The Athelney Magazine



Covering the church parishes of Burrowbridge, Lyng, North Curry and Stoke St Gregory

April 2023

Who's Who

Details of other roles can be found on the website, athelneybenefice.com/whoswho

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The editorial team meeting 12th March at 3pm. Copy text is best submitted as a Microsoft Word document, and any images as high reaolution jpeg files.

To advertise in the magazine, please contact the editorial team via magads@athelneybenefice.com. Costs are £65/full page/year and £40/half page/year.

Coffee, Tea and Fellowship across the Benefice



Each month there is a pattern of gatherings, featuring tea, coffee, cakes and conversation. All are open to all. All are wonderful opportunities to chat and all the cakes are guaranteed to be of a very high standard. At the produce market there are also bacon butties and more!

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1st Saturday of each month, from 10am in church



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2nd Saturday of each month, from 10.30 am the village hall

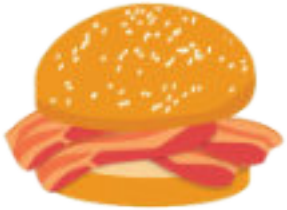
North Curry

Every Monday from 10am in church. (NB: change of day)

At the time of publication there will be no April Market.

Stoke St Gregory

The Levellers meet at 2.30pm every third Tuesday in the Williams Hall. A time of conversation and fellowship, often with a visiting speaker.



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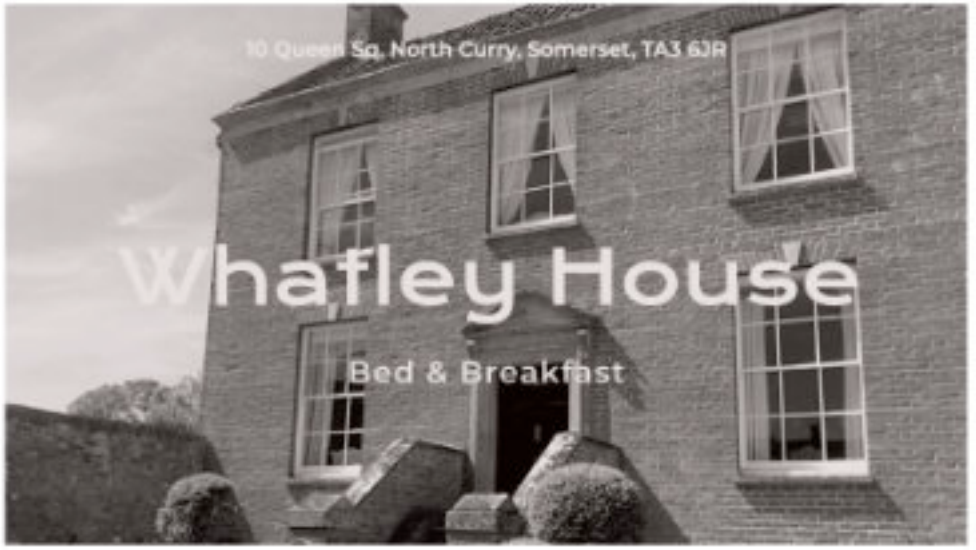
Welcome to this edition of the Benefice magazine which we hope you will enjoy and find useful. We are a fairly new editorial team and gradually getting to grips with what our communities would appreciate having in the magazine (or not for that matter). We are hoping to increase our input from the smaller parishes so that the magazine has a more balanced feel and we ensure that we are covering all that goes on and gain further insight into the community.

You will have seen various accounts and stories in recent editions and it would be lovely to have more of those, they could link to what is happening in the communities which we serve and or the season church or otherwise.

The team look forward to receiving any contributions by 14th of each month ready for the next month's edition. We will do our best to fit offerings in but reserve the right to edit if necessary.

Blessings from us all,

The editorial team



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The Athelney Benefice



Last month I wrote a piece for the weekly "pew sheet" that approached, as carefully as I could find words for, the disturbing matter of migration. I was encouraged by some to reissue it here in the monthly magazine. So, here it is. As with the original publication, I offer it with the caveat that these are my opinions. I am very happy to discuss them with anyone who reads them, and to listen to the views of others. Healthy debate is profoundly significant in our present circumstances.

Strange Boat



I said last week that I consider myself a fortunate man. I reiterate this week: I am a fortunate man. How so? First, I was born male. Given the continuing misogyny prevalent in the world I cannot imagine how it feels to be persecuted or oppressed because of my sex. It just doesn't happen to me. Second, I was born white. Likewise, there is still such racial bigotry in our culture that I can only barely grasp how it is to be judged on the basis of how I look. Third, I am middle aged (and a bit) and so nobody considers me a threat. I'm a fairly decent bloke according to the mores of our culture and society. Fourth, I was born into a stable and thriving nation. I still live in it. No matter how much I might bemoan so much of our present economic state, the UK has all the means to thrive. I am blessed. I am fortunate.

How different it is for some.

I could have been born into a war-torn suppressive nation where sharing my opinions as I am doing now might lead to my execution at the hands of the state or the imprisonment of my family. I wouldn't want to live like that. I'd want to be out of that kind of a place.

I might have grown up in South Sudan, let's say. A place where oppression is normalised and where people routinely go missing. I might decide to get out of there and, since I speak English, I might try to reach sanctuary in the UK. But I wouldn't be allowed in by just showing up. There is no safe passage for me. What would I do?

