

# *The Four Parishes News Magazine*

BECKLEY  
FOREST HILL  
HORTON-cum-STUDLEY  
STANTON St JOHN



Early morning moon over Otmoor, February 2023

*March 2023*

## The editor writes



This month I have finally taken the plunge and moved the magazine from my 'legacy' (now completely obsolete) desktop publishing software to a shiny new industry-standard programme.

To be honest, I have been meaning to do this for at least two years, and I am somewhat appalled to discover that I have had the new software sitting on my computer since last April! But change, however necessary, is often 'easier said than done'! I have had to take time out to run through a string of tutorials and re-learn how to do some basic tasks again from the beginning. Fortunately I have a daughter who is very familiar with the new software and she has been extremely patient with my constant questions and complete ignorance of some of the basic concepts!

I should also confess that I really didn't select this month as the best time to make the transition (it wasn't!) but I was forced into it when my obsolete software became corrupted and there didn't seem any point in continuing to battle with it.

One good thing about migrating to up-to-date software is that it opens up the possibility of collaboration with other InDesign users, so do please get in touch if you have InDesign and would be interested in getting involved on a voluntary basis.

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 Katie Watson in February 2023*

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.fourparishes.org.uk/magazine).*

**The closing date for the April 2023 issue is 15 March 2023**

**To advertise in the magazine please email JULIA  
[adverts.4parishesnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:adverts.4parishesnewsletter@gmail.com)**

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

<b>Beckley</b>	Vacant at present. Send direct to the editor.
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<b>Horton-cum-Studley</b>	Carol Welch 01865 358122 <a href="mailto:carol_welch20@hotmail.com">carol_welch20@hotmail.com</a>
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# 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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### Horton-cum-Studley

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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, March 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
<b>5 March</b> <i>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent</i>	<b>11am</b> Holy Communion	<b>9.30am</b> Holy Communion	<b>9.30am</b> Holy Communion	<b>11am</b> Morning Prayer
	4pm Benefice Children's Service at St Nicolas			
	6pm Taizé Service on Zoom			
<b>12 March</b> <i>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent</i>		<b>9.30am</b> Holy Communion	<b>9.30am</b> Morning Prayer	<b>11am</b> Holy Communion
	11am Benefice Zoom Service			
	4pm Messy Church at Stanton St John Village Hall			
	<b>6pm</b> BCP Choral Evensong			
<b>19 March</b> <i>Mothering Sunday</i>	<b>11am</b> Mothering Sunday Morning Prayer	<b>9.30am</b> Mothering Sunday Morning Prayer	<b>9.30am</b> Mothering Sunday BCP Holy Communion	<b>11am</b> Mothering Sunday Morning Prayer
	4pm Mothering Sunday Benefice Children's Service/Messy Church/Family Church at Beckley			
	6pm Iona Service at Beckley			
<b>26 March</b> <i>5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent</i>	10am Benefice Holy Communion Service at Horton-cum-Studley			
	3pm 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,



I am writing this on Shrove Tuesday! I wonder if you had pancakes. These days I think people have them because they rather like them and it is traditional, rather than to deliberately use up ingredients before the onset of Lent. I enjoy pancakes, with an old-fashioned squeeze of lemon juice and a sprinkling of sugar – but I am too lazy to make them just for myself. Sadly, I did not get to the lunchtime meeting where pancakes were on offer. And I was not cheeky enough to invite myself to my neighbours when I heard they were having pancakes! I hope you enjoyed yours if you had them.

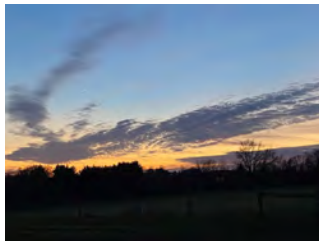
So now we are in Lent. I wonder, have you given anything up, or taken anything extra up, to mark the season? I have known many people over the years, who have given things up for the season. Out of interest, I have often wondered why. I think for some, it has been a helpful period of time when they could abstain from something and live more healthily, as they perceive it – giving up biscuits, or chocolate or alcohol, for example. It can be a ‘kick-start’ to a ‘healthy living regime’.

There have been years when I have given things up for Lent. I found these times quite testing – they were tests of my self-control, and will and determination, to keep going. I do not recall them as especially ‘spiritual’ experiences, although I think it was only through thinking about it being Lent, and the suffering of Jesus during his time in the wilderness, that kept me going. I gave up television for Lent one year. I spent my new found ‘spare time’ reading my Bible and spiritual books, and praying. If my memory serves me correctly, I treated myself to watching the rugby internationals though – so I was not overly pious!!

I am not sharing these with you to show off – I did these things for myself, to test myself, as a discipline for myself, to mark the period of Lent for myself, not to gain a badge of honour. These were personal things, and people only knew about them if they noticed I was not, for example, drinking or eating chocolate. These days I tend to try to ‘take something up’, rather than ‘give something up’, but I think it is for each of us to

consider for ourselves. What might be beneficial to us individually? For some, observing the period of Lent is a good discipline. I would encourage doing something, as otherwise the period passes, and it is no different to other times of the year.

