

The Four Parishes News Magazine

BECKLEY
FOREST HILL with SHOTOVER
HORTON-cum-STUDLEY
STANTON St JOHN



Bluebells in Stanton Great Wood, April 2025

May 2025

The editor writes



As I write this, the Easter break seems to have vanished without trace, and all the things that I didn't manage to get done before Easter have come back to haunt me!

While on one level it's good to be busy, I know so many people who are struggling to balance multiple commitments at the moment, that I can't help feeling we must have got something wrong. Part of the problem is that there are so many opportunities available - people and things to see, activities to take part in, places to visit, in addition to all our regular work, duties and obligations. We are amazingly lucky to be able to choose so much of what we do, but choice does create a certain amount of stress, particularly when we have to balance our own desires with the expectations and needs of others.

On the other hand, when I consider the terrible situation that so many people in the world are facing today, due to war, famine, poverty, exploitation and violence, I am reminded that I have absolutely nothing to complain about.

Talking of choice, this magazine is full of possibilities for the coming weeks and months, and I hope you will make the most of everything that is on offer in our local area. Don't forget that you can use the QR code to read this magazine on your phone or tablet when you can no longer find the paper copy.



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 Anthea Beresford. See pages 6-7 for more information.

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 2025 issue is 15 May 2025

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

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

Beckley Judith Rawlinson judithrawlinson@hotmail.co.uk

Forest Hill Stephanie Kitchen 07966 045144
stephanie.kitchen@bopenworld.com

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.

Ministry Team

Vicar

Reverend Anthea Beresford

anthea@fourparishes.org.uk

Tel: 01865 351839 Mob: 07876 527514

Associate Priests

Reverend Hugh Lee

hugh.lee@btinternet.com Tel: 01865 316245

Reverend Stephanie Bullock

stephaniebullock9@gmail.com

Licensed Lay Ministers

Betty Dye

betty.dye10@gmail.com

Canon Prof. Nicholas Orme

n.i.orme@exeter.ac.uk

Churchwardens

Beckley

Georgina Robson

Tel: 01865 351637

ginarobson5@gmail.com

Forest Hill

Jane Walker

Tel: 01865 872399

lyttleton@btinternet.com

Pat Fraser

Tel: 01865 875679

triciaann49@gmail.com

Horton-cum-Studley

Andrew Payne Tel: 01865 351018 stbarnabas.churchwardenpayne@gmail.com

Julia Slingo Tel: 07766 659524 stbarnabas.churchwardenslingo@gmail.com

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 Beckley, Forest Hill, Horton-cum-Studley and Stanton St John. 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 2025

| | 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 |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| 4 May <i>3rd Sunday of Easter</i> | 11am Holy Communion | 9.30am Holy Communion | 9.30am Holy Communion | 11am Morning Prayer |
| | 4pm Children's Church at St Nicolas, Forest Hill | | | |
| | 6pm Church Without Walls at Stanton St John Village Hall | | | |
| 11 May <i>4th Sunday of Easter</i> <i>Commemora- tion of the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day</i> | | 9.30am Morning Prayer | 9.30am Morning Prayer | 11am Holy Communion |
| | 4pm Crafty Church at Stanton St John Village Hall | | | |
| | 6pm BCP Choral Evensong at St Nicolas, Forest Hill | | | |
| 18 May <i>5th Sunday of Easter</i> | 11am BCP Morning Prayer | 9.30am Holy Communion | | 11am Morning Prayer |
| | 6pm Iona Service at Beckley | | | |
| 25 May <i>6th Sunday of Easter</i> | 10am Four Parishes Service of Holy Communion at St Nicolas, Forest Hill | | | |
| | 4pm Family Church does Forest Church at Bernwood Forest, Horton-cum-Studley | | | |
| | 6pm Taizé Service via Zoom | | | |
| 29 May <i>Ascension Day</i> | 7am Four Parishes Service of Holy Communion at the Payne's, Studley Farmhouse, Brill Road, Horton-cum-Studley OX33 1BP | | | |

Please check the website www.fourparishes.org.uk for any updates. If you are not on the church mailing list and would like an invitation to a Zoom service or a regular reminder of weekly services, please email Anthea: anthea@fourparishes.org.uk.

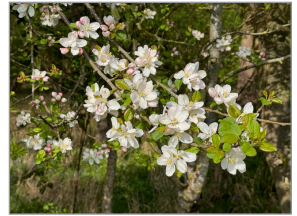
A letter from Anthea

Hi everyone,



As is quite usual, I ‘wrote’ my letter in my head as I walked Bertie around our beautiful countryside during Holy Week. I didn’t want to put fingertips to keyboard until after I and we had experienced the Easter weekend, as so much happens over that period and it is such an important and profound time in the Christian calendar.

As I walked around, I marvelled at the ‘next batch’ of flowers and shrubs that were coming into fresh life and colour for this season of their lives. Amongst the beauty, I marvelled at the bank of white in the hedgerows – see more on this in Lyn Ebbs’ wonderful article on pages 12-13, and the fritillarias which seemed to me to be very early – it was interesting to have my thoughts on this confirmed by the Horton-cum-Studley Gardening Club comment (see page 27). I noted the hue of the blue of the bluebells coming into flower in the woodlands, but didn’t yet sense the beautiful aroma of them. As ever the gorgeous flowers and smell of the gorse brought back fond memories of my childhood.



Despite my forward thinking and planning, my initial thoughts for this letter have been completely overshadowed by the news of the death of Pope Francis. Whether we might be people of faith or not, Catholic or not, I would have thought that in him we might all have seen a man of great humility, of service, of love and care for the marginalised; and a man who was not scared of speaking truth to power. A man indeed of great faith, and an example to us all.

