The Athelney Magazine



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

May 2023

Who's Who

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

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Copy Date: 14th May

The editorial team meeting 10th May at 3pm. Copy text is best submitted as a Microsoft Word document, and any images as high resolution jpeg files.

To advertise in the magazine, please contact the Sally via magads@athelneybenefice.com. Costs for a year are £75/full page, £40/half page and £25/quarter page. Our year begins on 1st may and existing advertisers will be contacted in due course for their annual payment.



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!

You can find the coffee mornings here:



Burrowbridge

1st Saturday of each month, from 10.30am in church

Lyng

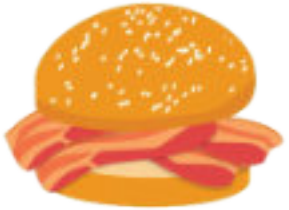
4th Saturday of each month, from 10.30 am the village hall (but May 20th!)

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.

Thank you to everyone who helps with these events

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Dear readers and subscribers,

Welcome to the May edition of the Athelney Benefice Magazine covering the Church Parishes of Burrowbridge, Lyng, North Curry and Stoke St Gregory. The editorial team are pleased to be able to serve the communities by producing this magazine and believe that, whilst we acknowledge some errors have been made and being human, we will probably make a few more; overall, it is an enjoyable and informative publication. Please email any feedback (preferably positive!) to magazine@athelneybenefice.com so that it reaches the full team.

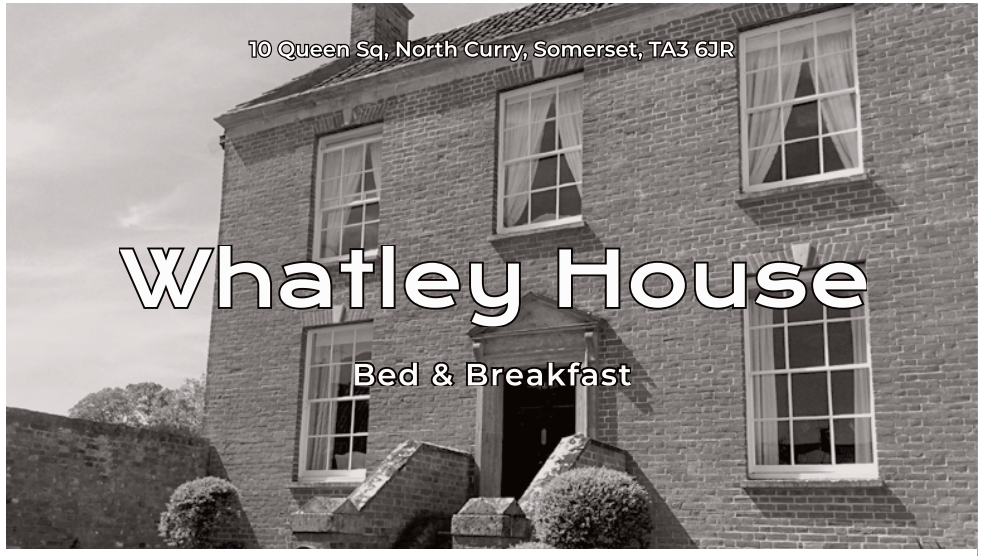
As we all know, costs of just about everything have risen and we are having to put the price up for the magazine. It has also been decided that the pricing has to be the same across the Benefice as this is the Benefice magazine. So, from June the price of an individual copy will be £1 on a pay as you go basis and the price will be on the front of the magazine. For the subscribers, the annual price will be £8 thereby getting 10 for the price of 8. We have also made a decision to move the yearly subscription collection time to June. This allows for the slight break in publications which happened in the change to this new magazine and gives notice.

For advertising: our current contributors have been contacted about their renewals. Sally Hale has taken on the role of co-ordinating adverts for the new magazine; thanks to Simon Baldwin and Karen for their work in the past. Use **magads@athelneybenefice.com** to contact Sally if you would like to advertise or wish to change your current advert. The prices are £75 for full page, £45 for half page and £30 for a quarter page for ten editions. For a one-off full page advert e.g., for an event the price is £10.

Many thanks,
The editorial team

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.