Regular readers of my letter know that I love walking in the countryside with dear Bertie, my Labrador. It is a chance not only for both of us to get some exercise, but also a special time for me to think, to mull over things on my mind, to pray, and to marvel at God's creation. It is also a great time to bump into people and have ad hoc conversations, with us putting the world to rights as we chat.



I find there is always something beautiful to see, whatever the season, whether it is stunning sunrises or sunsets, frost on the hedgerows, dew on the grass, birds soaring in the sky, birdsong, livestock in the fields, or the herds of deer standing stock still, hoping not to be noticed. Maybe this Lent might be a time to marvel at the beauty of creation around us, to take that in, and be renewed by it.

I know life continues to be difficult for many. Please do get in touch if 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.

In addition to the church services listed on page 5, there are other activities during the week, details of which appear below. **All are welcome to join these activities. Please email me (Anthea) [anthea@fourparishes.org.uk](mailto:anthea@fourparishes.org.uk) if you would like to know more.**

### Advent challenge and beyond

I hope you enjoyed reading through the stories of 1 and 2 Samuel last month. For March, I suggest we tackle 1 and 2 Kings. You will manage it if you managed 1 and 2 Samuel, as it's a mere 47 chapters by comparison – so 12 chapters a week. It would be a great achievement, and gets us a step closer to finishing reading the whole Bible since the outset, so let's have a go. 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.

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

### Book Group

During Lent, we are reading *Let me go there: The spirit of Lent* by Paula Gooder. If anyone would like to join us, please let me know.

### Private devotions during Lent

As I said last month, there is a vast array of books available to help us engage with the season of Lent. Here are some further suggestions from me:

*Meeting God in Matthew* by Elaine Storkey

*Forty Women: Unseen women of the Bible from Eden to Easter* by Ros Clarke

*Journey to the empty tomb* by Paula Gooder



If you decide to read any of the books I have suggested, I would love to hear how you get on. If you read something else that you think others might be interested to hear about for the future, please do let me know.

## Mothering Sunday: 19 March

Our morning services are generally following the usual service pattern, but will have a Mothering Sunday theme about them. Please see page 5 for details of these services.

At 4pm, in Beckley Church, we are holding a joint gathering of the Benefice Children's Service, Messy Church and Family Church, where we are hoping to showcase some of the creations from the Children's Craft Workshop on Friday 17 March (see below for more details). We look forward to welcoming you to this more informal service.

## Children's craft workshops

By the time you read this we will have held the first Children's craft workshop for 2023 which focused on Lent. The next workshop has a theme of Mothering Sunday, and is being held on Friday 17 March from 3.30-4.30pm. It is being held in Beckley Church as usual.

The workshops are aimed at primary school children and are run by the 'Open the Book' and 'Messy Church' teams – 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. We will let you know of future dates as soon as possible. Please do book in by emailing me beforehand at [betty.dye10@gmail.com](mailto:betty.dye10@gmail.com). Thank you.

Betty Dye

## 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 March across the benefice as follows:

Beckley	1, 11, 29
Forest Hill	4, 22
Horton-cum-Studley	8, 18
Stanton St John	15, 25

## Home Group Study on Romans

The study group looking at the Book of Romans is continuing on a Monday afternoon at 2pm at Studley Farm House, Horton-cum-Studley. The book of Romans is a hefty tome and is taking some unpacking! The group is on the home strait, with three chapters to go, but new participants are always welcome. If you are interested in being involved, please contact Annie Payne by email at [anniefpayne@gmail.com](mailto:anniefpayne@gmail.com).

## An invitation to join the conversation: How Village Churches Thrive

On Wednesday evenings during March, we hope you might join us in Stanton Village Hall, meeting at 7.15pm for refreshments, ready for a 7.30pm start, finishing promptly by 9pm. We will be chatting about the important topic of 'how village churches thrive', as we aim to ensure our churches remain a vibrant part of our communities long into the future. Our conversations will be based around the book 'How village Churches Thrive', using the ideas in the book to deepen the conversation in our own context. Here is the pattern of our conversations:

- 1 March General introduction  
Extending a warm welcome
- 8 March Making the most of Life Events  
Cultivating fruitful festivals
- 15 March Using buildings creatively  
Caring for God's acre (the churchyard)
- 22 March Being the heartbeat of the community  
Celebrating our heritage
- 29 March Reaching the isolated and lonely  
Communicating effectively

If you cannot make every session that is not a problem. There may be some areas for discussion that may be of more interest to you.

If you are interested in joining us, please do get in touch with Anthea or Hugh Lee (contact details on page 4). We aim to ensure you have a copy of the book to read beforehand.



## GENERAL

### Hello from The Maple Tree in Wheatley!

A reminder that there is something for every family with young children at The Maple Tree Children's Centre in Littleworth Road, Wheatley. All our sessions are drop-in, with a suggested donation of £2.50 per family per session.