My understanding of Christianity is that we need to care for the oppressed, set the captive free, feed those who hunger and reveal the love of God in the world to all those who seek it (check out Luke 4:18). That is an act of love and faith. Instead, we are in danger of doing exactly the opposite.

"We're sailing on a strange boat
Heading for a strange shore
We're sailing on a strange boat
Heading for a strange shore
Carrying the strangest cargo
That was ever hauled aboard"
(The Waterboys, 1988)

As a nation—as Christians, as people of any faith I know of and none—we need to seek the health and safety of all those who run from horror and violence. We can check their validity as asylum seekers once they arrive on these beautiful shores. If someone is not in such need, then we deal with it then. When we criminalise those in desperate need we dehumanise and then we are on a very slippery slope. That is unfortunate.

Revd Simon

Easter Thoughts

Seasons come and seasons go. The world turns and we rush headlong from Christmas to Easter. At least, that's how some might see it. A dash between, and hurried scurry of life, trying to fit everything that needs to be done into the moment that is always too short to accommodate it.

Then someone pipes up with a sincere "take it easy, don't rush" and rather than hearing the sincerity and concern we bark, "I haven't got time to slow down!"

Easter is here. Pretty much. So what does it mean? There's the eggs, of course. There might be a family meal. There is an increasingly urgent seasonal imperative behind Easter, being commercialised into a secular season like Christmas. I fret over this. I wish for Easter to be recalibrated so that we can see it once again as the great message from God: that in the glorious resurrection of Jesus as Christ we can see the ways in which we are each forgiven, day by day, to live a life of love and praise.

Yea, yea, vicar. Pious words… I know. Yet the message is real. Just as Jesus was resurrected we can be new every morning. Reborn and forgiven for all that we fail to do and all that we fail not to do. God makes us new. Every day. Whether we rush or sleep in. Every moment with God is a moment of calm: a still, small voice, reminding us that we are loved and that we are able to love others: no matter who they are nor what they have done.

So, deep breath… Hold onto who you are… Love one another, just as God loves us. Amen.

From Bishop Ruth

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The joy of Easter



As April begins, we mark it with the Palm Sunday procession, the welcoming of Jesus into Jerusalem amongst much jubilation and a sense of impending revolution. There were those who expected Jesus to be the next rebel leader who would rouse the local people to turn against their Roman overlords. Political populism at its height! In their enthusiasm, limbs of trees were broken to pave the way for this new hero.

However, it didn't take much for the crowd to turn around and change its tune. Those palm leaves torn from branches to throw in his path have become the palm crosses we hold today. Symbolising for us the way in which the week ends. Fronds of living trees now dried and woven to form the cruel instrument of death on which Christ suffered.

Many of our churches are now engaged with rewilding their church grounds, many are seeking to gain awards with Eco Church and are looking for new ways of reducing or capturing carbon. There would be horror at the thought of denuding our trees! In fact, parishes are discovering opportunities to partner with others to plant new trees on spare glebe land.

Sometimes though it can feel to us that the environmental crisis is too great a one to solve. Yet the message of Easter shows us that when things seem nigh on impossible it is then that we glimpse the grace of God at work. God's way of overcoming evil was not to fight a small act of resistance against a Roman invasion but rather to combat sin itself. The death of Jesus was the ultimate battle to overcome that which has separated humanity from knowing the extent of God's love for each and every one of us.

The natural world around us is a wonderful illustration of how death is not the end. The environment can be devastated by flood, fire and human carelessness and yet new life can begin again. The joy of Easter is that the story doesn't end in death but opens a new beginning for us all through the resurrection of Christ.

May you know the life and love of Christ this Easter!

Bishop Ruth

Spring Thoughts

By Zillah Sykes

Spring sunshine streamed into Margaret's kitchen and the lively, upbeat strumming of a guitar accompanied her morning chores.

"Jack's happy. Georgia must be back from her studies," she told herself, then added, "and now that spring's here, Bob's in his shed, and all's right in his world!" and taking her basket of washing into the garden to hang out on the line, she noted that it was a perfect drying day. With a wry smile she asked herself, "What more could I wish for?"

Meanwhile, in the potting shed, Bob was surrounded by bags of compost, packets of seeds and all that was needed for the ushering in of the new season. He had just finished sowing his runner beans and was about to open up a packet of sweet peas when he was struck, once again, by the miracle he witnessed every year of the potential of a single seed for phenomenal growth and fruitfulness. His thoughts were interrupted abruptly as the shed door was pulled open and Margaret popped her head in.

"I'm just about to put the coffee on," she told him, knowing from experience that her husband needed to be reminded, for when immersed in his garden he would lose all track of time. Assuring her he would be in soon, he took the tray of newly planted beans to the greenhouse, when he decided that, while coffee was brewing, there would be plenty of time to gather a few daffodils for his wife. Sadly, those growing in the main part of his garden had faded, their mission of heralding in the spring now accomplished, for his garden was bursting into new life, and life in abundance. Fresh, green shoots appeared everywhere and tender leaves unfurled; there were hellebores a-plenty, their modest demeanour and subtle hues contrasting with bright tulips that glowed in the sunshine, while his orchard was a mass of white and pink blossom, where bees hummed and a blackbird sang. There, under the sheltering boughs of these old apple trees, Bob gathered a handful of fresh, yellow blooms, and sat for a moment on his bench, with his back resting against the wall, to enjoy the fleeting beauty of this place.

