The Athelney Magazine



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

June 2023

Who's Who

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

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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

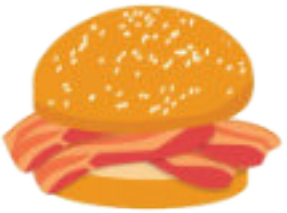
Lyng

4th Saturday of each month, from 10.30 am the village hall. This month: 24th June

North Curry

Wednesdays at 10am in church, starting 7th June. **Please note this is a reversion to the previous "Weds" pattern (sorry for confusion!)**.

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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Useful Information to help you and the editorial team

Copy deadline is **14th June** for the July/August Magazine; please ensure all rotas, services etc. include both of these months and also the first week in September.

Please send **content** in an email attachment to magazine@athelneybenefice.com. If you are sending content pertaining to more than one thing, please send separate attachments and for each please make it clear in which edition it is to appear. Please use 12-point Arial font and ensure that it fits into a maximum of 2 A5 pages where possible. To check this set your word document to be in landscape orientation with 2 columns.

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Any questions please send an email and one of the team will get back to you as soon as possible. Please use the group emails provided rather than sending things direct to one person.

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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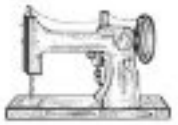
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Saturday Afternoon 3.30pm Queen Square Garden/Church Road	Fun and Funky Music with **The Little Big Horns** Free (bucket collection)
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The Athelney Benefice



Just perfect



I wonder what moorhens think of ducks. Have you ever noticed that moorhens have a real problem with getting about in water? Compared to a duck with its webbed feet, a moorhen is noticeably disadvantaged by having separate toes, not a webbed foot in sight. Through the process of natural selection ducks have evolved to grow with webbing between their toes which helps them really motor in the water. A duck is a far more efficient water fowl than a moorhen. The moorhen bobs its head backwards and forwards and seems to be having a real problem getting anywhere.

I wonder if a moorhen ever looks at the duck's foot with envy. Do they think, "If only I had webbing, then I'd be able to keep up with that mallard." Equally, does a mallard look with scorn or perhaps pity upon the moorhen as it sails past?

Both are deemed to be waterfowl, but is the duck a better one than the moorhen? Of course not. Both are perfectly suited to being themselves. They are simply different kinds of creatures. A moorhen is far better at being a moorhen than a duck is. It would be very silly to criticise a moorhen for not being a duck, yet so often we do this to each other.

Our society and our relationships frequently impose upon us a sense that we aren't good enough, that we are as comparatively bad at swimming as a moorhen. It's a powerful message but it is wrong headed.



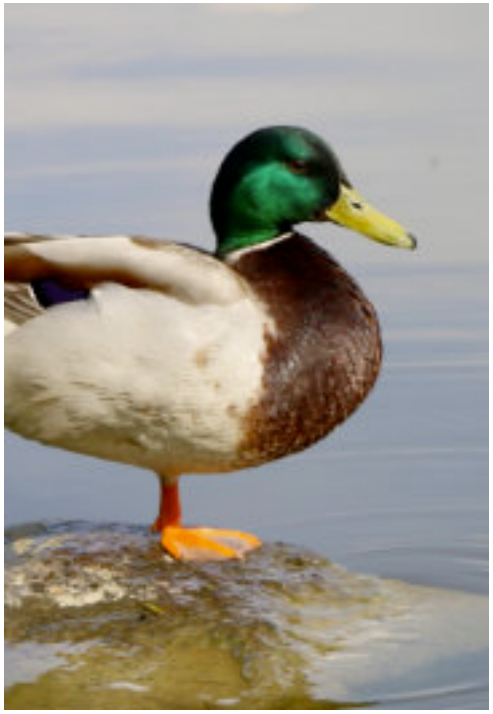
The idea of perfection implicit in the moorhen v duck problem needs to be thrown away. But it is so tricky to do because we so often think there is a perfect way to live and we so often equate perfect and successful, and then we inevitably impose labels like "imperfect" or "failure" onto others or even ourselves, when things don't go as we expected.

I cannot knit. Goodness knows I have tried. I once spent a whole week with needles in hands and managed two rows of something that was an uneven collection of tightly, too tightly, tied stitches. Knitting wasn't for me, just as swimming fast and smoothly isn't for a moorhen. I also can't draw very well or play the piano. Am I a failure?