Monday: **Messy Mondays** at 10-11.30am

Tuesday: **Story and Rhyme Time** at 10-11.30am

Wednesday: **Baby Cafe** at 10am-12pm

Thursday: **Little Explorers** at 10-11.30am and Twinnies at 2-3.30pm. Also **The Maple Tree at Forest Hill Village Hall** from 11am-12pm

Friday: **Social Butterflies** at 10-11.30am

**Family Fun** at 10 - 11.30am, 3rd Saturday in month.

### 'Daffodil Day', Sunday 26 March at Shotover House

**Volunteers needed** for this fundraising event in aid of The Maple Tree and St Nicolas Church, Forest Hill. See page 17 for more information.

**Please get in touch if you can help us on the day as a Car Park Attendant, Ticket Checker, Refreshment Server or First Aider. We also need volunteers to bake cakes or biscuits beforehand!** Call 01865 2360700 or email [info@mapletree.org.uk](mailto:info@mapletree.org.uk).

### Stanton House in Stanton St John is looking for volunteers

If you have a genuine desire to bless others through the gift of service, **we are looking for help in the following areas:**

**Kitchen** - washing pots/pans, utensils, and crockery; cleaning kitchen areas; laying and clearing tables

**Painting and decorating** - skilled painters/decorators required to refresh our communal areas

**Housekeeping** - laundry/ironing

If you would like to support us as a volunteer, and you could commit to being available for a few hours each week, we would love to hear from you! Please get in touch by emailing [office@stantonhouse.org.uk](mailto:office@stantonhouse.org.uk).

Stanton House is a charity (Charity number: 275205) whose objective is the encouragement and refreshment of Christians in a retreat environment

## Aerial Hunters

by Lyn Ebbs

When I moved to Stanton St John 30+ years ago, the biggest bird I'd be likely to see in the skies over the village would have been a crow, a wood pigeon or the odd gull. Now raptors, birds of prey, are present in our skies; it's a rare day when I don't see at least one red kite; buzzards, too, have greatly increased in recent years. You need to make more of an effort to see a marsh harrier, another of the successes of the RSPB's Otmoor reserve. And, as I am typing this, our garden is getting one of its regular afternoon visits from a sparrowhawk.

These birds are all members of a big group of hawk-like birds of prey that hunt in daytime. Although different sizes, they share the same basic body shape of short necks, broad wings and longish tails. Their eyes are proportionally huge, giving them excellent vision. Their hearing is also good, but their sense of smell is poor. There is a noticeable difference in size between males and females, but it is the female that is invariably bigger.

They hunt a wide variety of prey, from small mammals and birds, reptiles, amphibians, to invertebrates. In breeding pairs, the parental roles differ sharply, the male provides for both the female and the young, with the female hunting in the later stages of nesting. The size difference between the adults may come in to play here as they won't be competing with each other by hunting for the same size prey.

Red kites, the most accomplished flyers of all raptors, are probably the easiest to recognise by sight. They are strongly patterned, graceful and noticeably fork-tailed. Even from a distance their angular silhouette and buoyant flight is always obvious. They are usually solitary hunters but will flock, for example, at harvest time when small mammals are easy prey, or in communal roosts in winter.



Buzzards are the largest species in our group of local raptors but with a compact shape: a short round head on a thick neck, a thickset body,

relatively broad wings and fairly short tail. In colour their plumage is typically warm brown above with pale underparts, but it can be very variable from almost uniformly dark to mainly white. They are mostly active predators but can be seen on the ground taking earthworms and, like red kites, they often scavenge.

Marsh harriers (the clue is in the name) are particularly at home in wetlands. They've nested successfully in the Otmoor reed beds for several years recently, having been missing from the county as a breeding bird for over 200 years. Here you will get the opportunity to see not just marsh harriers but buzzards and red kites, and can compare them for yourselves. Harriers are bulky birds, with a slim head and body, long wings with parallel edges, long tail and legs. They soar and glide with wings in a distinctive V shape. When provisioning the nest, the male calls the female; she flies out, flips over and catches the prey as he drops it. Called a food pass, this is quite dramatic to watch.



The sparrowhawk is the smallest species of our group and the one with the biggest disparity in size: the female is up to 25% bigger than the male. It's a fierce, dashing hawk that feeds almost entirely on birds, as indicated by its long legs. It's a woodland bird, preferring woodland edge, clearings and rides for hunting. It also hunts along hedges and shelter belts. It has rather short, rounded wings and a long square-ended tail. Its plumage is grey above and barred below, brown in the female, orange in the male. Its open flight is often described as 'flap, flap, glide'.



I hope to write about another group of raptors, the falcons, later in the year.

Many thanks to Otmoor regular, Malcolm Bowey, for the use of his photographs of the marsh harrier, and red kite and buzzard

*Lyn Ebbs has lived in Stanton St John for 34 years and has been volunteering at the RSPB Otmoor Reserve at Otmoor Lane, Beckley, since 2009.*

## BECKLEY

### Beckley Church

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 5 - 10. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website [www.fourparishes.org.uk](http://www.fourparishes.org.uk).

