from predators, such as birds. They can be seen from August onwards and the moths overwinter as caterpillars.



Another striking tiger moth, the scarlet tiger is a metallic green-black colour with white and yellowish spots, and bright red (or very occasionally yellow) hindwings with black markings. This rather exotic-looking moth can also be found in gardens. It flies in sunshine, particularly in the late afternoon and early evening and can also be found during the day resting on leaves. Its flight season is May to July. As a caterpillar it also feeds on vegetation such as nettles and brambles. It favours damp habitats like riverbanks and fens and, while most common in the south-west of England and Wales, this one was photographed in our garden.



Hummingbird hawk moths cannot survive the British winter, so migrate to and from southern Europe in autumn and spring. It can be easily mistaken for a hummingbird - the wings beat so fast they make an audible hum. But is smaller than any hummingbird as it hovers, probing flowers such as honeysuckle and buddleia for nectar with its long proboscis. It is hairy with a dark, white-spotted abdomen, mousey-grey forewings and golden-orange hindwings. While not the most colourful of the day-flying moths, this behaviour makes them very noticeable. They fly only during the day and can be seen throughout lowland Britain in the summer. The caterpillars, about 50mm long, are colourful. They have a green or reddish-brown body with white dots, white, dark and yellow horizontal stripes and a blue, yellow-tipped horn. They eat bedstraws; I once found one feeding on goose grass (cleavers).



There are six similar species of burnet moth in the UK but, as the name



suggests, the six-spot burnet is the only one with six red spots on each forewing on a background of iridescent greenish black. (The other common species have five spots.) The red spots indicate to predators that they are poisonous: they release hydrogen cyanide when

attacked. They fly from June to August. The adults feed on the nectar of knapweed, thistles and other grassland flowers, and females lay their eggs on the caterpillars' foodplants: bird's-foot trefoil. The caterpillars hatch and feed, hibernating over at least one winter. They emerge in spring and pupate in a papery cocoon attached to grass stems. This is the commonest of Britain's day-flying Burnet moths and is found throughout Britain.

Moths, like much of our wildlife are in decline, maybe a result of spraying of weedy areas and the general tidying of hedgerows. Recently evidence also indicates a link between lower numbers of adults and mild, wet Januarys followed by colder weather in February. The caterpillars succumb to fungal infections in milder, damp conditions.

Lyn Ebbs has lived in Stanton St John for 35 years and has been volunteering at the RSPB Otmoor Reserve at Otmoor Lane, Beckley, since 2009.

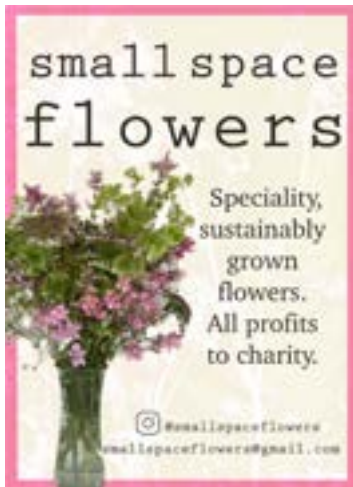
Thame & Wheatley Ramblers Introductory Walks

Thame & Wheatley Ramblers group will be offering walks to introduce people to walking with the Ramblers. They will start at 10am on Sunday 4 June in Thame Upper High Street car park: a 4 mile leisurely walk finishing with complimentary coffee and cake in Christchurch hall and a longer 6 mile one finishing with a complimentary soup lunch. In the hall there will be information about activities of the Ramblers and walking locally.

Just turn up on the day, or if you would like more details please phone 01844 213608 or visit www.ramblers-oxon.org.uk/thame-wheatley.html.

The Ramblers is Britain's biggest walking charity. Since 1935, it has been campaigning to keep the countryside open for all, particularly by preserving and improving the hundreds of thousands of miles of well-loved paths, tracks and trails across England, Scotland, and Wales. These paths were especially appreciated during lockdown, with many people discovering the physical and mental benefits of walking in the countryside.

Flowers for Good Causes



I am again selling flowers from my cutting garden in Stanton. This year all profits will go to environmental causes because of the climate emergency and the need to conserve the nature around us and people's access to it. I am offering:

- Jam jar arrangements for £8
- Mixed bouquets for £15
- Gift bouquet including my own hand-dyed ribbon £30

See the ribbons here: <https://crafters.market/shop/creative-ribbons/>

All flowers are picked to order and conditioned for maximum vase life.