Factors such as money, a house, a fast car, letters after your name, perhaps a medal or a public accolade can seem like the ways we measure success. We celebrate them and, in this YouTube and TikTok generation, can consider the only thing worth striving for is celebrity itself. To be famous and wealthy can seem to be the only value that implies success (a webbed foot rather than a moorhen's claw).

There is really no need to think this way. It can be a challenge in our monetised world, but it is far better to be able to see who you are and to be thankful for that no matter how wealthy, fast, famous or clever you might be. To live a good life isn't to be measured in these material ways but it is found in being able to see into your own soul and know that you are just right for who you are.

Charles Darwin, who came up with the idea that natural selection has brought us to be who we are, coined the phrase "survival of the fittest." This has been misunderstood to suggest that only the "best" at things can be deemed successful. That is not so. "The fittest" is simply a clumsy way to explain that when we are able to live appropriately in our environment (be it a pond, a house, a workplace or a society) we are very suitable to where we are. A moorhen is as good at being a moorhen as a duck is good at being a duck. What matters to us all is that we see ourselves as perfectly fit, perfectly suited, to being who we are. In ourselves.



Don't envy the fast car or the big house. Don't fret at not being able to speak French. Dwell in yourself. Abide with God. Knowing ourselves before God is all it takes to be perfect.

From Bishop Michael

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A commitment to serve



'Your Majesty, as children of the kingdom of God we welcome you in the name of the King of kings'. In reply to these opening words at his Coronation, King Charles III responded 'In his name and after his example I come not to be served but to serve.' This short exchange summed up what the service was about and what it intended to convey.

The King's commitment to service is not in any doubt. To give just a few examples, he has engaged with our most challenged communities far more than any politician, he called on us to care for the environment years before it became popular to do so and, of course, founded The Prince's Trust, which supports our most challenged younger people in so many ways.

He becomes king of a new era, the Carolean era. Our times see us face some big challenges. Our question is how to address them. I was immensely struck by all the agencies and charities present in the Abbey for the King's Coronation. Their participation spoke of the ways in which we're going to need to act differently in the years ahead to address the issues that confront us.

Because it's all too evident that the power of government, be that local or national, to respond to the problems we see is less now than it was when the late Queen began her reign. Our challenge in this era is of how we're going to come together, in service, to address the different challenges that lie before us, be that the climate, how we tackle poverty, how we respond to a troubled international situation. All of us will have a part to play.

Where to find the resource to act in the way that's going to be needed? As I stood beside the King at the Coronation what inspired me was to see the way he drew so much strength, purpose and resolve and assurance from his Christian faith for the service he's called to give. And in that we can follow him too.

Bishop Michael

Martin's Musings

By Revd Martin Mudie

An occasional contribution from the garden of many delights…



As I write these words, I am sitting on a sun-drenched balcony in a beautiful country park in the south of France with a table holding a large glass of chilled white wine close at hand. Below the balcony I can spy a flower filled meadow containing buttercups and daisies leading to woods rolling gently down to the great river Dordogne as it meanders its lazy course through the valley down to the Mediterranean. In the far distance, on the left, a picturesque French chateau sits high on its cliff top above the river and on the right, I can see two or three ancient French farmhouses surrounded by their fields and more decorative woods.

Am I making you all jealous? O, I do hope so – for thanks to the great kindness and generous hospitality of my cousins–I am staying with them in their lovely home called Categrighl (which, in translation, means 'The Singing Cricket') and indeed from my seat I can hear not only lovely birdsong but also many merry chirping crickets. For I am here on my Holiday-Retreat. Now holidays, you all know about and the purpose of retreats in the Christian tradition is to withdraw from the routine of daily life in order to pray, read and think holy thoughts. Well, I do pray every day, I have several gardening books with me, and I can't remember how long it's been since I had a holy thought–so, two out of three isn't bad!

You see my holiday retreat is a bit like spiritual glamping (luxury camping, for the uninitiated). Not only are my hosts gifted and enthusiastic cooks who like to try out their favourite recipes on their visitors, but they have a large and well-equipped wine cellar, which they are more than happy to share.

All in all, I am having a wonderful time. For retreats, however you take them, are good for your body and your soul. It is good to get away from the pressures and the routine of everyday life and have some quality time just for yourself. Now, you don't need to go to the south of France for this, you can an away day or days, but ensure that the time is just for yourself. I am sure that you will return to the daily round refreshed, renewed and invigorated.