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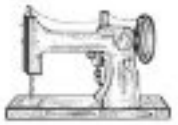
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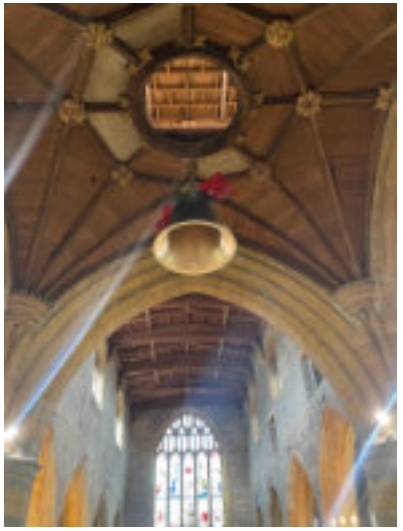
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The Athelney Benefice



Money for Old Rope?



At around 6.30pm on the Evening of 30th April just gone in North Curry Parish Church the Bishop of Bath and Wells said prayers over a piece of old rope. It just so happens that until last year that rope was attached to a two hundred year old Bell that rang to celebrate the victory at Waterloo in 1815. It is a symbol, this rope. It represents the newly recast bells in the tower which have cost £150,000. This money has been used to replace the old bell frame and to recast the old bells into the new ones that will be dedicated. The rope symbolises the bells above us in the tower. I am very excited about all this. I am the vicar at North Curry and having the new bells rededicated in this way by Bishop Michael is a definite high point for the church community and me.

There are two questions that are going around in my head, however.

First, is it important to have bells in churches? Second, Is it OK to spend such a large amount on them?

First of all, *of course* it's not important always to have bells in churches. Many churches either have none or never ring those they have and they get along fine as communities of believers and worshippers. We all have watches now and don't need to hear the bells in order that we know its time to go and pray. Even so, after the new bells rang their test rings this week, it is clear that they are a reminder to everyone in the village and fields that there is a church. Many of people have spoken to me of their joy at hearing the new bells. It is a call to the people that "God is here".

Bells fulfil a purpose beyond the "mere" sounding of the hours or even of the reminder to come to church. Church bells remind us of the presence in our world of the Good News of God. They are an alarm call of the need to consider how we live and how we can specifically live the life of Christ. When the church bells ring they sound chimes of freedom and of refuge, for those without a voice. Church Bells are a reminder of God in our lives.

But the second question: are they worth £150,000? That's actually more complex.

For sure, £150,000 would go a long way to funding many social care programmes. It could feed hundreds for months. And I am all for raising funds to do so. But is this comparing apples with oranges? All of the money for the bells has been raised through either personal donations or from funds specifically dedicated to bell refurbishment or church maintenance. I am confident that the same people who have given of their personal funds towards the bells are good, kind and concerned individuals who will also be giving to support those who struggle in their lives.

£150,000 is fifteen reasonably priced new cars. It is a fairly reasonable holiday for maybe 150 people. We all spend our own money in many different ways, and we can analyse and always find a better way (i.e. a more just, caring way) to spend all the income each of us might have. So, my answer is both yes and no. A cop out? Probably.

What is your answer? Is it money well spent or money for old rope?

A dedication to remember

It isn't every week the Bishop comes to church with you, and it isn't every week that he's got a Coronation to attend the following Saturday. That was just one of the special things about the dedication service held in North Curry last month.

Also in the running for making it special was that this was the first set of bells in the Kingdom to bear the royal cypher for King Charles. The Bells' first "proper" use will be to ring a full peal for the Coronation and then that afternoon they will sound for the wedding of Poppy and Josh. The first wedding to have bells since before the pandemic. And it is down to the hard work of so many people. Some are show in the photo below. This vicar cannot thank them (and so many others) enough for their commitment and hard work. Thank you, again.



From Bishop Michael

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Remember Jesus too



Writing about the celebration of Holy Communion almost eighty years ago, Gregory Dix posed the question 'Was ever another command so obeyed?' It's well worth searching online for his whole answer. An edited quote of his response reads:

'For century after century, spreading slowly to every continent and country and among every race on earth, this action has been done, in every conceivable human circumstance, for every conceivable human need. Men have found no better thing than this to do for kings at their crowning and for criminals going to the scaffold; for armies in triumph or for a bride and bridegroom in a little country church; for the wisdom of the Parliament of a mighty nation or for a sick old woman afraid to die; while the lions roared in the nearby amphitheatre; on the beach at Dunkirk. And best of all, week by week and month by month, on a hundred thousand successive Sundays, faithfully, unfailingly, across all the parishes of Christendom, the pastors have done this just to make the plebs sancta Dei—the holy common people of God.'

The first of Dix's scenarios will be played out before us at the coronation of King Charles III. At the heart of the ceremony, amidst all the pomp and circumstance, the oaths and declarations, the regalia and crowning, will be the celebration of Holy Communion. The words used will be just the same as those spoken in our parish churches Sunday by Sunday. From Communion, the King and Queen will be sent out from Westminster Abbey to live like us the prayer we say at the end of many of our services. They will offer 'their souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice, sent out in the power of [God's] Spirit to live and work to [God's] praise and glory.'