### Beckley Organ Update

The work on the organ is well underway. Don't be too shocked if you go into church, as it has been dismantled by the organ repairers, and those parts necessary, have been taken to their workshop for repair. The pipes etc. are all carefully laid out in the chancel, which looks a little chaotic, but is very carefully arranged. The repairers are optimistic that work will be completed in time for Easter.

We are delighted to have received a further £5,000 donation towards this work, this time from the P.F. Charitable Trust, for which we are very grateful. If you would like to donate towards this repair work, please do get in touch with Susy Jepson [susy.jepson@gmail.com](mailto:susy.jepson@gmail.com).

### Beckley & Stowood Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **Thursday 2 March 2023 at 7pm at Beckley Village Hall**. Any changes to the published meeting dates will be on the website [www.beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk](http://www.beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk)

### Have your say

The **Beckley and Stowood Neighbourhood Plan Consultation runs from 19 January until 2 March 2023**. Documents are available on the website ([southoxon.gov.uk](http://southoxon.gov.uk)), at the Abingdon Arms (during opening hours) and at Beckley Village Hall (during events).

### SODC Local Elections on Thursday 4 May 2023 and Photo ID

**At these elections, voters will need to bring photo ID with them to be able to vote at a polling station.** A wide range of photo ID will be accepted, including passports, driving licences, a disabled parking blue badge and proof of age PASS ID cards. You can still use your photo ID if it's out of date, as long as it looks like you. If an elector does not have an accepted form of photo ID, they can apply for a free voter ID document

known as a Voter Authority Certificate. The deadline to apply for voter ID for this election is 5pm on Tuesday 25 April. Information in respect of this requirement is available on the South Oxfordshire District Council website and via the Electoral Commission website.

The Clerk's email address is [clerk@beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk) and Parish Council information can be found on the website [www.beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk](http://www.beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk)

For information on Beckley Village Hall please see [www.beckleyvillagehall.org](http://www.beckleyvillagehall.org) and to enquire about a booking please contact the Booking Secretary at [booking@beckleyvillagehall.org](mailto: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 and cake 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.

### More than a Pub talks

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

### **Sunday 26 March, 6.30pm: *Placebos in Medicine***

Professor Andrew Carr, Nuffield Professor of Orthopedic Surgery at the University of Oxford, will talk about placebos in medicine.

### **Sunday 30 April, 6.30pm: *Eight Things I would like to see at The Ashmolean***

Former resident of Horton-cum-Studley and gallery guide at The Ashmolean, Anna Steven will talk about eight key exhibits and why you should see them.

*(continued over)*

If you missed any of the talks and want to listen to the recordings or would like more information, go to [bacbs.org/events](http://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](mailto: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 - 10. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website [www.fourparishes.org.uk](http://www.fourparishes.org.uk).

### How is Climate Change affecting our Gardens?

Forest Hill Village Hall, Friday 3 March at 7.30pm

Join members of Forest Hill Garden Club for a glass of wine and an open discussion to share experiences of managing gardens in changing weather conditions.

Which plants do well or die in drought, mild winters, stormy conditions etc.? Do call with questions ahead of the event and we can research some answers, or simply turn up and join in the discussion.

Prue: 01865 872034

Sue: 01865 87401

Gael: 01865 873319



## Daffodil Day at Shotover House, Sunday 26 March, 2-4.30pm

St Nicolas Church, with the support of the Shotover Trust who owns and manages the house and grounds at Shotover, is delighted to be joining once again with The Maple Tree Children's Centre in Wheatley to organise another 'Daffodil Day'. As many people from Forest Hill will know, Laura Spencer from The



Maple Tree, along with two regular volunteers from St Nicolas (among others), runs the Thursday morning Baby and Toddler group in Forest Hill Village Hall, and we have welcomed over 50 local families since these sessions re-opened in June 2021.

Last year's Daffodil Day event coincided with an afternoon of stunning weather at the end of a Covid 'Lockdown', which attracted an overwhelming number of people. This year we have been working hard to put measures in place to improve the traffic flow at the entrances and exits and we have arranged free off-site car parking at local schools, which we hope most people will use. The 400 bus from Thornhill Park & Ride is another convenient option.

Tickets can now be purchased online from <https://www.stnicolasforesthill.org/shop>. The cost is £15 for cars and £3 for pedestrians or cyclists. Children under 12 are admitted free. Please note that bicycles can be used as a mode of transport to travel to/from the gardens but cycling round the gardens is not permitted. Cycle parking will be provided.

**Advance booking is strongly recommended, as we will restrict the number of tickets available if the event looks like being oversubscribed. If you are unable to book online, please contact Julia Stutfield (07766 103427 or email [julia.stutfield@gmail.com](mailto:julia.stutfield@gmail.com)) and she will be able to sell you a paper ticket.**

Meanwhile we still need more volunteers to help with a range of tasks. Please contact Julia Stutfield if you can help us on the day as a Car Park Attendant, Ticket Checker, Refreshment Server or First Aider.