Catherine Rye

Email: smallspaceflowers@gmail.com

Telephone: 01865 351469

BECKLEY

Beckley Church

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 5 - 11. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website www.fourparishes.org.uk.

A reminder that the **APCM (and the Annual Meeting of Parishioners) will be held on Tuesday 23 May at 7.30pm** in Church.

Beckley Organ Update

The work continues apace, with no new problems, and Clevedon Organs expect that it will be finished by the end of April. Meanwhile we are still using the temporary electronic organ that Anthony Hall of Clevedon Organs kindly lent us at the beginning of February when the repair work was starting. It has been wonderful to have the benefit of it all this time.

Beckley Garden Table

You may have seen that we have reinstated the Garden Table in the churchyard, just inside the lichgate. It's a simple way to exchange any excess garden produce! If you have any extra plants, vegetables, fruit, or produce such as jam and chutney, you can leave them on the table, and take anything you fancy that's already there. If you do take something, donations would be much appreciated. All takings go towards the maintenance of our beautiful church.



13 Middle Road, Stanton St John
01865 351532 / 07795 415819
stantonvillageshop@gmail.com



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"With two young children, we love our twice-weekly milk delivery."

To our valued customers, THANK YOU! We LOVE that you shop local!

Beckley & Stowood Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on - *date to be confirmed* - at 7pm in Beckley Village Hall.

The Annual Open Parish Meeting will be held on Wednesday 24 May at 7pm at Beckley Village Hall followed by the Beckley Village Hall Management Committee AGM. Any changes to the published meeting dates will be on the website www.beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk.

Bank holiday bins

With a few bank holidays coming up, SODC/Biffa will be emptying the bins on a different day to usual from 1 to 13 May and again during the week commencing 29 May. For details, visit the SODC waste calendar page on their website.

The Clerk's email address is clerk@beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk and Parish Council information can be found on the website www.beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk.

For information on Beckley Village Hall please see www.beckleyvillagehall.org and to enquire about a booking please contact the Booking Secretary, Mel Green, at booking@beckleyvillagehall.org.

Beckley and Area Community Benefit Society Ltd

More than a Pub program <https://bacbs.org/events>

The Beckley & Area Community Benefit Society (BACBS) has a great line up of events at The Abingdon Arms, Beckley to which all are welcome.

Coffee mornings

1st Wednesday of the month, 11am. Meet for coffee cake and a chat in the pub.

Pub quiz

1st Wednesday of the month, 7.30pm. Thanks to The Abingdon Arms, there's a free round of drinks for the winning team.

Community walks

3rd Sunday of the month, 2pm start. Dogs on leads are welcome on these gentle, approximately two-hour, walks. Email info@bacbs.org for details.

More than a Pub talks

Talks are usually from local experts and cover a wide range of topics.

Sunday 21 May, 6.30pm *Menopause: Is it me or is it hot in here?*

Everything you want to know about the menopause... Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist at the Royal Free and Beckley resident, Sapna Shah, and Peter Hintridge, Consultant Gynaecologist specialising in menopause and endometriosis, will answer key questions on the menopause. Why the sudden change? Why does HRT go in and out of fashion? What is HRT anyway? Does it work? And is it safe?

Sunday 25 June, 6.30pm: *Why is my car rubbish?*

Your car's performance is nothing compared to a Formula 1 car. And, what's more, F1 cars are far more efficient too. In this talk Beckley resident Terence Goad will explain why road and race cars are so different. The talk is aimed at the curious layman, not just petrol heads.

Terence is a mechanical engineer who has spent 25 years designing race cars, mainly for F1. He has never designed a "normal" car and has no intention of doing so.

If you missed any of the talks and want to listen to the recordings or would like more information, go to bacbs.org/events.

BACBS Good Neighbour Scheme

The Good Neighbour Scheme offers lifts to those with no other transport to e.g. the doctors or Stanton Village Shop, or to the Barton/Green Road roundabout, where there are regular buses into Headington and central Oxford. The scheme serves Beckley, Elsfield, Stanton, Forest Hill, Woodeaton. To request a lift, ring 07514 791910 or email BACBSgoodneighbour@gmail.com.

If you know of anyone who might need help, and perhaps does not know this service exists, please let them know. If you would like to volunteer, please email the above address.

FOREST HILL

News from St Nicolas

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 5 - 11. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website www.fourparishes.org.uk.

Thanks to Rosemary Waknell, Linda Hurren, Florence Muldoon and her sister Anne, Judy Brown and Pat Fraser, who all decorated the Church so beautifully for Easter.