So, Bon Voyage!

Burrowbridge



Burrowbridge Toll Gate

by Dave Evans

On 29th December 1838 the Burrowbridge Commissioners held their auction at the Sweets Hotel (now the Castle), to 'farm' the tolls arising from use of the bridge. The previous year the tolls had amounted to £30.

The idea of paying to cross the bridge did not go down well with the locals, which often led to disputes, as reported in the Frome Times in 1866: "Mr. Robert Hurd was summoned on Thursday, by Thomas Pollard, toll-keeper at the Burrowbridge-gate, for refusing to pay toll for a horse which he rode on May 21. It appeared that defendant, who is member of the West Somerset Yeomanry, had been present at the assembly of his regiment, at Taunton, on Saturday, May 19. He rode home the same evening, and was returning to Taunton on the morning of Monday, May 21, dressed in the regimental stable dress, but had no arms with him. The collector demanded the usual toll for the horse, but the defendant refused to pay it, claiming exemption as a volunteer in uniform proceeding to duty. The lessee took action under the regulations which enact that volunteers claiming exemption must be armed and accoutred." He was fined 6d.

The annual bidding session moved to the Langport Arms and the bids were regulated by a 'Sandglass Auction'. At the start of bidding a three minute sandglass was turned over. It was turned over again after each bid. If the sand had run through without a new bid, the glass was turned over again three times before the last bid was accepted as final. The final bidder then had the right to take the tolls.

In 1903, the rights were bought by a private company, which led to further protest including this letter to the Taunton Courier: "Some London syndicate has purchased the toll monopoly for the next period, and the gate-keeper insists the gate being closed all day and locked at night. The village of Burrowbridge lies on both sides the Parrett, and the inhabitants cross and re-cross the bridge many times daily. Everything on wheels has to come to a standstill when this bridge is approached and await the leisure of the tax collector. In my mind it appears an anachronism, and an infringement of liberty that a public highway should be barred by a private Company, however rich they may be. I am, Sir, Yours, &c , JAS. B. ALLISON."



In 1937 the bid was a record: "£1,560 was paid by Mr. Frank Dyer. Motorists all over the country are familiar with the toll gate on the Taunton–Glastonbury main road, where small fees are charged for the privilege of crossing a bridge over the River Parret. Mr. Dyer's bid was £210 more than the sum paid for the current year by Miss Elsie Boobyer and her brother, Mr. Donald Boobyer, of Burrowbridge."

In 1943 there was only one bidder. The rights were sold for £170, the lowest figure since 1927, to 28 year old farm worker, Mr. Ernest Frank Priddle, Stathe Road. In 1944, it was reported that "BURROWBRIDGE TOLL BRIDGE RIGHTS BOUGHT FOR 15-YEARS-OLD GIRL. There were 14 bids . . . the purchaser was Cuthbert Hembrow, 33-years-old withy worker, of Silver Street, Boroughbridge.'I bought it for my sister Queenie,' he told a reporter."

In April 1945, after 40 years discussion, the toll over the bridge was finally removed: "The toll bridge which spans the River Parrett at Burrowbridge, was freed for ever at noon on Sunday. It became the property of the Somerset County Council, and a ceremony in celebration was held at the bridge on Tuesday afternoon. For the past 12 months the toll collector has been Queenie Hembrow, aged 16. Her father was the last motorist to pay the 3d. toll on Sunday, as the clock struck twelve.The amount actually paid in tolls has been estimated at about £75,000."



Monthly Market at the Coronation Hall

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

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

Tea, coffee and breakfast rolls also available

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.



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!

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



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: H Andrews, Youth Football Club, Adult Football Club

Big Bash & Bales

Don't forget: the Big Bash returns to the August holiday weekend. Band, bar, hog roast & lots of dancing! Ticket details will be announced later.

We need about 20 hay bales! Our previous supplier has retired. There are fewer in the fields these days, but if you know of any we could borrow, please email: whitestreet@northcurry.com



200 CLUB

200 Club winners

Sunday 7th May

1st Marilyn Gunning

2nd Karen King

3rd Martin Horrox

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

Let's make a Tribute to the Music for The Music Festival in North Curry Church June 9th – 11th

You are invited to bring
Flowers & Foliage from your Gardens & from the Hedgerows into the church on June 6th, 7th & 8th (buckets at the back of the church).