Bob's thoughts soon turned to Easter, now just a week away, and to his mind, inseparable from springtime. The drama, played out every year by the wintry world, cold, dark and apparently lifeless, bursting forth into glorious new life, he thought perfectly reflected the death and resurrection of our Lord. In a few days' time it would be Good Friday when he would remember His cruel and undeserved death by crucifixion and the bitter grief of His disciples as they laid his lifeless body in a stone-cold tomb. Then, after a day of silence and sorrow, at daybreak on that first Easter morning Jesus walked free from the grave,

while birds greeted Him with joyful song, flowers opened up their petals and the new day welcomed its risen and victorious Lord. It was the dawning of a new Day, a new era, when for His followers, tears of sorrow would for evermore become songs of joy.

Glancing down at the freshly picked daffodils, he remembered it was coffee time and gathering up the flowers, he hurried towards the house. There he was met with the welcoming aromas of fresh coffee and toast and his son Jack tucking into breakfast. Margaret poured coffee into a mug and passed it to her husband, then reaching for a vase began to fill it with the daffodils.

"My favourite flowers," she said, and they smiled at one another, remembering.

Once his breakfast was over, Jack began making sandwiches for a picnic. As he did so, he explained to his mother that he was planning to take Georgia out for an afternoon drive followed by a walk on the hills.

"Well, you might as well make the most of this lovely weather," she agreed, searching the cupboards for a lunchbox and a flask. Then with the picnic prepared and packed into the car, Jack sped round to Angela's cottage and after enduring a rapturous welcome from Amber, their springer spaniel, was happily united with the girl he loved. As they drank coffee together he enthusiastically shared his plans with her for the afternoon, while Mum Angela busied herself making a cake.

"A simnel cake for Easter," she explained, stirring up the mixture.

Taking Amber with them and leaving Angela to her baking, Jack and Georgia took their seats in the car and set off across the moor. The sun shone from a cool blue sky and flat, green fields spread all around them, giving Georgia a wonderful sense of freedom and a release from all the demands of the past weeks. Free, yet safe, she thought as she looked at the man she loved sitting beside her.

Leaving the moor, their drive took them along deep narrow lanes which led them to the crest of a hill and a spacious car park, which commanded sweeping views across a green valley to the gently rolling hills beyond.

"What a lovely spot for a picnic!" observed Georgia. They sat together enjoying the peaceful view, their sandwiches and one another. Jack grinned. "Have you noticed that sandwiches always taste better when eaten outdoors?" he said, helping himself to another. Georgia nodded. "Any cake?" she asked smiling, as she poured coffee from the flask. Then, their lunch over, Jack packed the picnic things into the car.

"A perfect day for a walk!" Georgia exclaimed, enjoying both the warmth of the sun and the fresh, cool spring air. "With a perfect companion!" smiled Jack, taking hold of her hand. With Amber on a long lead they

left the car park and walked along a rough footpath that followed the contour of the hill and led them beside fresh green pastures then through a shady copse of tall pine trees. Emerging from the cool shade, they welcomed again the warmth of the sun on their faces and the wide open space of the hillside. They continued their walk until their lively conversation was accompanied by the bleating of sheep and lambs. Jack shortened Amber's lead and the three of them walked alongside a thick, thorny hedge until they arrived at the field's gate. Then, leaning upon it, Jack and Georgia watched with delight as the young lambs in their white, woolly coats skipped and scampered on the soft green grass in the April sunshine, carefree and content, knowing that mother was close by, watching over them. Twin lambs scampered up to them, bleating a greeting, turning their endearing little faces towards them, only to dart away quickly on hearing their mother's warning bleat. So Jack and Georgia lingered there for a while, enjoying this idyllic springtime scene, laughing and taking photos, then resumed their walk with glad and happy hearts.

Perhaps, one day, they would hear an old song, a favourite of Bob's that he liked to play at this time of year: "All in an April evening." In it, the songwriter recalls an April evening when he came across a flock of sheep with their lambs making their weary way up a hillside to fresh, green pastures where they would find rest and refreshment. His thoughts then turned to Jesus, the Lamb of God. The song ends with these words:

"But for the Lamb, the Lamb of God, Up on the hilltop green,
Only a cross, a cross of shame, Two stark crosses between.
All in an April evening, April airs were abroad
I saw the sheep with their lambs and I thought of the Lamb of God."

(Hugh S. Roberton.)



Martin's Musings



By Revd Martin Mudie

An occasional contribution from the garden of many delights…

Our pagan forbears used to mark the significant times in the natural year with festivals. So, both the midwinter solstice, when days in the northern hemisphere began to lengthen and the spring equinox, where day and night were the same were both celebrated.

Then, when our clever Christian forebears came along, they didn't abolish the festivals. They just pinched them! The midwinter festival became Christmas, celebrating the light of Christ coming into a darkened world and the ancient pagan festival of the spring equinox which celebrated the coming back to life of plants and trees that had been dormant for the winter as well as the birth of new life in the animal world. Given the symbolism of new life and rebirth, it was only natural for the church to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and they named it Easter, after Eostre, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring and new birth.

Our French cousins call it Pasque, connecting it with the Jewish festival of Passover (the Greek word is Pascha), during which Jesus was crucified, died and raised by God from the dead. Thus, on every Easter Eve, the Paschal Candle is lit and brought into our churches, representing the new resurrection life which Jesus offers for us all.

Easter itself has been celebrated in many ways over the years. Nowadays we have wonderful chocolate eggs, invented by the clever Mr Fry in the 19th century, but decorated eggs have been given as symbols of new life at Easter since Roman times and indeed are still given in Poland. The symbolism became more important in the Middle Ages when eggs were not allowed to be eaten during Lent. Just imagine the horror of a Lenten Sunday Tea without boiled eggs and honey!