As one person said to me “He has reminded us of the best of men”; another said “Would that our world had more leaders, and citizens, with such peace of heart, mind and spirit. Long may his legacy continue”, and another said “...a truly great man. A truly massive loss not just for our Catholic friends and Catholic people in the world but a massive loss for every good individual around the world”.

It seemed so appropriate that Pope Francis died on Easter Monday, having

just celebrated his final Easter here with us. How incredible that just hours before his death, he once more, and for one last time, gave his Easter blessing to the crowds gathered in St Peter's Square. Despite his obvious frailty, and against doctors' orders, as I imagine he would have felt it his duty to do, he faithfully served his God and his people one last time.

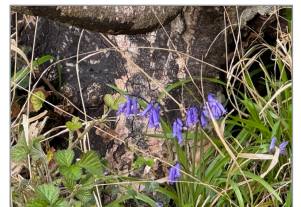
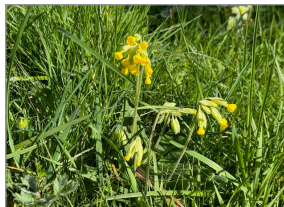
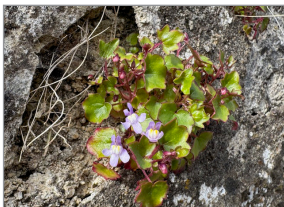
Whilst especially thinking of Catholic friends across the Four Parishes and far beyond, I believe we have all lost a great man, and the world is a poorer place for it. May I offer my prayers, as the Catholic Church looks to appoint the next Pope, interestingly at the same time as the Church of England continues its process to find a successor to Archbishop Justin Welby. Looking at the attributes of Pope Francis might be a good model for both!

Before moving away from Easter, I would like to give my huge thanks to all who did so much across the Four Parishes to help us journey through the Easter story once more. This may have been through decorating our churches, taking part in a concert, the Passion Play or other activities, providing music, leading services or being part of them, coming to services and activities, providing and serving refreshments, cleaning, making the churchyards look neat and tidy, hiding easter eggs, and on I can go. Thank you so much everyone. I have once more loved taking this journey with you, and hope that in the many and various different ways, you too have enjoyed the journey.



We now look forward to the many activities taking place in May. Please do have a read of the magazine to make sure you don't miss out on anything! 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

Church opening and services

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

Commemorating the 80th anniversary of VE (Victory in Europe) Day

8 May 1945 is known as Victory in Europe Day, commemorating the formal acceptance by the World War II Allies of Germany's unconditional surrender of its armed forces. 8 May 2025 marks the 80th anniversary.

In many conversations I have been having across the Four Parishes in more recent times, there seems a sense of concern that the peace – and light – that came to Europe on 8 May 1945 is under threat again in ways that we have not seen in 80 years.

Beckley Church is offering an opportunity to everyone in the Four Parishes, of all faiths and none, to visit the Church any time from 4-11pm on Thursday 8 May, for a personal time of quiet and reflection, and to light a candle for peace, if helpful. For more information, please see page 17.

On Sunday 11 May, our usual church services across the Four Parishes will mark this special occasion with prayers for continual peace in these seemingly uncertain times. For more information about the service times, please see the rota on page 5.

We continue with hope, our prayers for peace in the world (see below).

Prayers for Peace

As the situation in the Holy Land and the Middle East continues to move further and further away from the tentative peace of the now crumpled ceasefire, with discussions for peace in Ukraine seemingly making little progress, and continuing news of unrest in Yemen and Sudan, it is clear that God's peace is not present throughout the world, so we continue to pray for peace. We will meet for 15 minutes at 12pm on Wednesdays and Saturdays in May across the Four Parishes as follows:

| | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| Beckley | 10 and 24 |
| Forest Hill | 3 and 21 |
| Horton-cum-Studley | 7, 17 and 31 |
| Stanton | 14 and 28 |

Ascension Day Service: 29 May at 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, leaving them gazing up towards heaven.

Once again, Annie and Andrew Payne have invited us to their garden for this wonderful service, followed by a generous invitation to coffee, bacon rolls or croissants, 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 wonder how your reading of the New Testament is coming along. At the time of writing this, I am still slightly behind! So as with last month, I have a little catching up to do. If you are behind, please do not get dispirited but keep going. Let's encourage each other.

In May we will aim to continue our reading of John and read up to chapter 20 verse 9. I look forward to hearing how you get on. Please let me know.

Ongoing midweek activities on Zoom

We are continuing Morning and Evening Prayer and the Four Parishes Book Group on Zoom as detailed. Please do get in touch with me for invitations.

| | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri |
|------------------------------------|------|-----|-------|-----|
| Morning Prayer at 9am | | Y | | Y |
| Evening Prayer at 6pm | Y | | Y | |
| Four Parishes Book Group at 7.30pm | | | Y | |

Book Group

At our first meeting in May we will be finishing our discussions of the book we read for Lent: *The Word in the Wilderness: A Poem a Day for Lent and Easter* by Malcolm Guite. After this, we will be starting a new book, yet to be decided, so this might be a good time to join us if you have been thinking about doing so. We meet virtually by Zoom on a Thursday evening at 7.30pm for an hour and new members are always welcome.

Home Group Study on Acts of the Apostles

The study group is continuing its look at the Acts of the Apostles. The group meets on Monday afternoons at 2.30pm at Studley Farm House, Horton-cum-Studley. New members are always welcome, and anyone from around the Four Parishes is welcome to join in. If you are interested, please contact Annie Payne by email at anniefpayne@gmail.com.