Last year we enjoyed visiting
Open Gardens in North Curry
This year, with your help, we will create "A Garden in the Church"

Thank you in anticipation of your contributions

For further information, please contact Lorraine on 491 665

North Curry Monthly Ecumenical Prayer Time

"It helps me get my thoughts in order, look back on what's happened and look ahead"

"I am pleased to get to know people in the village who go to other churches"

"I have come away encouraged – it is helping my faith to grow"

"I find it refreshing to be with others who want to pray"

We meet on the 4th Saturday of the month at 9.30 in the morning to pray together for North Curry. We follow a simple pattern of giving thanks for God's goodness, reflecting on our own lives and then praying for the village. Our longing is that God's love will be known more and more and we pray for God's blessing in many different areas of life. Last month we focussed on the resurrection of Jesus as the starting point for our prayer – the picture below is a reminder.



None of us are 'prayer experts' some share words of prayer aloud, some like to pray silently, we believe God hears what is in our hearts and everyone who comes along is a great encouragement.

Dates coming up are 24th June and 22nd July (see church notices for venues).

Why not come and join in?

So farewell then…

By Martin Horrox

For ten years Martin Horrox lived in Helland, largely unseen and unknown. Then he said he would help the bells appeal, and suddenly his name was everywhere – always attached to a request for other people's money. As he prepares now to return to the dampness and obscurity at the bottom of the hill, we asked him to write some valedictory words.

Bog. Bog. Bog. Bongggg.

Those are the sounds of four demonstration bells being struck with a hammer at the Loughborough bell foundry of John Taylor & Co.

You can make a bell out of any metal whatsoever – but if you really want it to ring, to resound with that lovely hummmm at the end of the note, you have to make it from bell-metal. Each of the first three demonstration bells looked like a bell and felt like a bell, but only the fourth was made of bell-metal and rang like a bell. Stray too far from the magic mix of 77% copper and 23% tin, and you get bog not bong for your buck.

Well, that's one thing about bells I didn't know at the start of 2020, when I first offered to help with fundraising for new bells in North Curry. Here's another: most people, including me, would draw bells as they have been shown on every Christmas card ever printed – with the open end (to use the technical jargon) downwards. The rest of Europe may toll or chime that way, but in English change-ringing the bells turn full-circle and ring when they face up. It's a common misperception – which one TV network demonstrated to the whole nation when it broadcast the video of North Curry bells upside down.

So much for things I didn't know (there were more, but this is not the place ...). What I couldn't know, of course, at the start was whether a small village could raise a very large sum of money. It would take a sustained effort of goodwill, time, enthusiasm and generosity from the non-churchgoing majority as well as the church community. And all for a project that does not score highly for usefulness: why spend thousands to keep the church clock chiming, when you could buy everyone in North Curry a wristwatch for a fraction of the price? The appeal of the Appeal, so to speak, had to be to the heart, not the head.



And that is exactly how it turned out – magnificently so. John Major's rose-tinted definition of Britishness famously included cricket, warm beer and dog lovers. He should have added 'the bells of a village church'. Is it the sense of permanence and tradition that they embody? The sense of belonging? Or the feeling that if you can hear the bells you are part of a community: a human place on a human scale? Maybe all of those and more. A proper village should have a church, and a proper church should have bells. What more need be said?

The interest and enthusiasm were contagious. People I didn't know stopped me to say how much they wanted the bells back; then, as the Appeal progressed – and we could begin to think it would succeed – how much they looked forward to having them back; and now, especially after the Coronation peal, how delighted they are to hear the bells ringing out once more. The sound is harmonious and triumphant.

This village, and its friends from farther afield, have achieved something remarkable: not only new bells but an uplifting of the spirits that will endure for generations to come.

News from North Curry Methodist Church

Visit of the Vice President of the Methodist Church, Mr Anthony Boateng

By Reverend Deborah Kirk (01823 334854
deborah.m.kirk@gmail.com

The Plymouth and Exeter Methodist District was delighted to welcome the Vice President of the Methodist Church, Mr Anthony Boateng for his visit over the Coronation weekend. Anthony was invited to spend his time in two of the four Somerset Circuits of the District, joining in some of the events which had been planned around the Coronation celebrations. Anthony is a Local Preacher from the London District, with a passion for social action, politics, church unity, spiritual revival and creative ways of worship. He has been a member of the Conference since 2014. Anthony serves on several committees across the Church including as a convenor of the London District Social Responsibility Commission, and is a member of the Church Action for Tax Justice Management committee. In his 'day job' Anthony is a caseworker for Ingeus - a government Work and Health Programme.