The command that the King, Queen and all of us obey is Jesus's direction to 'Do this in remembrance of me.' So, as you watch the Coronation please remember Jesus too. For he is the one who comes to us as a servant; the king of Kings.

Bishop Michael



Martin's Musings

By Revd Martin Mudie

An occasional contribution from the garden of many delights…

I always think that there is nothing so lovely as our English gardens in the spring.

First thing on any pleasant May morning you will find me with the girls enjoying that most wonderful drink of the day in the spacious grounds of Bourton House – The Morning Tea.

As I sit and ponder in my garden I think back on how it was three years ago when Annie and I moved in. The grounds had been weeded and were very tidy but there were only two trees there – a mahonia and a lilac. Since then, they have been joined by a few others (numeracy is in the eye of the beholder!) However, much though I love the garden I have created, no one can buy time and I will never see the trees I have planted come to full maturity. However, all is not lost. Thanks to the unwitting generosity of my kind and generous friends and neighbours (as a hero of mine, Benjamin Disraeli once said, you can never use too much flattery); over the hedge I can enjoy the following from my garden. A wonderful wildflower meadow, many fine trees and conifers and splendid vegetable patch.

Going further afield, on my regular journey between the coffee shops at Stoke and North Curry, and less often between the churches there are two wonderful magnolias in the house next to the Willows, and a bit further down another magnolia and a wonderful cherry tree.

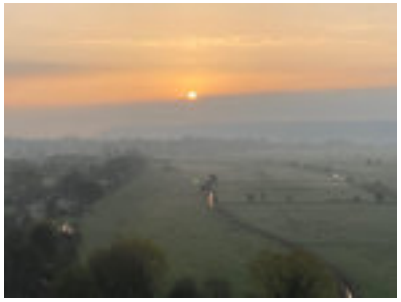
All this set me thinking on how much we share with our friends and neighbours, not only our gardens but each other. Moving from a town where, after 20 years, I hardly knew any of my neighbours, I think it is wonderful on how friendly and caring our country neighbours can be, not only with their gardens but with themselves.

All of us have something good to offer and share with each other, so keep up the good work!



Burrowbridge





Easter Day on The Mump

It always seems a good idea to say, "Yes! Of course we will start Easter Day by welcoming the sunrise at the top of the mump." Until the day dawns, that is, and it's dark and cold and early in the morning. But again this year, a (growing) band of faithful insomniacs gathered at the top of Burrow Mump. We sang and we prayed and we shared pastries: traditions form fast in Athelney.

And once again the sun showed its face, not long after 6.45am, once it had got past Aller Hill and a pesky bank of cloud. It was worth the early start. It always is. Sun rise on Easter Day is very special: we recall the sense of excitement felt by the women at Jesus's empty tomb, and we marvel at the miracle of a new world, new every morning.

Next year, however… Easter Day is the same day that the clocks go forward. That means (effectively) a 4am start.

See you then? Of course.



Monthly Market at the Coronation Hall

The second Saturday of every month, 10.30am to 12.30pm.

West Yeo Road, TA7 0RH

A time to gather and chat and to buy locally sourced food, goods and other produce.

Tea, coffee and breakfast rolls also available

Burrowbridge WI

Today's Women Working For Tomorrow's World

An update on recent activity of the Burrowbridge WI will appear in the next issue of this magazine. In the meantime…

…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 burrowbridgewi@outlook.com

Lyng



Lyng Brunches and the Church Clock

For some time the church clock has been struggling to keep the time and is in need of a major repair. This, of course, comes at a price and, also, of course, church funds are rarely if ever buoyant!

Our approach is therefore to raise funds for the clock through all manner of events. Mostly these involve food and nattering because that is always good fun in Lyng.

Since the beginning of the year around £370 has been raised through the selling (and eating) of bacon butties and associated edibles, so we're on the way…

Thank you to everyone who is helping out with this fund raising. The additions to each of our waistlines is a true sacrifice for this worthy cause.

Please note: as of June, coffee mornings and brunches will be held on the 4th Saturday of each month (NOT May, which will be 20th)



The Village Hall

Lyng Village Hall is so often the place to be. Especially when there's celebrations to be had. The past few months have seen a Burn's Night, complete with haggis and Scottish(-ish) music entertainment (thank you to all who contributed) and a St Patrick's Day party, also with music and nation-appropriate food. It's fast becoming the cosmopolitan hub for the benefice.