A reminder that the **APCM (and the Annual Meeting of Parishioners) will be held on Tuesday 16 May at 7pm** in Forest Hill Village Hall.

Saturday Plant and Produce Stall

Always a welcome sign of summer, the Saturday Plant and Produce Stall is now up and running outside Lyttleton, Main Street. Home-grown vegetable and flowers etc are available for a donation, and contributions from your own gardens are welcome. All proceeds to St Nicolas Church.

Dates for your Diary - Cream Teas and Music at St Nicolas

Sat 24 June, Sun 23 July, Sun 27 August, Sat 23 September

3pm-5pm Cream Teas with live music in the church garden

5.15pm Informal concert in church followed by drinks in the garden

If you would like to take part in any of the concerts, please get in touch with Julia Stutfield on 07766 103427. We offer the chance to perform in a supportive and informal atmosphere and all styles of music are welcome.

Forest Hill with Shotover Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **Thursday 18 May at 7pm in Forest Hill Village Hall** and this will be the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council. Dates of future meetings can be found on the Forest Hill website www.parish-council.com/foresthillwithshotover.

Current agendas and minutes are posted on the notice board outside the Village Hall. Archived agendas and minutes can be found on the website.

You can contact the Clerk by email at theclerk@foresthillwithshotover-pc.org.uk or telephone 0844 884 3328, between 9am and 5pm.



St Nicolas Organ - Open Morning – Saturday 27 May

The organ at St Nicolas is 140 years old this year and has remained largely unchanged since it was built by Charles Martin of St Clements in 1883. Anybody interested in hearing, playing or learning about the organ can drop in any time between 10am and 12.30pm, when St Nicolas organist, Peter Stutfield, will be happy to demonstrate. All ages are welcome, but children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

Tea and coffee will be available. Ring Peter on 01865 876848 for more details.

St Nicolas Anniversary Celebration (1272 - 2023)

Our observant Assistant Editor, Jonathan Barker, emailed the magazine in March with the following message: "Cycling past the church the other day I noticed it was founded in 1273 - 850 years ago - not a major anniversary but probably the best we will get in our lifetime!".

Typically, those of us who visit the church on a regular basis had not really paid much attention to this particular milestone, but, thanks to Jonathan, we are now giving some thought as to how to celebrate it!

Meanwhile, we are delighted that David Radford from Forest Hill, who is working on an archaeological dig at Osney Abbey in Oxford, has presented us with a fascinating article about St Nicolas which you will find overleaf.

Forest Hill Church: An Appreciation

As a planning archaeologist I get to visit wet and muddy trenches for a living. This March I have been visiting an archaeological excavation taking place at the site of medieval Osney Abbey at Gibbs Crescent near Osney marina. Here, a new housing development will sit over a small part of the extensive medieval monastic precinct. Water pumps have been running around the clock to allow archaeologists to investigate before new piled foundations are constructed.

The area appears to have been part of the abbey from its inception as a priory in 1129. At this time the Norman knight Robert D'Oyly was persuaded to establish a priory by his wife Edith. With the foundation came gifts of estates to help sustain it. There remains some debate over whether this included the estate and chapel of Forest Hill, or whether the 'capella' was gifted to the abbey by the holder of one of the two local Forest Hill manors, Hugh de Tew in the 1140s. Either way, there is a historic link between the excavated remains and Forest Hill's beautiful 12th-13th century church.

At the time of writing (April 2023) the archaeologists had found a massive precinct wall at Gibbs Crescent, thankfully located beyond the footprint of the new development and to be preserved in-situ. The thick perimeter wall is in keeping with the recorded power and wealth of the Augustinian Abbey. This became an important banking and financial hub, whose church, now sadly demolished, was once described as 'one of the first ornaments of this place and nation'. Other exposed remains at the Gibbs Crescent dig include fish ponds seemingly relating to a 14th century change of heart when the monks decided that this part of the 12th century precinct site was too wet from seasonal flooding to support buildings and working areas.



In contrast the simple late Norman church at Forest Hill has survived and served as an iconic landscape feature for over 800 years. The chancel arch and relocated carved doorway in the later porch being some of the surviving features of Norman transitional architecture, i.e. the transition from Romanesque to Early English Gothic.