Sunday dawned bright as Anthony returned to Taunton to lead morning worship at Temple Methodist Church. Rev Dr Daniel Haylett joined the congregation, which was complemented by other members from around the Circuit – including the North Curry Methodist congregation

Anthony preached inspirationally and powerfully on the theme of revival for these days, and encouraged the congregation to continue to listen and respond to God's voice through his Holy Spirit, building on the strong foundations of our forebears to build and transform our communities.

Monday was spent joining a working party in the garden of Lisieux Way Methodist Church, together with student volunteers from King's College and others who had come to share in the 'Big Clean Up'. The working party transitioned into a Garden Party with refreshments and relaxation!

The Vice President was interested in the initiatives that were already in place around the Circuit, including the post-Covid 'new shoots' of possibility, and reflected with realism about the challenges of the wider church. He left us feeling encouraged and with a renewed confidence in Christ and our participation in the mission of God.

Church Anniversary: On Saturday 24th June, between 2.30 and 5pm, the chapel will be open for afternoon cream tea, with proceeds and donations going to the renovations of the chapel.

On Sunday 25th June at 3pm, the service will be led by Revd Tony Cox and all are welcome to join us on this occasion, which celebrates the coming together of the North Curry and Curland Methodist churches.

Dates for your diary

Preachers for Jun, all at 11am unless stated otherwise:

4th June: Revd Peter Thomas (HC),

11th June: Worship enabler team,

18th June: Revd Deborah Kirk (HC),

25th June: Revd Tony Cox Chapel Anniversary @ 3pm

A Tour of the Parish Church Windows, Weds 21st June.

NORTH CURRY SOCIETY

Sherry Keith-Welsh, Chairman

For our June meeting, Angela Dix and Colin Trim take us all on a virtual tour of the Parish Church windows, a textual and photographic exploration of the individual windows by two members of the North Curry Society.

In mediæval times, the stained glass in churches served to tell and remind worshippers of stories that they might not have been able to read for themselves in the obscure Latin texts. Often, original glass did not survive the Reformation, but with the Victorian reordering of churches, such windows became fashionable as an adornment to the glory of God, and a record of more recent events. When the church opens again for visits, or at public worship, you will be able to look at them with fresh eyes.

With tea or coffee at 7.30pm, the talk will start promptly at 8.

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 for them is £5 for the evening.

Our Annual General Meeting will be in July, and the new Society year starts in September.



Stoke St Gregory



This Summer …

United Benefice Service

The UBS is at St Gregory's on 30th July (11am) and will be followed by lunch

It is St Gregory's turn to host our United Benefice Service at the end of July and we would like to invite those attending from all around the Benefice to join us for a two-course buffet lunch and a glass of wine after the service. There will inevitably be a charge for this (£15) and to help with the catering arrangements we would ask people to book and pay for their place in advance by contacting Pat (490750) or Jane (490508).

Services through the summer

Just a reminder that we are back in BST – believe it or not if you look out the window – which means we shall now have Evening Prayer on the first Sunday of each month until we revert to a Eucharist in October.

Songs of Praise, Sunday 16th July at 11am

On the Playing Field, all being well, with our Baptist friends. Please add your favourite hymns to the list by the South door when you are next in the church and bring your garden chair with you to sit on if you can.

Churchyard

The Vicar, Churchwardens and PCC would like to thank those who in the past have made donations towards the cost of maintaining their family graves in the churchyard.

Maintaining the churchyard throughout the growing season between March and November costs the Church over £1700.00 per year which is a big part of our budget.

If anyone would like to make a contribution towards this cost please contact the Churchwarden 490508 or Pat Sollis 490750 details within the magazine or on the noticeboard in the porch.

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!)