We also need people to bake cakes or biscuits beforehand. Please call Jane Walker on 01865 872399 or email [lyttleton@btinternet.com](mailto:lyttleton@btinternet.com).

## Esme Champ 1930 – 2022

Esme was a Forest Hill girl from beginning to end. The second child of



Bob and Marjorie Taylor, who lived in a small cottage in Main Street, she moved at the age of 8 to the newly built house, 3 Wheatley Road, where she remained until her marriage in 1950, to Ken Champ, from Stanton St John. She and Ken then moved to The Nook in Wheatley Road where Andrew and Claire were born, with

the help of Nurse Stevens, the village resident Midwife. Sadly Ken died in 1982, aged 53. Andrew and Claire were both married and living away, which left Esme alone at The Nook. This she coped with over time, enjoying the company of her dog and the love and care of her son and daughter and their families, plus many friends.

School was at Stanton St John, after which she worked for The Ministry of Food in Marston Road, followed by Nielsen's at Sandhills, where she met Annette Parrott (known as Anne), with whom she spent many enjoyable holidays, never venturing outside the UK, for fear of flying or sailing. The thought of the Channel Tunnel almost turned Esme 'green' with fear.

Esme had many gifts, including a brilliant mind for maths (one of her great-grandsons has inherited this talent!). Other gifts were knitting, sewing, gardening, cooking, especially coffee cakes, and caring for her family and extended family and a great love for her Church, Saint Nicolas.

After retirement, spare time was taken up with regular visits on the village bus to Oxford, meeting up with Anne to share their friendship, and working together to help run The Headington Cancer shop. Esme delivered the Four Parishes Magazine to her end of the village for many years and she hugely enjoyed collaborating with Jane Walker to produce the third Forest Hill Village Book "Memories of the 1940's."

In later life Esme sustained a left sided stroke, which curtailed her movement, so moving to a bungalow around the corner made things much easier. Carers visited three times per day and many friends helped to keep her

amused. Riki Grandi was a very good friend along with many others. She always wanted to know about “any news of Forest Hill?”, and she was especially excited when her neighbour, David, would check his mobile phone on “any house moves in the village”.

Esme was blessed with 2 children, 8 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren as well as many, many friends. Her funeral took place in a packed St Nicolas Church on 10 February. Esme’s wish was that any donations in her memory should be made to her beloved St Nicolas, and the generosity of her friends and family is greatly appreciated.

## Forest Hill with Shotover Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **Thursday 2 March at 7pm in Forest Hill Village Hall.**

Dates of future meetings can be found on the Forest Hill website [www.pariah-council.com/foresthillwithshotover](http://www.pariah-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](mailto:theclerk@foresthillwithshotover-pc.org.uk) or telephone 0844 884 3328, between 9am and 5pm.

## Spring Village Tea at Forest Hill Village Hall

**Saturday 11 March 3pm-4.30pm**

Everyone welcome to enjoy a cup of tea/coffee and some delicious home-made cakes whilst relaxing with friends and neighbours. Activities for children and music.

Dust off your cake tins and baking trays and bring along some cake to share.

If you prefer to drop off cakes in advance, please take to Ramblers, Wheatley Rd.

# HORTON-cum-STUDLEY

## News from St Barnabas

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 5 - 10. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website [www.fourparishes.org.uk](http://www.fourparishes.org.uk).

## Mothering Sunday

We shall be celebrating Mothering Sunday on 19 March. Come along to say 'thank you' to all our mums, grandmothers, helpers, carers, who give us love, help and understanding. Those attending will receive flowers.

## Funeral of Michael Kenworthy-Browne

For those who knew Michael Kenworthy-Browne, his funeral, will take place on Friday, 10 March at 12 noon at Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Church, 88 Wharton Road, Headington, Oxford OX3 8AJ.

## Coffee and Chat

Coffee and chat will be in St Barnabas church on **Saturday 11 March 10am – 12pm**. Everyone is welcome to pop down to share an hour or so with neighbours. No charge, donations only.

## Millenium Village Hall news

Work on a dedicated Millenium Hall website is underway, not only to raise the profile for potential hirers, but also to streamline the bookings process for what is a time-consuming volunteer role – thanks to Nick Venables for the initial IT outline. The revitalized playground sub-group has arranged a Ceilidh fundraiser on 4 March, which we hope will be well supported. Suggestions for playground improvements are welcome - email me ([s.macfarlane799@btinternet.com](mailto:s.macfarlane799@btinternet.com)). Thanks also to Pete Whitaker for repairs to 2 mysteriously damaged path lights – without his regular input on many issues, our repair costs would be substantially higher.