Watch this space for the 24 hour dance-athon being planned for the summer…

Thank you to everyone who helps with the happenings!



Our village hall

By Lyng's own poet laureate, Charissa Dovey

Our village hall is small
Our village hall is cold
It was built in 1936
So, I guess it is quite old

Our village hall has ivy
Growing in the toilet
They say it adds character
"If you cut it back you'll spoil it"

Our village hall has a kitchen
If you can call it that
Last time I went in there
I swear I saw a rat

Our village hall is shabby
Our village hall is dark
Some would like to knock it down
And make a new car park

Our village hall has history
If the walls could only yak
I bet they'd tell a tale or two
Of Lyn and John and Jack

Our village hall needs a revamp
Like they do it on the telly
I think I'll call Nick Knowles,
He'll turn up in his welly's.

Our village hall has flaws
Of that there are a plenty
Ive counted on my fingers and toes
So far we're up to twenty

Our village hall was once the hub
The beating heart of lyng
If we can make it great again
Debbie can add the bling

Our village hall has purpose
Our village hall has justification
It's in times like this we find
It isn't just a polling station

Join me please to raise a glass
Join me one and all
Raise a glass and a toast
To our village hall

Lyng Parish Council

The Parish Council meets every two months, usually on a Thursday evening, at Lyng Village Hall. Members of the public are always welcome to attend. Some of the issues discussed at the last meeting on Thursday 23rd March were as follows:

- The damaged parish noticeboard at Outwood has been noted and will be repaired as soon as possible.
- 30mph/50mph wheelie bin stickers will be purchased and distributed to those residents on the main road through East Lyng/ West Lyng to provide a regular reminder to drivers of the appropriate speed limit.
- Speed Indicator Devices-the posts have just been installed and the SIDs should be up and running soon.
- Defibrillators-the second defibrillator, obtained through a successful grant application to Benenden Health Charitable Trust, has been dispatched by the supplier.

- Village Transport Plan-the feedback was discussed, and it was decided to consult with Cllr Revans (Somerset Council) about the best way forward.

Update: The SIDs are now in place and the defibrillator has been installed at West Lyng Farm. This is registered on The Circuit. Should the need arise please call 999 who will have the location logged and the Ambulance Service will guide you through its use.

Dates of next Parish Council meetings:

Thursday 18th May at 7pm: Annual Parish Meeting, followed immediately by the Parish Council AGM.

Thursday 27th July at 7pm: the Parish Council meeting will begin with a presentation from the Airband Community Liaison Officer to give us more information about the project planned in our parish.



North Curry Flower Show

Schedules are out now, on sale in the Post Office

It is time to plan those entries

Plant, paint, Brew & stitch...

Show date August 12th, 2023







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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: C Trim, D Akerman and the Youth Football Club

The Big Bash returns 27 August! Featuring high energy band Snappa and our own Andries Geurin. Ticket details announced soon.

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 David Board

2nd John Miles-Taylor

3rd Nina Locke

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,
Sort Code: 30-98-45

North Curry

Music Festival

Friday 9 June
to Sunday 11 June

Keep the Dates Free !

Friday Concert — *The Askew Sisters*

Saturday Events — *Children's Music Workshop*
Musical Picnic & Parade

Saturday Concert — *Ben Griffiths Quintet*

Sunday Events — *Morning Eucharistic Service*
Peal of the Recast Bells
Evensong with 'In Ecclesia'

www.northcurrymusicfestival.org

Christian Aid Week 2023

Soaring costs are affecting people here and around the world. Families in Malawi are paying the price of this global crisis. Food, fuel, fertiliser and school fees have doubled in price in the last 12 months. And hard-working farmers are seeing their harvests fail as the climate crisis brings increasingly erratic weather.

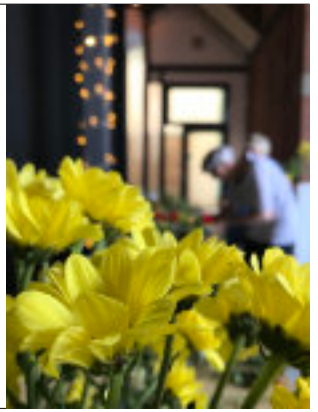
Christian Aid works with local partners and communities to fight injustice, respond to humanitarian emergencies, campaign for change, and help people claim the services and rights they are entitled to. Every pound donated and every fundraising event held helps us to eradicate poverty.

A single payment of £10 could pay for a 2kg bag of seeds to plant pigeon peas – a hardy, drought-resistant crop. £50 could provide pigeon pea seeds and farming tools for a family. £100 could help provide a business training session, helping farmers to secure higher, fairer prices for their crops.