Annual Parochial Church Meetings

The dates of the **Annual Parochial Church Meetings (APCM)** are shown below. The related **Annual Meeting of Parishioners** is on the same day, immediately before the APCM.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Beckley: | 16 May at 7.30pm in Church |
| Forest Hill: | 20 May at 7pm in Forest Hill Village Hall |
| Horton-cum-Studley: | happened in April |
| Stanton St John: | 21 May at 7.30pm Stanton Village Hall |

Children's Craft Workshops in Beckley Church

The next two Children's Craft Workshops in Beckley Church are now planned. The first is on **Friday 6 June from 3.30-4.30pm**. We will be looking at **God of the universe** where we will make the sun, moon and stars with bread. The second session is planned for **Friday 11 July from 3.30-4.30pm** and will be looking at **God of our lives**, where we will be making fridge magnets of seaside objects. So there is lots of fun planned.

The workshops are aimed at primary school children and are run by the 'Acting the Bible and 'Crafty 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 book in beforehand by emailing betty.dye10@gmail.com. Thank you.

Betty Dye

For more information about any of the items on pages 8-12 of the magazine, please contact me, Anthea Beresford.

Email: anthea@fourparishes.org.uk

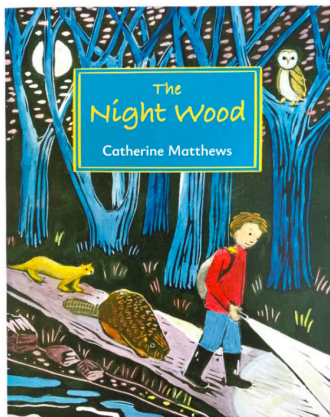
Telephone: 01865 351839 Mobile: 07876 527514



Come and see three Stanton St John artists taking part in Oxfordshire Artweeks in May

Rangan Goldsmith will be filling the Stanton village shop window with colourful, vibrant designs printed onto cushions, tea towels and cards, as well as wall art. She is a mixed media artist, combining painting, drawing, collage and digital art.

<https://www.artweeks.org/v/rangan-gupta>



Catherine Matthews at Hillside, Mill St will be showing her linocut prints and collages, inspired by natural subjects, particularly animals, trees, and the sea. She will also have her latest children's book hot off the press, *The Night Wood*, with ten original illustrations, some of which will be available as prints.

<https://www.artweeks.org/v/catherine-matthews>

Catherine Rye is opening her house and garden at Hillview, Mill St for A Floral Feast, with art inspired by, plants and flowers. There will be textiles combining embroidery and hand dyed fabric (some of the dyes from home grown plants), mixed media panels, books and cards. She will be demonstrating cyanotype printing in her garden.

<https://www.artweeks.org/v/catherine-rye>

Phone 01865 351469 for more information



A Thorny Subject by Lyn Ebbs

You probably know the old saying: “Ne’er cast a clout till May be out”. Rather than advising waiting until the month of May is over before shedding extra layers of clothes, it is really referring to the flowering of May (Hawthorn). Having seen hedgerows in full bloom in mid-April, you might already have been tempted to cast some clouts – some days were



certainly warm enough. But that would have been too hasty: that hedgerow blossom belongs to the Blackthorn – *Prunus spinosa*. Though superficially similar to Hawthorn (they both belong to the rose family), there is one obvious difference; Blackthorn blooms before its leaves emerge, while Hawthorn’s leaves and flowers come out at the same time.

Another difference, if you look more closely, is that Blackthorn flowers are almost pure white, whereas May blossom has a hint of pink. The stamens are strongly tipped with pink, and some trees actually have pink flowers. (The deep pink version is often sold as an ornamental tree.) Although it is pretty, and was used in Maytime festivities, there was a superstition that it was unlucky to bring May blossom into the house, as death or illness would follow. It has been shown in recent years that trimethylamine, which is formed when animal tissues decay, is given off by freshly gathered Hawthorn flowers. As it was once much more common that people died in their own homes, and their bodies were buried from there, too, a flower with a scent reminiscent of death would certainly not have been welcome.



The reason we see so much Hawthorn in hedgerows is as a direct result of the evolution of farming methods from open to enclosed fields. At first these were just informal boundaries, but then the Enclosure Act of 1773 required the owners of land to physically enclose it. Hedging plants could be dug up from woods but, as an alternative name for Hawthorn suggests, Quickthorn was easily grown in nurseries and would soon develop into straight-line impenetrable hedges. Both Blackthorn and Hawthorn are good

subjects for the maintenance technique of hedge-laying, but Hawthorn is not as inclined to put out suckers, so maintains a neater boundary.

The UK has two native species of May and both can be found in our local hedges, Common Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*), though they do also hybridise. Hawthorns are hermaphrodite, meaning both male and female reproductive parts are contained within each flower. The May flowers merit close examination because of this. The male parts (stamens) are similar in both species. The difference lies in the female parts, and the clue is in the name. *C. monogyna* flowers each have a single stigma and go on to produce fruits containing a single seed. *C. laevigata* has two stigmas and its fruits contain two seeds. If you don't have a lens, it becomes much easier in autumn, as you can more easily see the bigger, elongated haws of Midland Hawthorn and squash them to reveal two seeds inside.



There are other differences between them; 'laevigata' means smooth and the leaves of Midland Hawthorn are not as downy or as deeply lobed as those of Common Hawthorn.