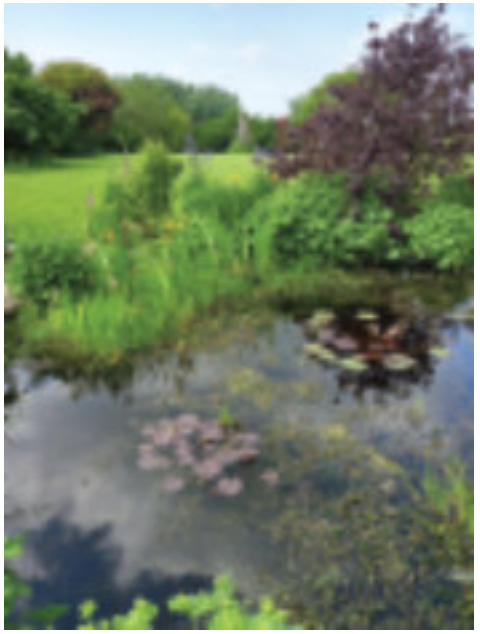






Sunshine, gardens and cake: What more could we ask?

By Jane White



Saturday 13th May dawned fair and Open Gardens at Hillcrest were definitely open, having been postponed from the previous weekend to make way for some big jamboree in London. Thank you to Charles and Charlotte Sundquist for making their beautiful gardens open to so many people for the whole weekend. Thank you too, to the many people who baked and decorated delicious cakes to attract the visitors and draw the pounds out of their pockets. Also to Annette and her band of helpers for raising and donating so many plants for sale. Altogether a very worthwhile weekend for fundraising and adding to the general enjoyment of the visiting crowds. If only I did not go home feeling so dispirited by my feeble efforts in my own garden!



Heart of the Village News

by Mike Blair, Chairman

The Royal Oak has introduced a new service! High quality pub food is being cooked from scratch by Jenna, our very talented chef.

On our opening weekend Jenna produced a superb range of meals, including a roast dinner on Sunday, which received fantastic reviews from our customers. As demand increases, we are very aware that we will need to maintain high standards of menus and service. In order to ensure that we do not overreach ourselves and lower our customer satisfaction, we are restricting the number of diners per session and ask customers to book their tables.

This limitation is a temporary measure until we are able to provide Jenna and Phil with the necessary front and back of house support needed to deliver an excellent service. We are organising a team of volunteers and paid staff to help with waiting, pot washing, food prep, cleaning etc.

If you wish to try our new food offering, please contact Phil at the Royal Oak to book a table (see below for contact number). Food is available on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings plus Sunday lunchtime.

If you feel that you would like to be part of the team working in support of Jenna and Phil in a volunteer or paid capacity, please contract Phil, Jo, Carolyn or Ann Woods.

The shop and café continue to provide an important service to the community, although higher interest rate and food inflation are making managing the business more difficult.

The garden is now coming into its own as the weather improves, it is becoming a popular spot to have coffee and cake!

You may have noticed that we have introduced a newsletter. We are intending to improve our communications with members and a wider interested group through this method. It is intended that this will be a monthly newsletter with occasionally specific mails on special events.

For further info regarding the newsletter, please drop an email to martin.keswick@btinternet.com.

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

Looking Forward to Getting Familiar?

By Ian Upshall

Where's the Sun?

After the extraordinary weather in the Summer of 2022, Spring 2023 is feeling a little gloomy and damp! Let's hope we see some more of the sun fairly soon – although we may not wish to experience such temperature extremes this year.

As I write, the local news has been reporting the flash flooding that hit our county on 9 May. From Bristol, to Shepton Mallet, North Cadbury, Taunton and Milverton. Areas around Yeovil and as far north as the Forest of Deane have also been affected. This is a small example of the type of event that has been predicted for some time. Now they are becoming more common, and people's lives are, unfortunately, being turned upside down. Some of these events will have been influenced to some degree by global warming, brought about by an increase in a number of gases in our atmosphere. We must therefore learn to adapt and accept these relatively small changes whilst doing all we can to limit our carbon emissions. Every little action will help if we all do something over time – the cumulative effect will have a beneficial impact.

As reported last month, Stoke Environment Group is inviting you all to its third Envirofair – to be held at The Williams Hall (village hall) in Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory on 3 June 2023. As always, the Envirofair will be free for everyone (donations gratefully accepted!). There will be lots to see with interesting and thought-provoking displays from many organisations – large and small. There will be activities for the children and a great display (again) from the Owls (Tawny, Little, Barn and Eagle) that were so popular last year. Alasdair Cameron, who founded Somerset Wildlands, will also give a short presentation on the work they are undertaking to rewild 74 acres of land near Athelney Farm. We look forward to welcoming you and your family and friends to this event which will take place between 10am and 4pm – rain or shine. The day will be topped off by a raffle draw that includes some extraordinary prizes to help you save money, be kind to the environment and reduce your carbon footprint.