Christian Aid Week is 14th – 20th May. Instead of a door-to-door collection, the Anglican and Methodist Churches are taking a stall at this year's North Curry May Fair in Church Road on the afternoon of 13th May where you can make your donations. Let's see what we can do to support this work.

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



A small gallery of bells…

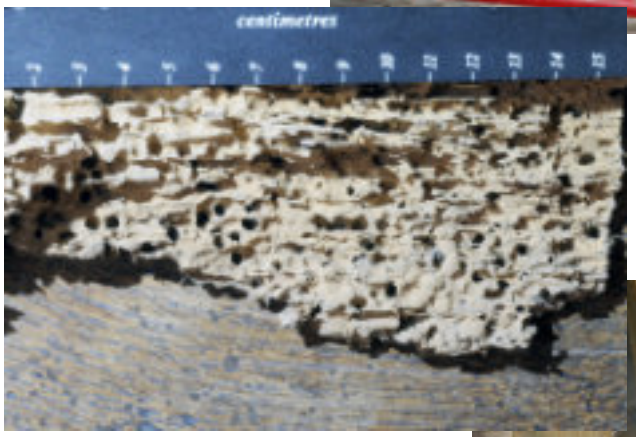






…more to follow next month!









The History and Mystery of the Freshwater Eel

Wednesday 17th May 2023

NORTH CURRY SOCIETY

Eels have been a feature of the natural fauna of the Somerset Levels from prehistoric times and are known as a source of protein for the lake villages and riverside settlements. It is more recently that their economic potential has been recognised.



Raconteur with a passion for eels, Michael Brown will outline briefly how he first came to be involved with them (in spring 1973); describe what it was like to go elvering in the old days, look at the life cycle of the eel and its unique characteristics and finally consider its importance as a food source down through the ages.

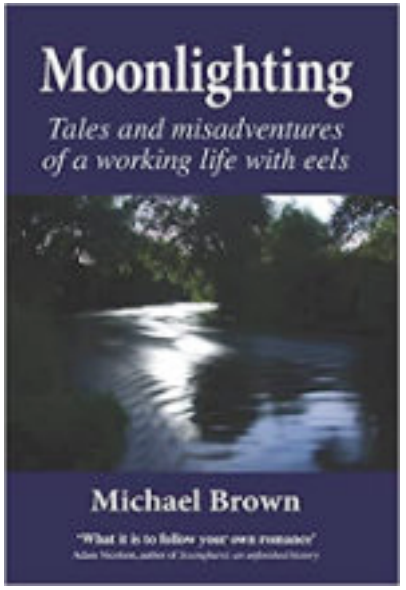
Michael has now retired from the family-run smokery and restaurant he set up overlooking the Levels, and is a keen gardener, cyclist, tennis player, grandparent to four boys in Australia, and writer of books, including *Moonlighting: Tales and Misadventures of a Working Life with Eels*.

With tea or coffee at 7.30pm, the talk will start promptly at 8. No props or electronics required, just him and the voice!

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.

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. The new Society year starts in September.

Sherry Keith-Welsh, Chairman



News from North Curry and Curland Methodists

Good Friday Taizé Service Taizé: Prayer in Silence and Song



The service proceeded with readings telling the story of the events of Good Friday leading to the crucifixion of Jesus.

It was followed by silence and song, to allow us to reflect on these events and their place in our lives.

Altogether, a timely reminder for everybody, of the importance of silence and reflection in our hectic lives.



Easter the greatest festival in the church calendar.

Easter day dawned with sun and cloudless skies as the worshipers entered the chapel which had been tastefully decorated by Christine



The service, which was led by the Rev'd Lynne Mayers, contained readings from Isaiah 65 v 17-10, 21-23 and John 20 v1-18.

Among the hymns chosen, were "He is Lord, He is risen from the dead and He is Lord," and "Thine be the Glory," set to the glorious tune from the oratorio Judas Maccabaeus by Handel.

Dates for the diary:

May 7th Visit to the Circuit of the Vice president of the Methodist Conference Mr. Anthony Boateng when the congregation will worship with Temple Methodist Church.

May 14th Miss V Pearson,

May 21st Mrs Glenys Allinson

May 28th 3pm Rev'd Deborah Kirk Pentecost Praise with Anglican friends on the Green (weather permitting, otherwise in Methodist Church)

June 25th Church Anniversary. At 3pm.