Just a reminder of Millenium Hall contact details:

For bookings bookings [hcsmvh@gmail.com](mailto:hcsmvh@gmail.com)

And for treasurer [treasurerhcsmvh@gmail.com](mailto:treasurerhcsmvh@gmail.com)

## Update from Layla Whitaker

### Dogs Day Out – 14 May



I began agility (*a sport where you direct your dog through a pre-set obstacle course within a certain time limit*) a few years ago after watching it at Crufts for Mum's birthday. I was shocked when I qualified last year for Crufts with Elsa my Gordon setter, and this year I am grateful to qualify again with the opportunity to show not only what an amazing dog she is but also that any dog and anybody can train and compete in agility - all it takes is a lot of love and a lot of patience!

To further my agility career, I will be qualifying as a Kennel Club judge by the end of February and I will be putting on an agility show in Alton GU34 3AT, 'UKA Dogs Day Out' on 14 May. It will also consist of flyball, a fun dog show and lots of doggy stall holders and I would love as many people as possible to come down for it!

### 3 Peaks Challenge



I didn't want people to think I was running short on spontaneous ideas: I have decided to take on the Three Peaks Challenge in July! I will be completing 26 miles and ascending 3000m in 24hours! I will be raising money for Hope for Children, an

incredible international charity that works to improve the lives of children in poverty. In the UK alone there are 4.3 million children who live in poverty: this figure is set to increase as the cost-of-living crisis continues.

Any donations of any size would greatly be appreciated, all money will go directly to the charity, and with gift aid they can claim an extra 25% on top of your donation meaning every little really does count!

### Village Night at Studley Wood

The next **Village Night at the Golf Club** is **Friday 24 March**. If you would like more details about these supper evenings contact Ruth on [ruth.david@live.com](mailto:ruth.david@live.com). Menu choices need to be given on the Monday before each of the Social Nights.

## Horton-cum-Studley Gardening Club news

By the time you read this, we will hopefully be welcoming the familiar colours of Spring, with crocuses, daffodils and drifts of wild primroses announcing the promise of longer, warmer days.

The starlings will have stopped murmuring – a breath-taking spectacle darkening the evening sky during winter months if you are lucky enough to live close to their reed-bed roost on Otmoor.

With so much that is unpredictable in the world at the moment, closeness to nature is an incredible comfort and, for me at least, brings a reassuring sense of permanence that some things can be relied upon: the sound of the first chiff-chaff heralding the true start of Spring (though increasingly they seem to stick around during the winter too); the odd plant that you thought had not made it through the bitter frosts miraculously showing tiny green shoots; and, of course, buds bursting into life and candyfloss blossom appearing on blackthorn and crab apple.

A friend with a large garden in the Chilterns told me that he neglected a large patch of grass last year and was rewarded with a profusion of wildflowers, including clover, bird's foot trefoil, yarrow, and even orchids. Inspired by this, and being lucky enough to have a long stretch of lawn in front of my house, I've been reading up on how to create patches of wildness. The jury seems to be out on exactly when / whether to mow the lawn to encourage grasses and wildflowers which are invaluable to a range of invertebrates, insects, pollinators, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and even mammals such as hedgehogs. I've decided to experiment by cutting various patches to different lengths at different times, allowing things to find their natural place. Planting yellow rattle (*rhinanthus minor*) will attract pollinators, weaken grasses and allow wildflowers to establish.

The Gardening Club is a great place to learn about all aspects of gardening, from visiting speakers or from other members. Membership, at £10 a year, is a real bargain, bringing with it discounts on seed catalogues as well as the chance to meet fellow lovers of horticulture. You are also most welcome to come along as a guest for £5 to see if you'd like to join us.

If you'd like to know more about our programme for 2023 contact me on 07766 708303 or [mjcbt2013@gmail.com](mailto:mjcbt2013@gmail.com).

*Melanie Jones, Chair; Horton-cum-Studley Gardening Club*

## Horton-cum-Studley Parish Council news

The Parish Council is looking forward to the introduction of the 20-mph speed limit. New signage will be put in place by Oxfordshire County Council; due to legislation the new signs will not be in the same positions as the current signs. The Parish Council has made OCC aware of issues on the Woodperry Hill

The next face to face Parish Council meeting is on **7 March at 7.30pm in the Millenium Village Hall**. All parishioners welcome

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

## Launton & Otmoor District Update February 2023

### The Local Plan

The Local Plan went to the Oversight & Scrutiny committee before it went to the CDC Executive in January. Below are the recommendations that the Executive will investigate more thoroughly, which will result in further delay to the next stage of a further public consultation.

- The balance of affordable housing included in the plan is not ambitious enough or adequate.
- It is important that all infrastructure keeps pace with development as well as ensuring satisfactory integration between new developments and established communities.
- The importance of farming has been recognised in the draft, but it should be given more prominence.
- In reference to Bicester Strategic Corridors, consideration should be given to creating a formal Green Belt around Bicester.
- Rural allocation of housing should be equitable.
- Executive to assure itself that the wording of policies included in the plan is strong enough, particularly in relation to Climate Action and viability.
- Members be given more opportunities to engage, provide feedback and comments during the Regulation 18 consultation.