A reminder that SEG is also organising, with the help of Somerset Wildlife Trust, Somerset Botany Group and Somerset Environmental Records Centre, a family 'bio-blitz' on 1 July. The event will start and end at the village hall where we will learn all about two very clever smart-phone apps called 'Seek' and 'iNaturalist'. Once we have gotten the hang of the tech, we will go out on a nature walk and see how many species of plant and insect we can find, record them and then upload to the national database. Citizen Science in action!

Then in September (2nd or 3rd – to be confirmed and subject to weather) we are running (again with the help of SWT) a Bat Detective family evening. Early enough for children to be involved but late enough to see some of our resident bat population. Again, using our smart-phones and some swanky tech, we will record our bat sightings and then re-convene in the village hall to see what we have discovered. Refreshments and swanky tech all provided!

So, there is a lot going on in your area over the next few weeks. Let's hope the weather is kind so we can all get out and experience, at close quarters, our wonderful environment and don't forget – sign up with any local community groups so that you can to do your bit to protect our way of life.

If you would like to know more, please contact us by email at envirostoke@yahoo.org or telephone 07837 764367.

Coronation Fete

The morning of the Monday Bank Holiday did not disappoint. At least, it did not disappoint the weather forecasters who had promised us rain, and rain it did. The fete was relocated to the Williams Hall and one must assume that some stall holders had pulled out, perhaps fearing that the turn-out would be poor, because there was not a lot to see when you got in there. However, the numbers attending were surprisingly good, given the dreary weather. If you had a gambling bent, you were in luck since we were offered an excellent tombola-style bottle stall by the WI, another lucky go at winning soft toys by the Friends of the School and the Parish Church ran the raffle with some highly desirable prizes, including a roast beef dinner in a basket and many others, some given by private individuals and a number by local businesses. The Willowset produced sumptuous cakes for the teas and, if the noise level was anything to judge by, a good time was generally had.

The main thrust of this little item is to say a huge thank you to those kind people and businesses who gave so generously to the Raffle on behalf of the Parish Church and to all the other optimists who bought raffle tickets in the hope of winning their Sunday roast!

The Big Count Returns: Make Wildlife Really Count!

This annual citizen science event gives the public the chance to help protect local wildlife by recording the species living right on their doorsteps and in their favourite green spaces

Somerset Wildlife Trust is delighted to announce the return of The Big Count 2023, its Somerset-wide annual citizen science event which aims to help monitor changes in local wildlife populations by encouraging as many people as possible to take note of and record the species living in their gardens, parks, green spaces, workplaces, and communities.

The count hopes to inspire people of any age and setting to get outside and connect with nature and the county's amazing wildlife and, at the same time, become important eyes and ears on the ground as they collect vital data about some of Somerset's native species, in order to help inform the work that's needed to stop further species decline.

This year, The Big Count will run from June 16th – June 25th and is supported by Southern Co-op. The public are being asked to record their wildlife sightings on the popular iNaturalist citizen science platform, and they'll be on the lookout for 8 individual species of wildlife and 4 species groups, which includes goldfinch, dragonflies, spiders, and several species of butterfly. This is an activity for everyone to get involved in, whether family, friends, neighbours, schools, social groups, scout groups, or congregations. Participants will be able to see their sightings on the iNaturalist map immediately, and there is a FREE downloadable pack which explains everything that people need to know, which can be found on the Somerset Wildlife Trust website.

The Big Count is part of the Trust's Great Somerset Wildlife Count initiative, a joint venture between Somerset Wildlife Trust and the Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC). SERC holds over 2.5 million records of species present in Somerset, but there are gaps in its knowledge, especially when it comes to more 'common' species, and it hopes that running The Big Count 2023 will help fill those gaps and in turn provide important information about the health of the ecosystems that exist to support them, ensuring county-led decisions are being made with wildlife in mind.

Simon Clarke, Head of Nature Recovery at Somerset Wildlife Trust, says, "We were so pleased at how many people got involved last year. We were able to add nearly 1,000 species records during The Big Count 2022, which is an amazing effort. We want to do even better this year, so we hope that even more people will come on board. It's a great way for people to get out and nurture a nature connection, and it's something really simple that really can make a difference. When it comes to records, it's quite literally a numbers game, so we need as many people taking part as possible – we can't do this without the public behind The Big Count, so we want everyone to spread the word."