My favourite feature is the 13th century bellcote (see photograph on front

cover), supported by two large buttresses that were added just before the English Civil War. The church was originally a simple cell or nave, with the chancel likely added under the sponsorship of the abbey. The north aisle was added in the 19th century. The simple bellcote is in keeping with the modest status of the village. No doubt any surplus wealth produced locally was effectively extracted by the abbey. In fact, there is some documentary evidence to support the idea that the abbey did indeed 'neglect' Forest Hill: in 1296 the bishop was obliged to order the archdeacon to arrange for the proper serving of the church (i.e. by a priest). In 1520 it was noted that the graveyard 'was not well kept and the font and holy oil were not kept locked'.

Thus, whilst other nearby churches found sponsors willing to construct more impressive church towers, Forest Hill kept its bellcote which retains its simple beauty with two pointed-arch openings for the tenor and treble bells (dated to 1652) and with a smaller opening above for the sanctus bell. Various repairs are visible, along with putlog holes for scaffolding, but the integrity of the fabric is clear. The Oxfordshire Sherwood and Pevsner volume notes that stone bellcotes are relatively common in Oxfordshire but that 'the most striking is the massive gabled double west bellcote at Forest Hill'.

St Nicolas the Confessor has only been subject to one archaeological investigation, in 2003 by Oxford Archaeology before the northern vestry was added. This revealed 23 graves of 18th-19th century date with associated finds including copper shroud pins, bone buttons and jewellery. The remains of one highly decorated coffin were identifiable from a breast plate that commemorated '*Mrs Mary Mickle, died 20th Feby 1811. Aged 64*', the wife of William Julius Mickle, a Scottish poet, after whom Mickle Way is named. The archaeological investigations produced only hints of medieval activity; a couple of post holes that were perhaps used for wooden grave markers and 15 sherds of medieval pottery. Thus the question of when the first chapel or church was established on this spot remains satisfyingly unresolved and the mystery of this magical place remains.

Warm and dry on this well drained calcareous hill, I look towards Oxford and hope that the ground water levels at Gibbs Crescent drop before the archaeologists have to return. Hopefully they will uncover more of the story of Oxfordshire's most wealthy monastery whose temporal power and spiritual influence shaped the lives of Forest Hill villagers for generations.

David Radford, Forest Hill

HORTON-cum-STUDLEY

News from St Barnabas

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 5 - 11. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website www.fourparishes.org.uk.

A reminder that the **APCM (and the Annual Meeting of Parishioners) will be held on Wednesday 3 May at 7.30pm** in Church.

Coffee and Chat

Coffee and chat will be in St Barnabas church on Saturday 13 May 10am – 12pm. Everyone is welcome to pop down to share 10 minutes or an hour or so with neighbours and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee. Dogs are always welcome too.

Messy Church celebrates St Barnabas Day, 11 June 4-5pm

Save the date! All ages are welcome to join us for Messy Church with a Teddy Bear's Picnic in St Barnabas churchyard at 4pm. Please bring a picnic and chairs or blanket. More details in the June magazine.

Tiggywinkles Wildlife Hospital Box

Just a reminder that there is an ongoing donation box in the church porch for Tiggywinkles Wildlife Hospital at Haddenham. Items which are always in high demand are: towels, newspapers, stationery, tinned cat or dog food and kitten biscuits (meat-based please, no fish flavours). Currently they are most in need of newspapers and tinned dog food - thank you.

Horton-cum-Studley Parish Council news

Annual Parish Meeting

The Parish Council invites all parishioners to the **Annual Parish Meeting on 25 May at 8pm in the Millennium Village Hall**, Nibbles and wine will be available.

Speed watch group

The 20 mph speed limit through the village is now in place and the Parish Council is looking for volunteers to be part of a speed watch group; a minimum of 3 people are required. If you are interested please forward

your name to Alexia using the email hortoncumstudleyparishcouncil@gmail.com.

Photo ID for election

Local District Council elections will be held on Thursday 4 May. Please remember that ID is now required to vote in person. The following are suitable forms of ID, Driving Licence (with a photo), Bus Pass, Passport (passport can have expired, you must be recognisable in the photo), Blue Badge, Biometric residents permit, or a Voter ID card. **Voter ID cards can be obtained via the Government website, but the last date to apply in order to get one in time for these elections was 25 April.**

Information about the Parish Council, including dates of meetings, agendas, minutes and policies can be found on the village website: <http://www.horton-cum-studley.org.uk/>. Current agendas and minutes are also posted on noticeboards at both village bus stops. If you use email and would like to join the village email circulation list, please contact Alexia Lewis, Parish Clerk at hortoncumstudleyparishcouncil@gmail.com.