I am so glad we now live in more enlightened times. So, however you choose to celebrate Easter–for me it will be Roast Lamb and Christmas pudding (too good just for Christmas) and all those lovely Easter Eggs–I wish you all a very Happy Easter.

Burrowbridge



Burrowbridge WI

Today's Women Working For Tomorrow's World

We meet the third Monday of every month at 7.30pm at Burrowbridge Coronation Hall, Burrowbridge.

If you would like any further information please call our secretary, Sue Heyes, 01278 691326 or email: burrowbridgewi@outlook.com

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

Prayer Across the Benefice

Prayer is at the heart of the Christian faith. It is a time to speak to God. Prayer is not simply kneeling and holding your hands together. It is not necessarily about sitting quietly and looking ever so Holy. Prayer can be a time of extreme frustration or a moment of utter joy when you can't stand still. It may happen when you read a poem or sing a song. Perhaps you have a favourite way to pray.

Lyng



Lyng Brunch

There will be Lyng Brunch of the year will be held at 10.30am on Saturday 18th March. Bacon butties and more will be on sale to raise funds for the clock. You will also be expected to have a chat and generally meet people in the village. Knowing Lyng, that won't be too much of a problem.



The Wall

You can't help but notice the big sacks of ballast placed at the west wall of the churchyard in Lyng.

These are in place because, also, you will know that the wall is in a rather sorry state. The ballast is there to help keep the wall from falling down or at the very least bowing out any more. The bags are placed there by the district council and their future will be reviewed once the unitary council begins to operate this month… we shall see how things develop. Watch this space.

North Curry

North Curry Coffee Shop



The coffee shop continues to operate through the week, from Tuesday to Sunday. It is a delightful place to stop and chat, discover what's going on in the village. We look forward to welcoming you in for a browse and maybe a light lunch or coffee and cake. Opening hours Tues-Sun 9.30-4.30. If you are interested in volunteering please contact Alison Stone 01823 490282 or aj.carterstone@gmail.com.

White Street News from North Curry Sport

200 Club: Congratulations to these winners of the March draw: Youth Football Club, Mary Piers and Mary Cridge! There are a few places left in the 200 Club. It costs just £12 to enter for the year. Just send a message to: whitestreet@northcurry.com All proceeds support the running of the White Street site. Thank you!

Enjoy and Care!

We hope that everyone who makes casual use of the site enjoys it. Please ensure that you manage your dog(s) and care for our pitches.



200 CLUB

200 Club winners

Sunday 5th March

1st Leslie Dennis

2nd Martin Horrox

3rd Rachel Walker

The North Curry Parish Church 200 Club still has room for one more! Players must be 18yrs+ to join. Only £18 per year (£1.50/ month)

Prizes each month £30/ £20/ £10, plus a special Christmas bonus draw of £60. Proceeds for churchyard maintenance

To sign up, contact Sue Bethune on 01823 490179. Cheque payments to North Curry PCC, Standing Order/ BACS payments to North Curry PCC,
Account No: 00514650,

North Curry
Music Festival

Friday 9 June to Sunday 11 June

Come & Join Us !

Friday evening
Folk Concert
The Askew Sisters

Saturday
Family Events
Amazing 'Drain-o-Phone'
Children's Workshops
Musical Parade & Picnic Concert

Saturday evening
Classical Concert
Ben Griffiths Quintet

Sunday
Choral Events
Choral Eucharistic Service
Peal of the Recast Bells
Evensong with 'In Ecclesia'

www.northcurrymusicfestival.org

Tickets available from TicketSource.co.uk ,
North Curry Post Office, Taunton Visitor Centre

Going nuclear near you!

NORTH CURRY SOCIETY

Our speakers on 19th April are from the Hinkley Point Community Relations team. Hinkley Point on the Severn Estuary at Bridgwater Bay is one of seven sites in England (and one in Wales) announced by HM Government in 2010 as suitable for nuclear power stations. Hinkley Point C (HPC) has been under construction since 2017 - Hinkley Point A had closed down and Hinkley Point B was still operating at that time. HPC has a projected lifetime of 60 years.

HPC is said to be the largest construction site in Europe, and members of the Community relations team will describe recent and future developments there.

North Curry Society meet at the Village Hall, generally on the third Wednesday each month, for talks relating to local or natural history, archaeology & architecture and the people who have lived in and around the village. Doors open 7.30pm for refreshments and chat, with a chance to engage in further discussion with the guest speaker(s) afterwards. Visitors always welcome - the charge is £5 for the evening, or become a Member at £15 for the rest of the year up to and including our AGM in July.

Gill Slocombe and Sherry Keith-Welsh, Joint Chairmen





North Curry and District Amateur Gardeners

New members and visitors always welcome. Membership is £12 annually with visitors charged £3 per visit. Need more info? Phone Sue, 01823 491658 or email northcurrygardeningclub@gmail.com

To celebrate the success of the Appeal of Bells

An evening with



Mary Stewart-Wilson and friends

Glenise Bunn (alto), Wayne Hahn (organ)
Margaret Marinkovic (piano), Alan Philps (baritone)
John Williams (tenor)

Musical theatre, songs, readings, organ solos

Flanders & Swann, Rodgers & Hammerstein, G & S and more

Saturday 15 April
North Curry Church, 7.00 for 7.30pm

Tickets £12.50 (including a glass of wine before, from 7.00pm, and after)
from the Post Office or www.ticketsource.co.uk (search 'North Curry')

The new bells have been hung ...