Gemma Lacey, Southern Co-op's Director for Sustainability and Communications, says, "This is such a fun and simple way to get involved in your local wildlife and it can introduce you to nature on your doorstep.

"Somerset Wildlife Trust has identified a real gap in our knowledge about how the more 'common' species of wildlife are doing on a wider scale – so it's time for us all to step up and help so they can make the best decisions for nature's recovery."

Felicity Hay, Press and PR Officer, Southern Co-op
press@southerncoops.co.uk / 02392 222995

How to get involved:

1. Go to www.somersetwildlife.org/bigcount2023 and download your FREE digital pack.
2. Create an iNaturalist account at www.inaturalist.org or download either the iNaturalist or Seek app.
3. Get counting! Do as many counts as you can in different places and encourage as many people as you can to do the same.
4. That's it – you've just contributed important data to wildlife trends in Somerset!



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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

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North Curry

	Sidespersons	Intercessors	Readers
4th June	Pam Burgess, Teresa Jones	Owen Cullwick	Teresa Jones
8th June	Tom Jeanes	Mary Piers	Tom Jeanes
11th June			
10am:	Janet Dare, Pam Burgess	David Farnham	Zillah Sykes
6pm:	Helen Comrie, Lin Paul	Jenny Satchwell	Sue Harrison
18th June	Lorraine Bryan-Brown	Helen Griffths	Jenny Satchwell, Mary Piers
25th June	Tom Jeanes, Lorraine Bryan-Brown	David Walker	Mary Cridge
2nd July	Janet Dare, Pam Burgess	Owen Cullwick	David Akerman

Stoke St Gregory

	Sidespersons	Readers	Cleaners	Flowers
4th June	Penny & Simon Baldwin	Simon Baldwin	Penny & Simon	Carolyn Porter
11th June			Linda & Brett	
18th June	Barbara Parsons & John Hembrow	John Hembrow	Carolyn & Amelia	Sally Hale
25th June	Sally & Alex Morrice	Sally Morrice	Marilyn & Terri	
2nd July	Carolyn Porter	Carolyn Porter & Stephen Loveridge	Annette & Martin	Di Tilley

Lyng

	Cleaning	Brass and Flowers
5th June	Sue Dare & Jenny Barnstable	Grace Haskins-Salter (2nd)
12th June	Sue Dare & Jenny Barnstable	Grace Haskins-Salter (9th)
19th June	Di James & Ruby Barrington	Alison Perry (16th)
26th June	Di James & Ruby Barrington	Alison Perry (23rd)
3rd July	Alison Perry & Lin Willis	Christone Dawson (30th)

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 contact me.

Services across the Benefice

4th June Trinity Sunday

8am	North Curry	Prayer Book Eucharist
9.30am	Lyng	Eucharist
10am	North Curry	Eucharist
10.30am	Stoke Baptists	Messy Church (breakfast at 10am)
11am	NC Methodists	Holy Communion
6pm	Stoke St Gregory	Evensong

8th June (Thu) Corpus Christi

7pm	North Curry	Benefice Eucharist

11th June First Sunday after Trinity

8.30am	Stoke St Gregory	Prayer Book Eucharist
9.30am	Burrowbridge	Eucharist
10am	North Curry	Choral Eucharist
10.30am	Stoke Baptists	Family Service
11am	NC Methodists	Service
6pm	North Curry	Choral Evensong

18th June Second Sunday after Trinity

8am	North Curry	Prayer Book Eucharist
9.30am	Lyng	Eucharist
10.30am	Stoke Baptists	Family Service
11am	Stoke St Gregory	Eucharist
11am	NC Methodists	Holy Communion
6pm	North Curry	Evensong

25th June Third Sunday after Trinity

9.30am	Burrowbridge	Eucharist
10am	North Curry	Eucharist
10.30am	Stoke Baptists	Family Service
11am	Stoke St Gregory	Eucharist
3pm	NC Methodists	Church Anniversary Celebration (no Morning service)

2nd July Fourth Sunday after Trinity (St Peter and St Paul)

8am	North Curry	Prayer Book Eucharist
9.30am	Lyng	Eucharist
10am	North Curry	Patronal Eucharist
10.30am	Stoke Baptists	Messy Church (breakfast at 10am)
11am	NC Methodists	Service
6pm	Stoke St Gregory	Evensong