Both species of Hawthorn, and Blackthorn provide valuable resources for wildlife. Their dense thorny growth provides nesting places and shelter for small birds and mammals. Hawthorn fruit, haws, is important for birds, especially thrushes, in autumn and winter. Blackthorn fruit, sloes, is also a food source for birds and mammals.

Hawthorn's flowers and leaves are a good food source for insects. Blackthorn also provides food for over 100 insect species including Black and Brown Hairstreak butterflies and many moths including Lackey, Magpie and Swallowtail. Because it flowers so early in the year, it's a good source of nectar for solitary bees and other pollinators. Hedges don't just mark boundaries, they support wildlife.

Lyn Ebbs has lived in Stanton St John for 37 years and has been volunteering at the RSPB Otmoor Reserve at Otmoor Lane, Beckley, since 2009.

Local Government Reorganisation - Update

In his letter of 16 December to two tier authorities (those with county and district councils) the Minister Jim McMahon asked for proposals for unitary authorities to make local government more efficient. In addition, there is a proposal for a higher level regional mayoral authority, in our case probably for the Thames Valley.

The Minister set out the criteria for new unitary authorities, the main ones being that they should have a population of 500,000+ and that the current district council boundaries should be used as building blocks.

Currently the county council is responsible for 85% of services, including transport management, highways maintenance, education, adult and children's social care, Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision, libraries, museums and waste disposal. District councils are responsible for the other 15% including planning, waste collection, parking, council tax collection and elections.

There are currently 4 competing proposals on the table for unitary authorities for Oxfordshire:

1. **A county-wide unitary authority** (*population 750,200*).
2. **'Ridgeway' - SODC and Vale with West Berks** (*population 462,767*).
3. **'North Oxfordshire' - West Oxon and Cherwell and possibly Oxford** (*population without Oxford 285,600 with Oxford 450,800*)
4. **'Greater Oxford' - Oxford City Council and undefined surrounding rural parishes** (*population Oxford City 165,2000*)

The county-wide unitary authority is the only one that meets the minister's population targets, and the County Council already delivers services across the county. For comparison, Bucks became a single tier authority on 1 April 2020.

The 'Ridgeway' and 'North Oxfordshire' proposals together would cover the whole county, but only if Oxford was willing to become part of 'North Oxfordshire'. SODC and Vale have no shared services with West Berks.

The City of Oxford has no shared services with SODC and Vale, and the proposal does not meet the criterion of using current district boundaries as building blocks. The 'Greater Oxford' proposal is also not compatible

with any of the others.

Kidlington Parish Council has also written a letter opposing becoming part of Greater Oxford, similar to the one which was reproduced on page 20 of the April Four Parishes Magazine. The response to this from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government was:

“It is for councils to develop robust and sustainable proposals that are in the best interests of their whole area. They should engage with residents and local MPs in working through options. Following submission of these proposals to government, we will consider proposals carefully before taking decisions on how to proceed.”

There will be a consultation process for each proposal, although this is more likely to be informing us of their intentions than seeking our opinions. In the end the minister will decide, and it is questionable whether there will be any democracy involved.

There are also two main proposals for a Thames Valley mayoral authority, namely Bucks, Berks and Oxfordshire with or without Swindon. It would be sensible if the same boundaries were used as other supra-county authorities. The Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley covers Bucks, Berks and Oxon. BOB ICS (Bucks, Oxon and West Berks NHS Integrated Care System) covers all of Bucks and Oxfordshire and West Berkshire – mainly Reading, Wokingham, Newbury and Thatcham. South Central Ambulance covers Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire and Oxfordshire.

The Minister has asked for one proposal for each area for a single tier of local Government to be submitted by 28 November 2025.

Ginette Camps-Walsh, Beckley
email: g.camps-walsh@beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk

Population Stats ONS mid-2023 estimates are:

- Oxfordshire: 750,200
- Cherwell: 166,300
- Oxford: 165,200
- South Oxfordshire: 153,400
- Vale of White Horse: 146,000
- West Oxfordshire: 119,300
- West Berkshire: 163,367

Volunteering Opportunity: Layout Designer

The Four Parishes News Magazine is looking to recruit a Layout Designer with experience of Adobe InDesign software.

The role of the Layout Designer will be to create specific pages of the magazine, with text and images arranged in accordance with the overall 'house style' of the publication. Currently this work is all done by the Editor, and you will be working under her supervision. You will need to own, or have access to, a current licence for Adobe InDesign and you will ideally have experience of working in collaboration with another InDesign user. Other qualities required are:

- The ability to work to a deadline
- Good communication skills
- A good command of spelling and grammar

This position is entirely voluntary, as are all the roles associated with this magazine. If you would like more information, please contact Julia Stutfield at 4parishesnewsletter@gmail.com.

The Otmoor carer



I am a happy and qualified private carer with over 20 years of niche and generalist experience. I have a well earned reputation and exceptional local references.

I have undertaken challenging nursing care for clients of all ages, honing skills like catheter management, hoist lifting and medication assistance. I tend to be called upon when clients become forgetful or less confident than

before; or perhaps when they need support at close quarters to regain their mojo and smiles. It is normal for the client and their family to need time to adjust to a new chapter and I can help with navigational support. I aim to improve and extend life as much as possible through nurturing companionship, organisational support, familiarity exercises, postural and skeletal care, nutrition and friendship. I am fully insured and DBS checked.

I live on Otmoor: If you have a care need and would prefer a bespoke care service that is more affordable than agency cover, contact me at theotmoorcarer@gmail.com. I'm open to day work or live in work.

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.