… but (before you get too excited) not yet in North Curry, only 200 miles away in the Loughborough foundry

The foundry's photo shows the new frame, with all eight bells in place, assembled in the workshop. Space, as you can see, is tight. This is the opportunity to check that one bell does not impede another as they are turned. If there is a problem, it is best solved a ground level, not when the frame and bells have been winched up into the tower at North Curry.

The bells hang from cast-iron headstocks, painted in the red that marks out bells throughout the world which have been cast by Taylors of Loughborough. The wheels which carry the bell ropes are made mainly of American ash, with mahogany for the flanges that keep the ropes in place. Their large circumference provides the leverage to turn the massive weight of the bell: the largest bell in the new North Curry peal (the tenor) tips the scales at three quarters of a ton – and that is over 10% lighter than the previous tenor.

Dr William Hibbert, an expert in the tuning of bells, has analysed the newly cast bells for us. They have been cast to a particular shape – the 'Gillett & Johnston profile' – which is considered to create an especially sweet tone. As no records of bell designs survive from Gillett & Johnston's bellfoundry, the Loughborough foundry had to take laser measurements of existing Gillett & Johnston bells and create entirely new moulds for the North Curry bells.

The sound of a church bell is not a simple thing: it contains multiple frequencies of vibration. Within each bell certain frequencies must be in tune, and the bells must then be in tune with one another as a peal. They are tuned by removing metal, normally from the inside, on a vertical lathe. Dr Hibbert compared the North Curry bells to 20 peals cast by Gillett & Johnston between 1911 and 1937. He concluded that our bells successfully reproduce the Gillett & Johnston profile, and they have been 'well tuned'.

All this leaves the big question: how soon will we have the bells not only in the church but also in working order? 'By Easter' was the quiet hope, but that is unlikely; the more loudly voiced hope is 'around the end of April', when we will be joined by the Bishop of Bath and Wells in a service of celebration and dedication on the final Sunday of the month – but even that is dependent on progress with construction work in the tower. The real aim is 'in time to join the nationwide ringing of bells to celebrate the Coronation'. So don't hold your breath yet – but feel free to do so from the beginning of May.



North Curry Village Choir

Spring Concert

Haydn - Maria Theresa Mass

Vaughan Williams -
Five Mystical Songs

Soloists & other music

Saturday 29th April
7:30pm

North Curry
Parish Church

Tickets £10 from Village Post Office or Choir Members

www.northcurryvillagechoir.org.uk

News from North Curry and Curland Methodists

After a short break in production we are delighted to be back!

Although small in number as a congregation we are strong in our faith and keen to be a part of village life.

Your attention is drawn to the Taizé service to be held in the chapel on Good Friday. April 7th at 7pm. It is a gentle reminder of the real meaning of Easter and it is always a pleasure to welcome friends of other churches for a time of reflection, music and readings.

We hope to have a stall at the May Fair again this year and welcome the fact that we and the Anglican Church have adjoining tables. It is also planned to have Dick Brewer's gazebo as protection against any inclement weather!

Another event to be anticipated this year, is the visit to Taunton of the Vice President of the Methodist Conference, Anthony Boateng in May. North Curry/Curland chapel friends, will be joining the congregation at Temple Methodist Church on this occasion.



The United Service for the World Day of Prayer was held at the Methodist Church in North Curry on Friday 3rd March, 3pm.

Representatives of the congregation from North Curry and Curland Methodist Church welcomed those from St Peter and St Paul's North Curry, Stoke St Gregory Baptist Church and St Gregory's Parish Church.

The service had been written by the women of Taiwan during 2020, when the world was suffering the effects of the Covid pandemic. Taiwan has for many years been caught in a superpower struggle, and China continues to claim Taiwan as its sovereign territory. With an approximate population of 23.6 million people, Taiwan is a densely populated multi-ethnic country with 16 officially recognized indigenous languages. The people are very much in need of our prayers at this time.

The theme was 'I have heard about your faith', based on Paul's letter to the Ephesians 1:15, and included an opportunity to hear about some of

the struggles for the people of Taiwan through letters of encouragement which focussed on some of the challenges: protection for the environment, discrimination towards working women and those who wish to pursue their education, the very particular challenges of the Covid pandemic through isolation, and those who had suffered from any form of abuse.

The different 'voices' were shared between those present, and the hymns were ably accompanied by Barbara. The service closed with the traditional WDP hymn 'The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended', with its reminder that whilst one part of the world rests, fresh lips take up the voice of prayer and praise as dawn leads others into day.

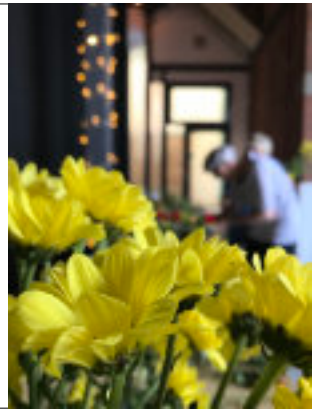
The service raised £116 towards the work of the National Committee – details of which can be found on their website www.wwdp.org.uk



Refreshments were enjoyed by all after the service. Thank you to all who took part in any way, and supported with their prayers.