More information on [cherwell.gov.uk/homepage/27/local-plans](https://cherwell.gov.uk/homepage/27/local-plans).

Please do get in touch on 01869 717712 or email:

[gemma.coton@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:gemma.coton@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)

[angus.patrick@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:angus.patrick@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)

# STANTON ST JOHN

## Stanton Church

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 5 - 10. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website [www.fourparishes.org.uk](http://www.fourparishes.org.uk).

## Stanton St John WI

Our **AGM** is on **Tuesday 21 March at 7.30pm**. It is important to choose your committee and President for the forthcoming year and we plan to have a Quiz so be prepared to organise a few teams for some friendly rivalry. There will be prizes!

Advance notice that from **April 2023** our meeting day will be on the Second Tuesday of the month, so our first “new date” will be on **11 April**, just after Easter. This will be an **Open Meeting** when we encourage visits from friends and family. The topic is *Oxford's Penicillin*. (The first penicillin jab was in February 1941 at the Radcliffe Infirmary.)

## Monthly Coffee Mornings in Stanton Village Hall

Come for tea, coffee and cake, 10.30am - 12pm on the following dates!  
Everyone is welcome!

**8 March**

**12 April**

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

## Stanton St John Parish Council

### Stanton Village Litter Pick: Saturday 18 March 2023, 2pm – 4pm

Join us for the village litter pick on Saturday 18 March and make a difference to our local verges and hedgerows. We will meet up at 2pm in the car park at Rectory Farm Shop on Pound Lane. Adults and children are welcome to join in – the more the merrier – but please bring your own gloves and remember to wear stout shoes or boots. SODC is providing yellow vests, pickers and bin bags. Rectory Farm has kindly offered tea and coffee after the event.

Michiel Stofferis & Luke McLaren, Parish Councillors, Stanton St. John



## “Fix My Street”

In addition to smaller items of litter, some outlying areas of our village are unfortunately also a target for fly-tipping. If you spot this, it can be reported directly to Oxfordshire County Council (who are responsible for our roads) at [fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/](https://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/) giving details of the location, and if possible, a photo of the problem. It will usually be cleared up pretty quickly. You can also notify them of other issues such as potholes and overhanging branches.

## Local Elections – Thursday 4 May 2023

District (South Oxfordshire) and Parish Council elections will take place on Thursday 4 May.

Nominations for parish councillors must be submitted by 4pm on Tuesday 4 April; the required nomination forms are available from South Oxfordshire District Council.

More information is provided on the SODC website at [southoxon.gov.uk](https://southoxon.gov.uk) (go the Home page and scroll down to click on “Local Democracy and Elections”). You can also contact the Electoral Services office by phone on 01235 422528 or by email at [elections@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:elections@southandvale.gov.uk)

## Voter ID

The May 2023 local elections will be the first time that voters in the UK will be required to show photo ID when voting at a polling station.

A range of photo ID will be accepted, including passports, driving licences, disabled parking blue badges and cards with a PASS Mark. Expired ID is acceptable, as long as the photograph is still a true likeness of you.

If you don't have an accepted form of photo ID, you can APPLY NOW for a free voter ID document, known as a Voter Authority Certificate. If you need to apply for ID, you must do so by 5pm on 25 April, in order to vote in this election.

For more information, including the full list of accepted ID and on how you can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate, contact SODC using the details above, or visit The Electoral Commission website – [electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID](https://electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID) or call 0800 328 0280.

## Stanton St John Churchyard

Spring is finally in the air, and with it come lovely bulbs, blue skies and birdsong! Where better to appreciate our village conservation area than from the churchyard? It is an important village amenity with all year round open access and an exceptional unblemished Grade 1 church at its heart, offering us all a sunny peaceful corner and moment of quiet, with far reaching views looking out over the Millennium Field toward Stanton Great Wood to the Chilterns beyond.

By March the churchyard has come alive with a carpet of primroses. They are quite a showstopper, and are carefully left to set seed well into July in order to encourage more. Into April we have bluebells, and then swathes of marguerites under a shower of overgrown dog roses along the raised bank up toward the church door. By Summer we have wild cranesbill geraniums, champions, an everlasting pea, buddleia, honeysuckle, and knapweed to name a few. Butterflies and moths abound. Some open areas of grass are deliberately left to grow tall and set seed (behind the war memorial) whilst other areas around graves are kept trimmed and mowed for ease of access. The aim is to keep the churchyard as relevant and uncontaminated as possible in order to achieve a place of quiet reflection and enjoyment, and to keep it open to everyone all of the time. It is a country churchyard which might yet inspire a modern day Thomas Gray, John Donne or John Clare, reminding us of Time immemorial, as well as of two celebrated Stanton St John incumbents: John White and John Milton.