Book Borrow, Exchange, Swap, in the Church

There are now plenty of books of many kinds in the church, on the pew next to the bookcase! The church is open every day, so do come and have a look. If you borrow a book, please would you note your name and the date in the notebook provided, so that we can see how much the 'system' is being used. Please return borrowed books, or bring an equivalent book instead!

Jill Crossland's Piano Recital

It was a huge privilege for us to welcome the celebrated pianist Jill Crossland to Beckley Church on 5 April. About 50 people came to the church to hear her wonderful recital and the generous donations amounted to £500 which will be shared between Jill herself and the church fabric fund for essential stonework repairs.

Light a Candle on VE Day



We invite you to come to Beckley Church any time that suits you between 4pm and 11pm on the **80th anniversary of VE (Victory in Europe) Day, Thursday 8 May**, to light a candle.

We last did this in our church in 2014 to remember the famous words of Sir Edward Grey on the eve of war, "The lamps have gone out in Europe, we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime."

The peace - and light - that came to Europe on 8 May 1945 is under threat again in ways that we have not seen in 80 years.

And so we open our church again to all in the parish, and across the Four Parishes and beyond, regardless of faith, to light a candle in the darkness.

Beckley and Area Community Benefit Society Ltd (BACBS)

Open share offer

The share offer to support the future of The Abingdon Arms is still open. Shareholders are entitled to 10% off food and drink at the pub: for further information email theabingdonarms@gmail.com.

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

BACBS continues its popular events at our community-owned pub, The Abingdon Arms, Beckley, to which all are welcome. Do come, enjoy, and support your local pub. For more information email info@bacbs.org.

Pub quiz

1st Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm - with pizza! The next one will be on Wednesday 7 May. Table bookings advisable - or you can just turn up and join an existing team. We suggest that teams should comprise no more than six people. No charge to enter, and thanks to The Abingdon Arms, there's a free round of drinks for the winning team.

Community walks

Walks are usually on the 3rd Sunday of the month. Our next walk will be at 2 pm on 18 May, led by Jane Appleton. More detail will be available at <https://bacbs.org/events> nearer the time.

Sunday evening talks

Last Sunday of the month, 6.30 pm in the pub.

25 May - Andrew Myatt: 'Oxford's Forgotten Stories – Faith, martyrs and miracles'. Andrew will look at the forgotten stories of how Oxford was founded in about 700AD through some miracles, the turbulence of faith and politics in the Middle Ages, as well as some of the 'heroes of the faith' right up to CS Lewis.

29 June - Maurice East: 'Three Histories of Headington – the old, the new and the quarried'.

27 July - Anna Beer: '“Murder She Wrote” – Oxford style'

BACBS Good Neighbour Scheme

The Good Neighbour Scheme gives lifts to those with no other transport – for example, to the doctors and village shop in Stanton as well as lifts 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, and Noke.

To request a lift, ring either 07514 791910 (if no answer, leave a message) or email BACBSgoodneighbour@gmail.com. If you know of anyone who might need help, and perhaps does not know this service exists, please do let them know. If you would like to volunteer, please email the above address.

Coffee (or tea!), Cake and Chat

Saturday 31 May, 10.30am-12pm in Beckley Church



Please drop in for coffee (or tea) and cake, and a chance to catch up with friends and neighbours, and meet newcomers.

This will be the third of our new monthly coffee mornings, on the **last Saturday** of each month.

Everyone welcome, please do come and join us!

Beckley & Stowood Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday 12 May at 7pm in Beckley Village Hall.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on **Monday 19 May at Beckley Village Hall from 7-8.30 pm.**

Meeting dates, agendas and minutes can be found on the village website www.beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk. The Clerk's email address is clerk@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.

Wheelie bin stickers '20 is plenty' are available from the Clerk and can be picked up at the monthly Parish Council meetings or from the Abingdon Arms Pub. The stickers are for wheelie bins only as they are more effective if they are not a permanent feature in the village and only visible on bin day.

FOREST HILL

St Nicolas 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.

Music at St Nicolas

A huge thank you to everyone who took part in the St Nicolas Choir's performance of selections from Handel's *Messiah* on Palm Sunday, and to the enthusiastic audience, including the 'Come and Sing' contingent who helped to raise the roof with the Hallelujah Chorus! Special thanks to John Stradling for playing the trumpet and to Joe Burgess for his skilful and sensitive piano accompaniment. There have been requests for us to do it all again next year, so watch this space!

Open Organ Mornings

All being well, Peter Stutfield's '**Open Organ Mornings**' at St Nicolas **will restart on Saturday 21 June**. For further information, email peter.stutfield@gmail.com.

Save the Dates: Cream Teas and Summer Music at St Nicolas

Provisional dates for our popular informal summer concerts are:

Saturday 28 June

Sunday 27 July

Sunday 24 August

Look out for more details in the next issue of the magazine.



Jazz on the Hill at Forest Hill Village Hall **Tuesday 13 May, 7.30-9.30pm**



Join Julie, Will and their musician friends to celebrate jazz with plenty of opportunity for instrumentalists and vocalists to make music with a house band, and to take the seat in the rhythm section as well if wished. Or just come to listen and soak up the atmosphere! All welcome. No need to book, just turn up on the night. Soft drinks available, bring your own alcohol if desired. Suggested donation by card or cash £5. Parking available in the village streets. Wheelchair accessible.

Report from Sophie from Forest Hill about her experience volunteering in Cambodia, with help from Dame Elizabeth Holford's Charity

In November 2024, I had the incredible opportunity to volunteer at a school in rural Cambodia, an experience made possible by the generous support of the Dame Elizabeth Holford's Charity. Over four weeks, I ran classes for children aged 4 to 16, helped organise playtime for the younger ones, and fully immersed myself in the daily life of the school.