Flower Arranging Workshop

Tuesday 23rd May from 10.30am to 1pm in North Curry Church. Langport Flower Club will be running a workshop, open to all-comers. Please come along to join in if you would like to discover or develop your inner flower arranger! We hope you will be inspired and encouraged, perhaps to start helping with church flowers. (No pressure, of course! This is an occasion to enjoy!) Further information from Lorraine Bryan-Brown, 01823 491665



Stoke St Gregory



Notice of St Gregory's Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Wednesday 26th April at 7pm in the Church Room

This meeting is open to members of the public and is the annual event when PCC members and church officers are appointed.

If you are interested in attending or even joining the PCC then please contact our secretary, the Rev Martin Mudie, on

Stoke St Gregory WI

Congratulations to Sue Hardy who won the annual WI competition producing a beautifully handmade St. Valentine's Day card!

The April members meeting should be highly entertaining with a spot of showbiz and glamour from Jan McNeil.

If you ever wondered about attending a WI meeting you would be extremely welcome to visit and enjoy Jan's performance.

Vicki Fielding is to give the vote of thanks. Barbara Parsons & Janice Pearce are on refreshments.

For further information, please contact Amelia Holt, President 01823 490401 or 07985317252

Can you help?

Do you (or does anybody you know) have beautiful copperplate or italic handwriting? We need somebody to help us bring our church-held records of gifts and the departed up to date with some handsome handwriting. Do you know anybody who could help? Please, yet again, call Jane (490508 – I love to get phone calls!)

I'm told the above paragraph is difficult to read so here it is again…

Do you (or does anybody you know) have beautiful copperplate or italic handwriting? We need somebody to help us bring our church-held records of gifts and the departed up to date with some handsome handwriting. Do you know anybody who could help? Please, yet again, call Jane (490508). I love to get phone calls!)





Old Church Records: Request for Volunteers

On the Saturday and Sunday after Easter (15th and 16th April) we are planning to have the old church records out from the Somerset Archives for people to come and examine. We shall need a collection of volunteers to oversee these when the church is open for a short period of time. Obviously, the more volunteers we have for church duties, the shorter length of time anybody will need to be on duty.

We hope also to have some live music in the church at some point and possibly a talk by a knowledgeable individual (yet to be confirmed).

We will also be serving refreshments in the Church Room during these hours, so more volunteers are needed to do some baking please, and another cohort of kind people to help out with serving on each day.

If you are able to support the church in these activities please contact Jane on 490508

We are also keen to know if how many people in the village have other family archives that could be of interest to others and whether they would be prepared to lend these to the exhibition. If this is the case then please let Jane know.

The weekend will conclude at 6pm on Sunday evening, 16th April, with a celebratory Evensong. All are invited.

NB: North Curry's usual Evensong will be shelved. Instead there will be a 10am Eucharist in North Curry

Open Gardens at Hillcrest (top of Curload), Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th May

Hillcrest Gardens are open from 1pm to 5pm for the National Garden Scheme, a charity that supports, amongst many others, Macmillan Cancer and Marie Curie Nurses.

With extensive views over the Levels, our 6 acre garden offers plenty of interest to young and old. There is a fine standing stone, woodland walks, varied flower borders, a large flowering meadow and wildlife pond, hopefully full of frogs and toads. We also have a newly planted large gravel garden, (formerly a tennis court) and raised beds producing a variety of vegetables. The garden is step free with gentle sloping paths.

To round off of your visit, delicious tea and cakes will be available with proceeds going to the Stoke St Gregory church fabric fund. There will also be a plant sale.

Admission to the garden is £5 per person, with children under 16 free of charge. Dogs are welcome on a lead. On site parking is available but if you are coming from the village please consider walking or cycling if you can.

Antoinette's Open Day

Hello, some of you know me and my baking and about me making celebration cakes with and for family and friends. These are the things I would like to offer through the food part of my business and this is an invitation to join me for:



"Antoinette's Open Day" on Friday 21st April 2023 from 10am to 12 noon and 3pm to 7pm at "Iona", Ham, Taunton TA3 5NZ

Come to enjoy tasty refreshments and talk to me about what Antoinette's can offer you; there will be goodies to buy and/or order too.

I look forward to seeing many of you there, best wishes from Sally Hale, sally@antoinettes.me.uk

Heart of the Village News

by Mike Blair, Chairman

We are looking forward to warmer days and the chancellor has spared a price increase on draught beer, although the duty has gone up on all other alcohol.

Trading is still difficult for small businesses but both the shop and pub are trading successfully. The changes made to reinvigorate the Royal Oak businesses are starting to show benefits. There is still a long way to go and the committee is determined to keep the business viable and resilient.

We are very grateful to our volunteers who are supporting the shop magnificently. They are showing tremendous flexibility and commitment, especially in covering for an unplanned absence. The support that they have been giving Jo and Ann is superb.

As customers, you will notice that volunteer training is ongoing. Initially this may slow service a little but it will help us to increase our pool of trained volunteers. If you feel that you might like to join our band of volunteers or that you have skills that can help us improve our businesses, please contact Jo, Carolyn or Ann Woods.

At the recent member meeting it was suggested that the committee should have a campaign to raise capital for paying off our loans. The members suggested that capital should be raised by the community buying shares. Although the initial share offer was closed, shares can be purchased at any time. Any capital raised in this way will be ring fenced and used only to reduce our loans, unless the purchaser chooses otherwise. We are checking that there are no penalty charges for paying off loans early and assessing which of our three loans will give us the most benefit if reduced.

The function room was used for the members meeting and for a very successful magic evening. The event was highly entertaining with music from Dave Owen (who is a stalwart of the acoustic evening in the Royal Oak) and a superb exhibition of magic from our local professional magician James Brown. Acoustic nights are fortnightly – next one is due on the 6th April

Thank you all for your continued support!