Millennium Village Hall

Playground fundraising

The successful Ceilidh fundraiser for the playground was well attended and enjoyed by young and old(er) alike. There was also a Fitness Fundraiser on the afternoon of 22 April, with sessions on Total Body Workout, Kids Judo taster, Zumba, Mindful Movement and Women's Self Defence.

Wine Tasting, 6pm on Friday 19 May

Professionally selected South African and Italian wines for summer drinking. Try before you buy for your summer stocks. **Bookings in advance with £12 payment to Derek Jewell 07845 147865 or Stuart MacFarlane 07906 216549.**

Tennis coaching for all age groups starts on Thursdays from 20 April, and on Saturdays from 22 April: bookings via Horton-cum-Studley Tennis Club (see page 25 for more information).

Just a reminder of Hall contact details: for Bookings hcshallbookings@gmail.com and for Treasurer treasurerhcsmvh@gmail.com.

Bryan Stearns, 9/2/1932 – 27/12/2022



Bryan was born on 9th February 1932 in Ealing. He was educated at a prep school in Windermere and then at Bedford school which was followed by two years national service.

After two years training with an accountancy company in Bedford he joined AC Niensens, an American market research organisation in St Aldgate's, Oxford. Three years later, Niensens moved to new premises on the London Road, Headington where he met a secretary called Ann Little.

Ann and Bryan were married on 1st March 1957 in St Andrew's Church, Old Headington. They bought a plot of land on Horton Hill at the end of the year. Whitecroft was built in 1958 and it was to be their home for 61 years. Their children, Paul and Lucy arrived in 1960 and 1964 and were christened in St Andrew's Church, Old Headington.

Bryan and Ann were always very happy living in the village. Bryan first took part in helping Mrs West and Gerald Coyne with the gymkhana for the Pony Club at Warren Farm. This was a charity funding event and was followed by the Otmoor Challenge.

When Bryan retired, he pursued his hobbies - first he took an open university course in the history of art. Painting (water colours), gardening, reading and travelling were his hobbies. He was invited to teach art history at Audley House and Ashford schools. He joined the Medley Sailing Club and was commodore for a short time.

Bryan was asked by Gorden Curtis, with many others, to help with the installation of the new church organ in St Barnabas where he was also church warden. Bryan served as a Trustee for the Horton-cum-Studley Alms Houses from March 1987 until March 2003, serving as Chairman from April 1992 until February 2002.

He organised the British Legion poppy collection with Ann for the Four Parishes for over 25 years.

Bryan was a loving and giving husband and father to Paul and Lucy. As expressed in the letters of condolence, he will be remembered as a lovely man, easy to talk to, being intelligent and interested and knowledgeable about many things and always interested in everything around him. And his lovely smile. I miss him so much.

Ann Stearns

* * * * *

New season at the tennis club

Horton-cum-Studley Tennis Club has opened the courts for another season. Everyone in the Four Parishes and beyond is welcome to join us, and you will be happy to learn that we will maintain the same membership fees as last season. When everything else is going up in price, we have decided to invest in keeping the fees at the exact same level, ensuring that we continue to provide an offer for people in our community to engage in sport and physical activity, even when the cost-of-living crisis is challenging us all.



We are a community tennis club, existing for the community and run by volunteers living in our community.

Horton-cum-Studley Tennis Club membership runs from 1 April 2023 through to 31 March 2024.

- Families: £80
- Adults: £47
- Juniors: £20

Later in the spring, we will organise social tennis evenings on Fridays. Join the club and be ready to come along when it takes off. When it starts, we will send a note to all members.

Also, we work with some of Oxfordshire's best tennis coaches and offer different classes for juniors and adults throughout the season.

Head over to our website to learn more about the tennis club, about membership and about coaching: <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/HortonCumStudleyTennisClubOxford>.

In Celebration of Philippa Badger: Lands End to John o' Groats

Editor's note: *Laura from Horton-cum-Studley emailed us in mid April about her brother James, who was about to undertake the LEJOG cycle ride with hopes of financing a research project into treatment of the type of leukaemia which killed his wife in 2022. James Badger grew up in Horton-cum-Studley, and attended Beckley School. His parents/relatives still live in the village. The following information is taken from James' JustGiving page*

"My wife Philippa was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukaemia (a Blood Cancer) on 20 April 2022 and very sadly died on 22 April 2022 while being treated with Chemotherapy at St James's Hospital in Leeds. Leaving three young children aged 12, 10 and 6.