Other than volunteering at the school we did trips to the local town and one particular day involved visiting the five poorest families in the rural village. We donated funds to the local food bank to provide essential supplies such as food, hygiene products, and clothing for them.

This experience was truly rewarding, and I am so grateful to Dame Elizabeth Holford's Charity for making it possible. It's an experience I will cherish forever.

The Charity grants educational bursaries for school aged children and young people up to the age of 25 who are or who have parents resident in Stanton St John, Forest Hill with Shotover, Beckley, Horton-cum-Studley and the ecclesiastical Parish of Elsfield. Applications are not means tested and funding is granted on a case-by-case basis.

The Trustees welcome applications for bursaries addressed to the Chair of Dame Elizabeth Holford's Charity, Alison Finch. The email address is HolfordtrustChair@gmail.com where you can obtain an application form.

The Maple Tree at Forest Hill, Thursdays 10.30am-12pm

The Thursday morning 'stay and play' sessions for babies and toddlers continue to run in Forest Hill Village Hall every week throughout the year, apart from 1 May when the Village Hall will be used as a Polling Station for Local Elections.

See www.mapletree.org.uk for a full list of activities run by The Maple Tree Children's Centre in Wheatley.

Forest Hill with Shotover Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **Thursday 15 May at 7pm in Forest Hill Village Hall**. This will be the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

Dates of future meetings can be found on the Parish Council website: www.parish-council.com/foresthillwithshotover and on the Village Hall noticeboard. Current agendas and minutes are posted on the noticeboard outside the Village Hall and the website. 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.

VE Day Celebrations

Please approach the Parish Council for funding if you are thinking of organising an event for VE Day in the Parish.

Casual Vacancy for a Parish Councillor

Please contact the Clerk for an application form. If you would like more information about what is involved in being a Parish Councillor, please speak to one of the Parish Councillors (you will find their names on the Parish Council website).

Forest Hill Village Hall

Forest Hill Village Hall is situated in Main Street in the heart of the village.



The hall can be hired for £8 per hour. It has a fully equipped kitchen with electric cooker, fridge and microwave. There is also a selection of folding tables and chairs available for use during the period of hire. Heating is charged by a coin operated meter (approx. £1 per hour).

The picture shows the hall in process of being set up for the weekly baby and toddler group. There is space for up to 4 cars to park in front of the hall and it is usually possible for a limited number of cars to park in Main Street.

To hire the village hall, email Stephen Robinson: spr500@gmail.com.

HORTON-cum-STUDLEY

St Barnabas 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.

Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting

This meeting took place on Tuesday 8 April. Thank you to Julia Slings and Andrew Payne, who were elected to continue as churchwardens for the coming year. It was noted that there are 26 parishioners on the new Electoral Roll. Thank you to Colin Jenkins for being the independent examiner for the accounts.

Trek to Everest Base Camp for YoungMinds

This year, I'm trekking to Everest Base Camp to raise funds for YoungMinds — a charity dedicated to supporting young people facing mental health challenges.



Mental health can feel like a mountain: steep, overwhelming, and isolating. If there's one thing I've learnt through my own challenges, it is that struggling is hard, but feeling alone in how you

feel is even harder.

That's why charities like YoungMinds are so important. They provide vital support, resources, and hope to ensure no one has to face the mountain of mental health alone. But this is only possible with our support.

My fundraising target is £2,495 and whilst fundraising whilst travelling is not easy, I'm determined to conquer both this and Everest Base Camp. If you would like to contribute, you can donate online by going to my fundraising page on **Givestar**. Type givestar.io into your web browser and search for my campaign, which is called **Summit the stigma**.

By supporting this fundraiser, you're helping young people find hope, resilience, and the strength to climb their own mountains.

Together, we can elevate awareness, break the stigma, and ensure that no young person feels alone in their journey.

Layla Whitaker, Horton-cum-Studley

Pop-up Pub and Social at the 'Dog and Collar'

Friday 2 May, 6-8.30pm

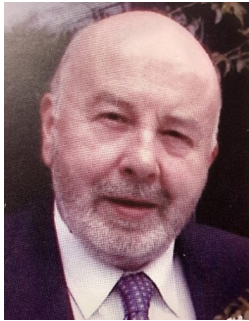
We look forward to seeing you at St Barnabas Church. Families welcome. Come and meet up with fellow villagers for a beer, wine or soft drink.

Coffee and Chat

Saturday 10 May, 10am-12pm

Everyone is welcome to pop into St Barnabas Church to spend some time with neighbours for coffee and cake. No charge, but donations always welcomed.

Adrian Charles Wood: 2 January 1944 – 7 March 2025



Adrian moved to Horton cum Studley from Rugby in the 1990s. In 1996, along with his wife Alex, they built Sunnyside. Adrian passed away in the John Radcliffe after a short illness.

Alex and Adrian were very involved in village life and Adrian will be remembered for his passion for all things mechanical especially landrovers.

He served his apprenticeship in Agricultural Mechanical Engineering at Rycotewood college in Thame. His varied employments involved driving, mending or inspecting vehicles. Adrian even met Alex through work as a driver for on-call NHS workers.

Adrian loved to share stories about his life. Many of us will have heard his tales of trips to Africa, once with Alex and once on his own. Adrian went to Le Mans a few times in his open top two-seater Panther. Adrian was an extremely conscientious person so when his employer required cars to be inspected urgently in Cornwall, he'd set off at 4am to arrive at 8am so he could be home by 5pm for Alex. He drove over 100,000 miles a year.