Happy St George's Day

Our Multi Award Winning Village Hub @ The Royal Oak, in Stoke St Gregory, is delighted to announce the return of Saint George to our Community Hub on St Georges Day, Sunday 23rd April at 12 noon.

Saint George's Day is the feast day of Saint George, celebrated by Christian churches, countries, and cities of which he is the patron saint, including Bulgaria, England, Georgia, Portugal, Romania, Cáceres, Alcoy, Aragon and Catalonia.

St George was buried in the Holy Land, and during the Crusades, St. George's Chapel was erected over his tomb. However, his heart was brought to England by the Emperor Sigismund of Germany and presented to King Henry V. The Order of the Knights of St. George was founded at Windsor Castle, and George became the patron saint of England.

Back by popular demand, the Langport Mummers will putting on a splendorous performance of the St. George Mummer's play.

There are regional variations of the St. George Mummer's play, but the plot always involves a sword fight between George and a dragon, or George and a Turkish Knight. The Mummers are woman and men wearing costumes of tatters and masks, and may have blackened faces to disguise their identities.



St. George is possibly England's most successful immigrant. Born in a foreign land, welcomed by the English and has worked hard for over 800 years in his adopted country. He has integrated so well that he has come to symbolise the very essence of 'Englishness'.

Contacts

General contact@hotvssg.org, Shop: shop@hotvssg.org Facebook search "Hotvshop", 07842992825

Pub: royaloakssg@gmail.com, Facebook search "Royal Oak Stoke St Gregory", 01823490602

Share forms are available from the shop or online at: stokestgregory.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/HOTV-share-application.pdf



A Vision of the Future

By Ian Upshall

On 12 March we were treated to the first episode of the latest Sir David Attenborough documentary–Wild Isles. The filming of these documentaries is simply astounding but what is more breath-taking is the natural world they portray. David Attenborough has made a significant contribution to the general public's understanding of wildlife, its beauty, fragility and complexity. What he is also able to do, so effortlessly, is highlight the impact we have on our fragile and carefully balanced world. In that first episode he presented us with a few startling statistics, in his inimitable and non-accusative way, about the decline of habitats and species in the UK. Looking out of our windows onto our ancient and green fields and moors, it is sometimes quite difficult to appreciate we live in a threatened environment.

Another interesting series that appeared on our screens in March was 'Our Troubled Rivers' fronted by one of my favourite comedians, Paul Whitehouse. But this series contains very few jokes. In the series we look at a number of rivers, many well-known, and hear about the pollution that is stripping them of all life. The country's most valuable resource – water – is being subjected to some horrific abuse. There is only one outcome if this abuse were to continue. Let's hope that those who look after these waterways on our behalf receive all the support, and incentives, necessary to reverse the damage being caused. The bottom line is 'no water, no life'.

In Stoke St Gregory, a team of residents are putting the finishing touches to a Village Plan. Based on the responses to questionnaires distributed to every house in the Parish, the Plan will highlight a number of issues for which residents care about – be it transport, sports and leisure, schooling and opportunities for young people, and the environment. The Plan will make a major contribution to a blueprint for our community. The environment will undoubtedly feature strongly – it is entwined with everything we do, after all. A vibrant, caring and resourceful community that respects and supports our fragile environment. Reducing the carbon footprint, saving energy, being prepared to do things differently, recycle and reuse more, reducing waste–all these things can be done to make our community more sustainable and equipped for a changing climate. These are the things that Stoke Environment Group want to address.

Upcoming events for the Stoke Environment Group include 'Give volunteering a go' at the village Coronation Fete on 8 May and our Environment Fair on 3 June. We also have plans to work with the children at our School and with a student at Strode College. Building a future with the future generation. Please come and support our events and make a difference. More information and contact details can be found on our website (Envirostoke) and Facebook page.

We don't own this environment, but we do own the responsibility to care for it.

The Reeves Feast



By Dave Evans

One hundred years ago this month, the Taunton Courier reported that a certain Mr Andrews remembered "when three bullocks were killed at Christmas-tide for the Reeves' feast." The responsibility for the feast is often credited to King John, but it may have had its origin in earlier Brythonic land tenure and rights and customs. Many of these were granted without any written charter. Instead they would continue only if certain rituals and customs were followed.

The menu included: "chine beef roasted, boiled rump and rump beef, bacon served with a sprig of rosemary and powdered with flour, boiled chicken, served with sops of bread, and proper vegetables". Dessert was a large mince pie with an effigy of King John in pastry and painted to represent a King. The 'Jack of Knapp' and the 'Real Jack of Slough', both pseudonyms for two local manors, were there, as in a deck of playing cards, as deputies of the King or Queen. The Jack of Slough was the owner of Slough Court in Stoke. The Jack of Knapp was the owner of a piece of ground called 'Parker's Mead', near the river at Haymoor's End. Until 1866 the Lords of the Manor, the Dean of Chapter of Wells Cathedral, paid 14 pounds 10 shillings towards the expenses of the feast. The left overs were supposed to be given to the poor. The feast was discontinued in 1866, but was revived the following year on a more 'charitable' basis.

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Currently the cost is £3.90 per meal.