Stoke St Gregory



Stoke St Gregory WI

Stoke St Gregory WI have a few exciting outings planned for the coming months:
Friday 9th June, the Institute are visiting the Museum of Somerset in Taunton for a talk on three inspirational women along side an exhibition on a Suffragist.

On Tuesday 13th June from 7pm at the Village Hall, Carolyn Dauncey is coming to our members meeting to demonstrate designing a posy arrangement in a rose bowl.
Mary Ginger is giving the Vote of Thanks and Helen Grant and Karen Housego are acting as Tea Hostesses.

The July meeting is an evening visit for supper at the Pitney Farm Shop followed by a tour of the Organic Farm. Further details in next months magazine.

We also have a Federation visit to Hinkley Point Power Station on Wednesday 19th July.

Fancy joining in? Then don't hesitate to get in touch for further details. We are delighted to welcome our latest new member Marian Walls.

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!)





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.

Open Gardens – A Call for helpers

We need cakes baked ahead of the event. Teas served on both days; some washing up on both days and clearing up after the event (even a hand to set up beforehand would be welcomed). In 2019 around 200 teas were servied across the two days…. This will require about 25 cakes and 10 litres of milk. This has become our one great fundraiser for the church in recent years, until covid intervened, and it can be so again. As you may know, there is quite a hefty maintenance bill looming on the horizon with essential restoration work to be done in the Lady Chapel and highly desirable work needed on the footpaths. If you can help out, please get in touch with Jane White (janepwhite@hotmail.com or 01823 490508).

The Mud Huts of Athelney

By Dave Evans

Between Knapp and Stanmoor Bridges, the Tone is not a river to fall in love with at first sight. It is not like the rushing waters of the East Lyn, or the gentle bubbling of the Barle. Here, the Tone is a drain, and unless a spring tide is up it has steep muddy banks. But for the early settlers of the river bank it was not only the best means of transport, it was about the only possible means of owning your own home.

Between the river and the road was the 'Ward-wall', to hold back the waters of the Tone from the lower ground. The landowners of the parishes had responsibility for different sections of the wall and had to make any necessary repairs at their own expense. It was not surprising, therefore, that they turned a blind eye to individuals and families who built cottages on top of the bank, and then took on the maintenance of their section. These would sometimes have started life as simple mud huts, thatched with sedge from the rhynes. The men were often boatmen, so a few steps would be cut in the bank to access the water. In time, brick walls were built around the house, a hedge was put to the road. A piece of ground the other side of the road was acquired for a garden, and fruit trees were planted. We can still see the results today.

Walter Raymond, a Victorian traveller, recalled meeting a woman who lived in one of the cottages and she related the story of the building: " 'twere gramfer what first builded a house here, sure 'nough. You zee 'twere like this. The wold man, he builded a little house o' the river-mud, there on the bit his brother had a-tookt in avore. There 'pon a spring-tide one night, he heaved un up 'pon apple poles, an' brought un over river 'pon the barge, an' clapped un down right there-right, an' lighted up his vire avore light, an' lived in un vor years, zo he did." The woman then explained to Walter Raymond that the family built a brick wall a foot or two outside the mud hut and cleared out the inside, so that when she married into the family she and her husband were owners of a brick cottage. Also, because it was on the Ward-wall, they paid no taxes. The only problem was the damp. As the woman said: "But lauk! 'tis zo wet."



Drawing of the exterior of an Athelney Mud Hut. For more on this story see https://www.gregorystoke.org/property

Heart of the Village News

by Mike Blair, Chairman

As we move towards the summer, there is good news from the Royal Oak!

We are pleased to announce that as from the 12 th May we will be offering good value high quality pub food. After much searching, we have managed to recruit Jenna, a very talented chef, to our team. She is an experienced chef who has worked in a variety of catering establishments in the UK and abroad including 5* hotels, bistro pubs and busy cafes.

Jenna will bring her passion for the environment into her cooking, sourcing local and seasonal ingredients to create a range of tasty dishes. She aims to highlight the great produce available to us locally and the varied dishes and flavours that can be created using them. Some members of the community have already sampled her cooking when she kindly agreed to hold a pop-up food evening at the Royal Oak.

The feedback from the diners at this event was unanimously positive. Food will be available on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings plus Sunday lunchtime. It will be advisable to book tables via Phil.

Despite the fact that UK food prices are rising at the fastest rate in over 40 years and annual food and non-alcoholic drink inflation is running at around 16.8%, the pub, shop and café are continuing to provide a valuable service to the community.

Our volunteers are proving to be a vital asset, and the training of new volunteers is progressing. It is anticipated that we will need additional staff when the food service starts. We hope to use a mix of paid and volunteer staff to help Jenna and Phil manage the service. The type of activities will include bar work, table servers, cleaners, pot washers etc.