If Adrian's friends encountered difficulties with car projects, Adrian would invariably diagnose the problem exactly. He was very practical and knowledgeable and friends will miss his glass half full optimism.

We will miss Adrian at St Barnabas Coffee and Chat each month: he was always the first to arrive and the last to leave. Now reunited with Alex, rest in peace, Adrian.

Horton-cum-Studley Parish Council News

Annual Parish Meeting

All parishioners are invited to the **Annual Parish Meeting at 8pm on Thursday 8 May 2025 in the Millennium Village Hall**. We are fortunate to have two speakers this year on themes of conservation:

Olivia Field – Vice-Chair CPRE Oxfordshire (Council for Rural Protection of England)

David Wilding – RSPB Otmoor Reserve

Amongst the current issues of relevance to our village are the impact of nearby solar farms, increased traffic on our roads, the growth of activities along the 'Oxford/Cambridge corridor', carbon reduction, the development of the local RSPB reserve and buildings with the impact on our rural byways. Nibbles and wine will be available.

Local Elections 2025

A reminder that ID is required to vote in person on Thursday 1 May 2025 at the Millennium Village Hall. Whilst there are no scheduled district or parish elections in May 2025, elections for councillors to Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) will take place. Further information is available on the OCC website and Cherwell District Council website.

Parish Council Meetings

Parish Council meetings, open to all in the village, are normally held on the second Thursday of each month, 7.30pm in the Millennium Village Hall, although an August meeting is not usually held.

*David Slings hcspsclingo@gmail.com
Parish Councillor for Horton-cum-Studley*

Giant Sunflower and Pumpkin Competition

Would you like to grow a giant pumpkin or a giraffe-like sunflower?

If so, please get your plants from Mill Lane, Horton-cum-Studley. They will be ready from the end of May.

The weigh-in is Sunday 5 October 3-4pm. Good Luck!

Cathy Jenkins

Tennis in your community



Tennis players have more fun...and we live longer. It's scientifically proven. Tennis is the sport that adds most years to our life expectancy, close to 10 years (Copenhagen City Heart Study). And the benefits are many. A study published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine found that playing racket sports significantly reduces the risk of death from heart disease. In addition to this, tennis gives you a full body workout, improves your stamina and balance, tones muscles, makes us more agile and react faster, strengthens bones and helps us lose weight. It has proven to contribute to our mental health and well-being. Did you know, if you live within the Four Parishes, you're less than 10 minutes away from your local community tennis club (by car...imagine the further benefit if you use your bicycle): Horton-cum-Studley Tennis Club?

If you are interested in trying your luck with a tennis racket, you should consider joining the club or maybe joining one of the coaching programmes. We are one of the cheapest tennis clubs in the country and have made it a virtue to keep the membership fees as low as possible, allowing for everyone to have access to the sport, locally. We are going into the 15th season without raising the fees. For the membership period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026 you can join us for as little as:



- Family membership: £80
- Individual Adult membership: £47
- Individual Junior membership: £20

Our head coach was recently elected coach of the year in the county tennis federation. We host regular club-hours where members can play with other members. Learn more about us at <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/HortonCumStudleyTennisClubOxford>.

Morten Schmidt

Otmoor Challenge, 31 May 2025

A reminder that, in addition to the half marathon and 10k routes for runners, the Otmoor Challenge offers **two marked walks - one of 13.1 miles and a shorter 5 mile walk suitable for families and younger walkers who may wish to take a gentle stroll with picnic.**

Further details, including maps and registration information, can be found on the Otmoor Challenge website at www.otmoorchallenge.com.

Horton-cum-Studley Gardening Club

Who'd have thought that the challenge in April would have been wondering when the next rain would fall? Gardens are really feeling the effects of the long, dry spell, but the sunshine has, of course, meant the possibility of enjoying some beautiful spring days outdoors preparing for the productive months ahead.

A reminder that on **15 May, members and guests are welcome to come to Magdalen College** – in the end, not to see the fritillaries (which arrived early this year) but to enjoy the wisteria in full bloom. Let us know if you'd like to be added to the list.

On **10 June, there is an organised visit to Rousham Park**: you can still book until 1 June: again, do get in touch for further information if that sounds appealing.

For now, I imagine a few of us are going to get out there to do a rain dance
For further details, please contact:

Sue Burge (Chair) sue.burge@ndm.ox.ac.uk
Lyn Senior (Secretary) lynsenior@hotmail.com

Millennium Village Hall

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday 18 June at 7.45 pm for drinks/snacks and 8pm start. This is an opportunity to quiz the committee on the running of the hall and its facilities, and to volunteer to join the committee for the next year.

The website is planned to be live shortly – the embedded on-line booking system is currently being tested. This enhanced 'visibility' is expected to be more convenient and efficient for both hirers and the committee.

Contact details: Treasurer – treasurerhcsmvh@gmail.com

Bookings – hcshallbookings@gmail.com

Stuart MacFarlane – s.macfarlane799@btinternet.com

Free Guided Butterfly Walks near Horton-cum-Studley

The Upper Thames Branch of Butterfly Conservation are holding **FREE Guided Butterfly Walks in Bernwood Meadows on Saturday 14 June and Bernwood Forest on Tuesday 15 July and Saturday 19 July.** Walks must be booked on Eventbrite (search using the name of the walk).

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.

Monthly Coffee Mornings in Stanton Village Hall, 10.30am-12pm

Monday 12 May

Friday 27 June

Come for tea, coffee and cake! Everyone is welcome. For further details, please contact Sue Baker 01865 351449.