The meals are cooked in the cooks' own kitchens and delivered to houses in Stoke St Gregory and North Curry. We are all volunteers and our cooks have food safety certificates

If you think Stoke St Gregory Meals could be of help to you, a neighbour, friend or relative in STOKE ST GREGORY or NORTH CURRY please phone:

Carole Joll 490077 or
Vicki Fielding 490565 or Judy Blair 490222

The Blue Sheet

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Rotas

North Curry

	Sidespersons	Intercessors	Readers
2nd April	Janet Dare, Pam Burgess	Helen Griffiths	Jenny Satchwell
5th April	Sally Keele	Jenny Satchwell	David Walker
6th April	Tom Jeanes	Helen Griffiths	Mary Piers
7th April	Janet Dare		
9th April	Tom Jeanes, Lin Paul	David Walker	David Akerman
16th April	Helen Comrie	Mary Piers	Julian Comrie, Judith Hincks
23rd April	Janet Dare, Pam Burgess	D Farnham	Zillah Sykes, Sue Harrison
7th May	L. B-Brown, Sally Keele	Owen Cullwick	Mary Cridge

Stoke St Gregory

	Sidespersons	Readers	Cleaners
2nd April	Barbara Parsons & John Hembrow	John Hembrow	Annette & Martin
9th April	Sally & Alex Morrice	Jane White	Volunteers please
16th April	Annette Gage & Veronica Albertini	Barbara Parsons	Dave & Janet
23rd April	Penny & Simon Baldwin	Diana Silk	Penny & Simon
30th April	No service at Stoke St Gregory		Linda & Brett
7th May	Barbara Parsons & John Hembrow	Alex Morrice	Carolyn & Amelia

Lyng

	Cleaning	Brass and Flowers
3rd April	Di James & Ruby Barrington	
10th April	Alison Perry & Lin Willis	
17th April	Alison Perry & Lin Willis	
23rd April	Sue Dare & Jenny Barnstable	Alison Perry

If anyone would like to join the Lyng rotas please contact Alison harveyfudge@icloud.com or 07470 838707. The more the merrier! Flowers are just two small brass vases on the altar and the small container on the war memorial. If you would like to discuss please

Services across the Benefice

2nd April	**Palm Sunday**	
8am	North Curry	Prayer Book Eucharist
9.30am	Lyng	Eucharist
9.50am	North Curry	gather outside Queen Square Garden
10am	North Curry	Eucharist
11am	Stoke St Gregory	Eucharist
3rd April	**Monday of Holy Week**	
6.30pm	Stoke St Gregory	Compline
6.30pm	Burrowbridge	Holy Communion
4th April	**Tuesday of Holy Week**	
9am	Stoke St Gregory	Morning Prayer
6.30pm	Stoke St Gregory	Compline
6.30pm	Lyng	Holy Communion
5th April	**Wednesday of Holy Week**	
9am	Burrowbridge	Morning Prayer
6.30pm	Stoke St Gregory	Compline
7pm	North Curry	Prayers, music and sacrament
6th April	**Maundy Thursday**	
9am	Lyng	Morning Prayer
6.00pm	Stoke St Gregory	Holy Communion & Stripping of Altars
7.30pm	North Curry	Holy Communion & Stripping of Altars
7th April	**Good Friday**	
10am	Stoke Baptists	Ecumenical Good Friday Service
2pm	Lyng	Good Friday Devotion
3.30pm	North Curry	United Benefice Stations of the Cross
7.30pm	NC Methodists	Ecumenical Taizé Service
8th April	**Easter Eve**	
8.30pm	Lyng	United Benefice Easter Vigil
9th April	**Easter Day**	
6.15am	Burrow Mump	Sunrise Service on the mump
6.15am	Stoke Baptists	Sunrise Service outside the chapel
9.30am	Lyng	Eucharist
10am	Burrowbridge	Eucharist
10am	North Curry	Eucharist
10.30am	Stoke Baptists	Easter Sunday Communion Service

Services across the Benefice

11am	Stoke St Gregory	Eucharist
11am	NC Methodists	Holy Communion
16th April	**Second Sunday of Easter**	
8am	North Curry	Prayer Book Eucharist
9.30am	Lyng	Eucharist
10am	North Curry	Eucharist
10.30am	Stoke Baptists	Family Service
11am	NC Methodists	Holy Communion
6pm	Stoke St Gregory	Evensong (celebrating the archives weekend)
23rd April	**Third Sunday of Easter**	
9.30am	Burrowbridge	Eucharist
10am	North Curry	Morning Prayer
10.30am	Stoke Baptists	Family Service
11am	Stoke St Gregory	Eucharist
11am	NC Methodists	Holy Communion
30th April	**Fourth Sunday of Easter (5th Sunday of April)**	
10am	Burrowbridge	United Benefice Eucharist
10.30am	Stoke Baptists	Family Service
11am	NC Methodists	Holy Communion
6pm	North Curry	Celebration Eucharist for the reinstallation of the North Curry Bells (President: The Bishop of Bath and Wells, Rt Revd Michael Beasley)
7th May	**Fifth Sunday of Easter**	
8am	North Curry	Prayer Book Eucharist
9.30am	Lyng	Eucharist
10am	North Curry	Eucharist, followed by Annual Meeting
10.30am	Stoke Baptists	Messy Church (breakfast at 10am)
11am	NC Methodists	Holy Communion
4.30pm	Burrowbridge	Benefice Coronation service
6pm	Stoke St Gregory	Evensong

Morning Prayer (The Daily Office) is said each day at 9am in the following parishes:

Tue: Stoke St Gregory, Wed: Burrowbridge, Thu: Lyng, Fri: North Curry. The prayer time last around 20 minutes and is a peaceful and enriching start to the day. All are welcome. You simply need to turn up.