Our wildflower policy was started by June Schultz in 1985 in response to the Diocesan Living Churchyard initiative. We continue today with Nature Conservation uppermost in our minds. The aim is to encourage native wildflowers, grasses, lichens, mosses etc, and a wildlife habitat for butterflies, bees, moths and other insects, reptiles (lizards, grass snakes, frogs and toads) and mammals (bats, moles, field mice and shrews etc) and increase the local biodiversity. Stanton St John is set on a limestone ridge. The churchyard has a good fine tilth and 'free' fertilizer (bodies!), so we try to nurture what grows naturally and to compliment what's here. This means we do not allow acid loving plants such as heather, or anything that might change the nature of the soil or wildlife habitat. Since the churchyard is neither garden of remembrance, nor arboretum, shrubs,

new roses, and trees are all considered inappropriate because they easily become overgrown and shade our native species.

For the churchyard to remain relevant and sustainable, and above all easy to maintain, we ask everyone to be mindful of the churchyard policy to keep gravestones simple and planting minimal. The choice and type of gravestone, and the inscription, must always be approved by the Vicar before commissioning, and can only be approved if in line with the Diocesan churchyard rules. We are aiming for a certain uniformity and cohesion to the whole, and new headstones should have a honed finish, as opposed to polished or reflective, and preferably be of limestone not granite.

We are trying to uphold the Diocesan guiding principle of keeping the churchyard free from ornament and fanciful exotica, opting for wildflowers and native spring bulbs over garden centre cultivars. We also want to discourage exotic dominant species such as Spanish bluebells and coloured primula because they interbreed and overtake our native bluebells and local primroses. Our recommendation is for perennial native wildflowers rather than large plants or garden centre hybrid species. The Diocesan Churchyard Regulations are available at <https://d3hgriq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/61f2fd86f0ee5/content/pages/documents/20211104-doc-parish-support-churchyard-regulations-v01.pdf> to help clarify and advise.

Where Christmas wreaths are acceptable during December into January, stone ornaments, glowing lights, toys, and plastic flowers and other such decorations are unwelcome additions to graves. These will be removed as a matter of course, as will all dead flowers after they have gone over.

That said, whether local or just visiting, we would like **everyone** to feel that they are welcome in the churchyard: it is our historical backdrop and our continuum, and we are incredibly fortunate to have such a well tended community asset as the core of the village.

The churchyard is supported by Stanton St John Parish Council and the Gresswell Environment Trust for which we are very grateful. Suggestions, and offers of help are always welcome, especially during the summer months.

Stanton St John Parochial Church Council

For more information contact [anthea@fourparishes.org.uk](mailto:anthea@fourparishes.org.uk)



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### **WHERE?**

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### **WHO?**

**YOU!! EVERYONE** is welcome and their Dogs\* too.  
In fact failure to attend is considered **TREASON\*\*!!**

### **OOOOH WHAT CAN I EXPECT??**

Exact details are a surprise for now but following on from the success of the Bring & Share Jubilee Lunch and the Christmas Lights event ...  
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### **DO YOU NEED ANY HELP??!**

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So, if you're practical, strong, good with children, creative ... or none of the above but willing to spare some time- even an hour or two on the day... please email ...

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

Or talk to Rowan in the village shop

\*Terms and conditions apply and dogs must be kept on a lead, poop picked up, and all their needs attended to at all times.

\*\*This is Simply **NOT** true

## Ninebarrow at Stanton Church, Saturday 25 March

Doors open 7pm. Concert starts 7.30pm. Entry £16

Tickets from Stanton Shop or [www.ninebarrow.co.uk](http://www.ninebarrow.co.uk).

Refreshments available. For more info call Julian on 01865 351829.

## Film Night at Stanton St John Village Hall

Saturday 1 April, 7.45pm

The Stanton St John Film Club presents Steven Spielberg's personal drama:

# The Fabelmans



*Growing up in post-World War II era Arizona, young Sammy Fabelman aspires to become a filmmaker as he reaches adolescence, but soon discovers a shattering family secret and explores how the power of films can help him see the truth.*

The film will start at 7.45pm but doors will be open at 7pm. Before and after the film, delicious cakes and drinks are available whilst the bar will serve wines and Mai Tai cocktails.

Since only 60 seats are available in the Village Hall, please reserve your seats asap for the screenings via Sue Baker ([susanjbaker24@gmail.com](mailto:susanjbaker24@gmail.com)) or in the Village Shop. Tickets are £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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# Daffodil Day



*St Nicolas Church  
Forest Hill with  
Shotover*



**A rare opportunity to wander round the private gardens of Shotover House**

**Sunday 26 March, 2pm - 4.30pm**

Enjoy the extensive displays of daffodils and other spring bulbs in return for a small entrance fee in aid of local charities.

Tea/coffee and home-made cake served all afternoon.



**Purchase tickets in advance at [www.stnicolasforesthill.org](http://www.stnicolasforesthill.org)  
(advance booking strongly recommended)**

**Cars £15 ~ Pedestrians/Cyclists\* £3**

**Children under 12 admitted free ~ Dogs welcome (on leads please)**

Please note: cycling is not permitted within the gardens