Save the date: Oxybaroxy Concert, Sunday 6 July at 7pm

OxyBaroxy (Oxfordshire Youth Baroque Strings) is an Oxfordshire Music Service Chamber Group, which offers young string players the opportunity to explore 17th and 18th Century string repertoire using Baroque bows and period performance practice. This popular and talented ensemble is performing in Stanton church once again in July.

Stanton St John Women's Institute

Our new season started really well on 8 April with the very entertaining talk: **Saints, Stunners, Marmalade & Medicine** by Oxford Tour Guide, **Lucy Gasson**. Lucy showed us some of the hidden curiosities that commemorate Oxford's women, from stained glass to blue plagues. We now need to find some of them for ourselves!

On **Tuesday 13 May** our talk will be by **Laura Bristow**, who is Fundraising Manager for **Emmaus**. Laura will say a few words about the charity, then one of their companions will talk about their experience of being homeless and how Emmaus supports them. When you visit the Emmaus Oxford store to buy or donate something, the chance is that the person serving you will be a companion. Please come along and find out more about this important local charity and sample the friendly atmosphere of our meetings with members of SSJ WI.



Stanton St John Parish Council

The Parish Council met on 17 March in the Village Hall, with twelve residents in attendance. The meeting covered a range of issues affecting the village.

- **Concerns Over Tree Planting:** Residents raised concerns about new trees planted along Middle Road without local consultation. The Parish Council will follow up with relevant authorities to seek clarity.
- **Public Transport Access:** Changes to the 108 bus route, which now bypasses the Village Shop, were discussed. Elderly residents noted the increased difficulty of accessing the new stop on the B4027. The Council will write to Oxford City Council requesting a review of the route to restore access to the shop.
- **Cycleway and Green Infrastructure:** Questions were raised about the proposed Oxford Greenways Cycleway potentially passing through Shepherds Pit. Cllr Tim Bearder confirmed that no final decisions had been made and committed to keeping the Council informed.
- **Local Litter Pick:** A recent community litter pick was praised, with 25 volunteers collecting around 40 bags of rubbish. The Council will send a formal letter of thanks to the organiser.
- **Planning Matters:** Several planning applications and appeals were discussed, including a proposal to convert a barn at Breach Farm into residential dwellings and the ongoing Star Inn and Bayswater developments.
- **Governance and Policy:** The Council approved a number of governance documents and reviewed internal controls.

The next Parish Council meeting will take place on **Tuesday 22 April at 7pm**, followed by the **Annual Parish Meeting at 7.30pm**.

20mph Speed Limit

A Public Meeting will be held in the Village Hall on Thursday 22 May at 7.45pm to hear your views on the 20mph speed limit and update you on future traffic issues and measures around pedestrian safety and verge protection. Please come along and make your views known to us as your participation will be invaluable.

Stanton St John Film Club

Saturday 31 May at 7.45pm, Stanton St John Village Hall



In Walter Salles's film 'I'm Still Here', when Rubens Paiva, a former congressman is abducted from his beachfront home in 1970s Rio his wife and children are left reeling – for decades. This factually based Portuguese-language drama unfolds, with meticulous period detail, in vividly-evoked early 1970s Rio. For her role as Rubens wife, Eunice Paiva, Fernanda Torres won the Oscar for Lead Actress in January.

Follow this link to watch a trailer: <https://www.metacritic.com/movie/im-still-here-2024/>.

Doors open at 7pm for delicious cakes and hot drinks before the film; the bar will be serving wines.

Please reserve your seat beforehand (only 60 available) either in the Village Shop or with Sue Baker: susanjbaker24@gmail.com. Tickets at the door, £5 (cash only).

Oxfordshire Artweeks in Stanton St John



The 2025 Oxfordshire Artweeks festival runs from 3rd to 26th May with more than 400 venues to visit, including 3 in Stanton St John.

Mixed media artist Rangan Goldsmith will once again be filling the window in Stanton Village Shop with her colourful, vibrant designs; Catherine Matthews will be showing her linocut prints and collages; and Catherine Rye is opening her house and garden for A Floral Feast, with art inspired by plants and flowers.

For more information see page 11 of this magazine or visit the Oxfordshire Artweeks website <https://www.artweeks.org/festival>.



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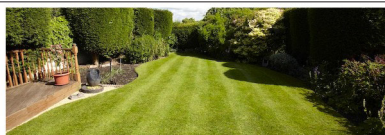
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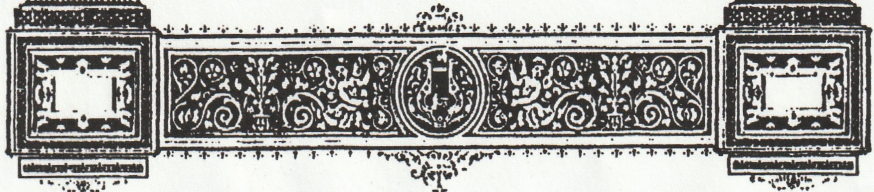
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The Otmoor Challenge, 31 May 2025



In 1980 Colonel Shephard, then a senior officer at the Army Depot in Bicester and a resident of Horton-cum-Studley, conceived a run and walk around Otmoor to allow entrants to raise money by sponsorship for charities of their own choice.

The Otmoor Challenge, as he named it, has continued annually since then and now raises funds for local good causes through the money raised from entry fees and donations from walkers and runners.

In addition to the main half marathon route, there is a 10k route for runners, and two marked walks.

Further details, including maps and registration information, can be found on the Otmoor Challenge website at www.otmoorchallenge.com.