If you feel that you might like to join our band of volunteers or that you have skills that can help make the new food service a success please contract Phil, Jo, Carolyn or Ann Woods.

Thank you all for your continued support and we look forward to you enjoying the new Royal Oak dining experience.

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

Stoke St Gregory Parish Council Report March 2023

Parking Issues

Please may we respectfully ask that people use the available car parks at the Royal Oak and the Church. The spaces outside the shop need to be available for those with mobility problems and it is an offence to block the fire hydrant so parking outside the Old Bakery on the bend of Willey Road should be avoided.

Private Hedge Cutting

The Parish Council expresses thanks to those who have maintained the hedges ahead of the fledgling season. The hedge on Huntham Lane has been cut back and the speed signage along Willey Road has been cleared.

Footpaths

A member of the public has reported that the public right of way T25/25 is blocked with no obvious footpath signage. This was followed up by the Clerk but there are many footpaths with similar historic problems. Only one case a year is dealt with based on whether it is a high priority. T25/25 is deemed as a low priority.

Village Plan update

The village plan analysis report has now been submitted to the Community Council for Somerset who have provided positive comments in the feedback. An action plan of SMART goals and measurable achievements was also submitted. The final plan is on the village website. Hard copies are available from the Parish Clerk please email ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk Hard copies will be available at various meeting points in the village. Thanks to the Steering group for their hard work and in particular Danny and Kate James for taking on the lead role in producing the final document.

County Councillor Report

David Fothergill informs us that the 2023/2024 budget for the new Unitary Council has been set. There is a consultation on the Somerset Council website regarding school term dates and a campaign is ongoing on domestic abuse.

The Authority is currently recruiting social workers and offering up to £20,000 bursary for training to be a social worker. The council are also looking to recruit child advocates to support children through the Route 1 programme. More information can be found on the Somerset Council website : www.somerset.gov.uk



Looking Forward to Getting Familiar?

By Ian Upshall

"No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced" – a quote by Sir David Attenborough. What an insightful thought!

Now is the time of year many of us will be making plans for holidays and events with family and friends whilst enjoying the best of the summer weather. Our travels may take us to foreign lands, experience exotic cultures, and see some amazing creatures. But it is worth remembering that we also live in a unique environment that we can explore each time we leave our house. Living, as we do, surrounded by wonderful countryside can result in 'environmental-myopia'. There is a saying that "familiarity breeds contempt" which can be interpreted as 'extensive knowledge of, or close association with someone or something leads to a loss of respect for them, or it'. However, it may be preferable to consider the origins of the word "familiarity" which is from the Latin word familiaritatem which means 'intimacy, friendship'. So, when we get the opportunity, lets familiarise ourselves and experience our surroundings and then, as Sir David suggests, we will care about our environment.

Stoke Environment Group remains active and has a number of events coming up in the village. We will be celebrating the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla on 8 May at a village fete where we would love to talk about community volunteering. This is followed by an Open Garden weekend at Hillcrest on 13/14 May and then, of course, our third Envirofair.

We will see a return of the Owls (Tawny, Little, Barn and Eagle) this year which proved to be one of the most popular parts of Envirofair22. You may have seen a ghostly apparition of a Barn Owl in the distance, but have you seen one up close? Have you ever experienced its silent flight as it flies over your head? If not, come and join us. We also welcome back Somerset Wildlife Trust, Somerset Wildlands, the RSPB and The Woodland Trust. We also have many local groups and organisations coming along for this free, friendly, family event that celebrates nature and the environment. We would love to see you at the Village Hall in

Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory on 3 June between 10am and 4pm. Raffle with great prizes, refreshments and activities for the children.

The Group is also organising some other family events such as a 'bio-blitz' on 1 July where we will learn how to make the most of our smart phone and to help log wildlife sightings (thanks to SWT) and a Bat Detective evening on 2/3 September where, again, we will use our smart phones to find bats and identify them through their high-frequency calls.

So, let's get familiar with our unique environment and learn what we can do to not only protect it but to help it flourish when it is so clearly under threat. Everyone is welcome to join us on this mission – if you would like to know more, please contact us by email at envirostoke@yahoo.org or telephone 07837 764367 – we really are a friendly bunch!

Somerset Wildlife Trust News

To encourage more people to make a difference for the wildlife in their gardens and outdoor spaces, Somerset Wildlife Trust is hosting a number of initiatives and campaigns that you can get involved in this year. Here are some, please visit the Trust's website for more.