We are raising funds for research into treatments of Acute Myeloid Leukaemia. Currently the survival rate for the type of Blood Cancer that Philippa had is just 10%. Research can make a real difference: through the work of BloodCancerUK the survival rates for childhood Leukaemia has improved from just 10% to over 85%. We want to support the same for Acute Myeloid Leukaemia.

With BloodCancerUK we will be funding a specific research project into Acute Myeloid Leukaemia. A 3-year fully funded research programme will cost £300,000.

In April 2023 to mark the first anniversary of Philippa's death I will cycle 1,600kms from Land's End to John o' Groats in just 8 days: 200kms a day, 2000m of climbing and around 12 hours of cycling every day for 8 days in a row."

For more information or to donate, go to <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/philippabadger>.

* * * * *

STANTON ST JOHN

Stanton Church

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 5 - 11. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website www.fourparishes.org.uk.

A reminder that the **APCM (and the Annual Meeting of Parishioners) will be held on TWednesday 24 May at 7pm** in Stanton Village Hall.

Nine Barrow Concert

Thank you for supporting the recent Nine Barrow folk concert in Stanton church which sold out! The concert was excellent and raised over £1,000. Thank you to Julian Money for organising the concert and to the Gresswell Environmental Trust for its support.

'No Mow May' in the Churchyard

We have not stopped caring for the Churchyard! We have decided to join



'No Mow May' in the hope of encouraging the habitat for our insects which have suffered a huge fall in numbers over recent years. We will be keeping the pathways clear to ensure access through the Churchyard and to graves, and will start mowing again in June. More can be found out about this national project on the BBC's Countryfile website <https://www.countryfile.com/news/no-mow-may-why-you-should-lock-up-your-lawnmower-on-1st-may/>.

Coronation Party Celebration, Sunday 7 May, 1-4pm

See back cover for details and note the request to RSVP either in person to Rowan at the village shop or via email to ssjvillageevents@gmail.com by Wednesday 3 May.

Monthly Coffee Mornings in Stanton Village Hall

Come for tea, coffee and cake on **10 May** and **7 June, 10.30am-12pm**. Everyone is welcome!

For further details, please contact Sue Baker 351449 /Sarah Coyne 358876.

Crafty Coffee and Chat Saturday 13 May, 10.30-12.30

Following a successful first meeting in April we are holding another meeting in May. Do you knit, crochet, embroider, sew, make cards, or do any other craft? Or would you like to learn any of these skills? Come along to Stanton St John Village Hall for a morning of chat, coffee and creativity. Bring along any work in progress, or just come for coffee.

The project to create a new wall hanging for the hall to commemorate recent events such as the Platinum Jubilee, the Coronation, and the SSJ WI's 100th birthday is now underway. It's not too late to join in!

There will again be a swaps table where you can pass on any unused fabrics, notions etc, and a yarn store.

Cost £3 to include coffee and biscuits (and maybe even cake!) Further information from Judy Nisbet judy@robertnisbet.com, 01865 35144.

Stanton St John WI

Stanton St John WI enjoyed an interesting talk on Penicillin at our Open Meeting. We were delighted to see so many visitors brave the April showers, and would welcome visitors to come along to any other meetings that might appeal.

Our next meeting will be at *7.30pm on Tuesday 9 May* in the Village Hall. **John Tyler's talk "Life in a Nutshell"** will explore the fascinating world of tiny things waiting to be discovered on your doorstep, from plants and animals to fungi and slime mould! He is an engaging speaker and highly recommended.

For any further details, please contact: stantonstjohnwi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk.

Stanton Parish Council

Next meeting

The next Parish Council meeting is on **Monday 22 May at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall**. The agenda will be published a week beforehand as usual, by email and on the noticeboard by the village shop.

To contact the Parish Council, please email the Clerk at stantonstjohnpc@gmail.com.

Film Night Saturday 6 May 7.45pm Stanton St John Village Hall

To celebrate Coronation Day, the Stanton St John Film Club presents:



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Doors will be open at 7pm, with a film start at 7.45pm. Before and after the film, delicious cakes and drinks are available whilst the bar will serve wines and Gin & Tonics.

Since only 60 seats are available in the Village Hall, please reserve your seats for the screening as soon as possible via Sue Baker (susanjbaker24@gmail.com) or in the Village Shop.

Tickets at £5 (cash only) will be sold at the door. Any profits raised will be used to enhance the Village Hall for future screenings.




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