- Wilder Gardening Awards: Your garden, whether big or small, can be a safe place for nature to thrive. See if your garden is eligible and find out more here: www.somersetwildlife.org/garden
- Working Together for Wildlife Awards: These recognise the importance of working together to reach that critical mass of 1 in 4 people, and connect up our gardens, parks, allotments, and churchyards to Somerset's Nature Recovery Network. Find out more about what's involved here: www.somersetwildlife.org/team-wilder/wilder-communities
- Wilder Lawns: This year, the Wildlife Trusts have partnered with the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) to call on gardeners to reimagine their lawns. Helpful advice can be found here: www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk

Our gardens can have an extremely positive impact on Somerset's wildlife when managed with nature in mind. Somerset Wildlife Trust are asking the public to look at their gardens in a new way this spring, and are urging everyone to start taking action for nature this year.

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We deliver homemade, freshly-cooked, two-course midday meals twice a week, in Stoke St Gregory and North Curry, to anyone who needs a bit of help.

Our customers range from the elderly to those recovering after an operation.
If you think we could be of help to you or to someone you know, please get in touch.

Our meals are cooked by volunteer cooks in their own kitchens and delivered by friendly local people.
The current cost is £3.90/meal.

To learn more, whether as a potential customer or as a volunteer, please phone Carole Joll 01823 490077, or Vicki Fielding (490565) or Judy Blair (490222).

The Blue Sheet

theblueshee t@outlook.com



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Rotas

Lyng

Cleaning

8th & 15th May Mrs Di James & Mrs Ruby Barrington

22nd & 29th May Mrs Alison Perry & Mrs Lin Willis

5th & 12th June Mrs Sue Dare & Mrs Jenny Barnstable

Brass & Flowers

5th & 12th May Mrs Alison Perry

19th & 26th May Mrs Christine Dawson

2nd & 9th June Mrs Grace Haskins-Salter

If anyone would like to join the rotas please contact Alison harveyfudge@icloud.com or 07470838707. The more the merrier. Flowers are just to small brass vases on the altar and the small container on the war memorial.

Stoke St Gregory

Sidespersons

7th May	Barbara Parsons & John Hembrow
21st May	Sally & Alex Morrice
28th May	Annette Gage & Veronica Albertini
4th June	Penny & Simon Baldwin

Church cleaners

7th May	Carolyn & Amelia
14th May	Marilyn & Terri
21st May	Annette & Martin
28th May	Dave & Janet
4th June	Penny & Simon

Flowers

4th June Carolyn Porter

18th June Sally Hale

2nd July Di Tilley

Don't hesitate to contact Amelia Holt if you are unable to cover your fortnightly duty.

Lesson readers

Please read both Old Testament readings as per the bulletin

If changing weeks please advise Jane or Pat

7th May	Alex Morrice
21st May	Annette Gage
28th May	Jo Washington
4th June	Simon Baldwin

From the Registers

Holy Baptism

Sunday 2nd April: Oakley Stanley Boobyer Willes Moule

Internment of Cremated Remains

12th January Philip Riley

20th February Malcom Champion

1st April Andrew (Andy) House

Services across the Benefice

7th May	**Fifth Sunday of Easter**	
8am	North Curry	Prayer Book Eucharist
9.30am	Lyng	Eucharist
10am	North Curry	Eucharist, followed by APCM
10.30am	Stoke Baptist	Messy Church (breakfast at 10am)
11am	Stoke St Gregory	Eucharist
11am	NC Methodist	Temple Methodist
4.30pm	Burrowbridge	Benefice Coronation Service (with tea and cake to follow)
14th May	**Sixth Sunday of Easter (Christian Aid Week)**	
8.30am	Stoke St Gregory	Prayer Book Eucharist
9.30am	Burrowbridge	Eucharist
10am	North Curry	Eucharist
10.30am	Stoke Baptist	Family Service
11am	NC Methodist	Methodist Service
18th May (Thursday)		**Ascension Day**
7pm	North Curry	Eucharist
21st May	**Seventh Sunday of Easter**	
8am	North Curry	Prayer Book Eucharist
9.30am	Lyng	Eucharist
10.30am	Stoke Baptist	Family Service
11am	Stoke St Gregory	Eucharist
11am	NC Methodist	Methodist Service
6pm	North Curry	Evensong
28th May	**Day of Pentecost**	
9.30am	Burrowbridge	Eucharist
10am	North Curry	Eucharist
10.30am	Stoke Baptist	Family Service
11am	Stoke St Gregory	Eucharist
3pm	Queen Sq Garden	United Pentecost Praise (in Methodist Church if wet)

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.