

ASHBURY
COMPTON LONGCOT
FERNHAM
NEWSLETTER MARCH 2010



Thought for the month - March

As I write, less than seven weeks have passed since New Year's Day. How time flies! What makes 31st December different from January 1st? The weather is much the same. Why does the world dance the new year in? Our family celebrated by being together and the children were delighted by the firework display. But what are we celebrating? A year of international, national and personal problems has ended and perhaps there was a hope that 2010 would be better. Tennyson sums up human expectations in his poem 'In Memoriam'

Ring out the old, ring in the new
Ring, happy bells across the snow;
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

January 1st was a day of hope. Seven weeks on and what is our assessment? Is it a safer, friendlier and pleasanter world? What is hope? It usually is a wish, a desire. As when we say "I hope that it will be sunny tomorrow."

Sometimes the early Christians would take a Greek word and invest it with a nuance particular to their faith. Hope was such a word. It came to mean more than a desire, but rather a confident expectation and was enshrined in the idea of certainty of fulfillment.

We frequently have desires and wishes that may never be fulfilled.

The Christian in daily life will experience these, but there are

important hopes which are sure and certain. (Hebrews 11:1)

expresses these. 'Now faith is being sure of what we hope for, and

certain of what we do not see' Faith is a Christian's sure foundation.

A secular society will live in hopes which are seldom fulfilled. The

Christian's hope is different. Paul writes (Romans 5:5) 'and hope does

not disappoint us because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.' In general terms the world is a loveless society, taken over too frequently by a self-cult. When a superstore offers three Valentine cards for the price of two, we have to ask, what is love? And what price a love that does not disappoint us?

God's love, poured out, is a redemptive love; it gives and gives and invades the self-cult. It changes our lives. Paul, expounding the love of God, removes all woolly understanding when he writes (Romans 5:8) "God demonstrates his own love for us in this; while we were still sinners (self- cult) Christ died for us." It is in this love experienced that gives us the hope (certainty) to face each day. Problems and pain may come, but God's love is there; poured into our hearts.

Philip Charters.

Shrivenham & Ashbury Benefice Services in March

Sunday 7th March

Lent 3

7.45am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Shrivenham
9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Fernham
9.00am	Matins (BCP)	Watchfield
10.15am	Parish Communion	Shrivenham
11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
12.00pm	Holy Baptism	Shrivenham
3.00pm	Joint Service	Chapel Longcot
6.30pm	Healing Service with laying on of hands.	Shrivenham

Sunday 14th March

Mothering Sunday

8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Compton
9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Watchfield
9.30am	Mothering Sunday Family Service	Fernham
9.30am	As above	Longcot
10.15am	As above	Shrivenham
11.00am	As above	Ashbury

Sunday 21st March**Passiontide**

7.45am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Shrivenham
9.00am	Matins (BCP)	Watchfield
9.00am	Holy Communion	Fernham
9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
10.15am	Parish Communion	Shrivenham
11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury

Sunday 28th March**Palm Sunday**

8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Compton
9.30am	Palm Sunday Procession	Shrivenham
10.15am	Palm Sunday Benefice Service	Shrivenham

Ashbury Evangelical Free Church**Sunday 7th March**

10.00am Communion
5.00pm Evening Service

Sunday 14th March

10.00am Communion
5.00pm Video and Tea

Sunday 21st March

10.00am Communion
5.00pm Bible Study

Sunday 28th March

10.00am Communion

There will be a **Lunch** on **Wednesday 3rd March** at 12.15pm and a **Coffee Morning** on **Wednesday 17th March** at 10.30am.

The **Women's Fellowship** will meet on Wednesdays, 10th and 24th March at 2.15pm.

The Church will host the **Women's World Day of Prayer** on Friday 5th March at 2.15pm.

Ashbury News

Ashbury Senior Citizens: Meetings at the Rose and Crown on the last **Tuesday** of every month at **3pm**. A Speaker, raffle, tea and

biscuits. At Christmas time we went to the Wyvern Theatre and we also had a lovely Christmas dinner. New members welcome, so come along and enjoy the afternoon. **Reg Smith**

Ashbury Come Dancing

A 6 week course of Ballroom and Latin Dancing begins on Tue 2 Mar at the Village Hall. Cost £40 per couple.

Learn cha cha cha, tango, samba, rumba etc every Tuesday evening from 7.30 – 8.30. Everyone welcome. Proceeds to St Mary's Ashbury. For more information, call Judy Clarke 710305.

Fitchett

Derek, Les, Donna, Karron and Libby would like to say thank you to everyone who sent flowers, cards and offers of help during our sad time. Also a special thanks to Sarah and Tony, Diane, Mandy and Bunce's for their help. Rachael had so many friends who came to say goodbye to her. We are all very touched by the kindness shown to us. Thank you once again, the Fitchett family.

Spanish Evening

12 March

Doors open 7.30pm, for 7.45 pm start, **Ashbury Village Hall.**

Richard Hancock will talk about his travels through France and Spain to include Santiago de Compostela (a world heritage city).

Richard was a professional photographer and he will use his wonderful photographs to illustrate his talk.

Cost £5 to include a glass of Spanish wine and Spanish nibbles! (This is a fundraising event for St Mary's Church)

Tickets available from Margaret Smith 710800

Churchyard Clearance Saturday March 13th 10am -12 noon.

The PCC and the Parish Council invite everyone interested in the appearance and upkeep of the old and current churchyards to join us for another grand tidy-up. Last year's efforts have made a big improvement and we want to continue this. Please come and bring your secateurs, cutters etc.

Litter Blitz Saturday March 27th. 9.30am. Please meet at the **Village Hall**. Bags and gloves provided. Coffee etc. afterwards at Claremont, opposite the school.

For your information. Ever been confused about the difference between the **P.C.C.** and the **Parish Council**? You are not alone. Parish Councillors are elected by you the electors on a regular basis and are the lowest form of local government life. In Ashbury they are responsible amongst other things for the upkeep of the bus shelter, the old, closed churchyard and are able to comment (only) on local planning applications. General grumbles should be addressed to them.

The **Parochial Church Council** is the body of clergy and some churchgoers who deal with all matters concerning St Mary's and the "new" churchyard. While we all discuss things as a community, certain decisions can only be made by the relevant body.

The Ashbury Village Hall Committee are pleased to announce that the **Oxfordshire Theatre Company** will present a public performance of "A Handful of Henna" at the village hall on **Friday April 16th**, commencing at **7.30pm**. There will be a bar and light refreshments. Doors will open at 7pm. Tickets are £7 adult and £4 concessions including seniors and children under 16. Tickets are available from **Graham Clarke (710305), Maggie Simons (710801) and Margaret Smith (710800)**.

Longcot News

Longcot Churches working together-Chapel News

Sunday 7th 3pm United service to be led by Revd Anne Bell. Everyone is welcome and we look forward to sharing fellowship over tea and biscuits after the service.

Friday 12th 3.15pm BAVAS (Bangers And Videos after School) Everyone of primary school age is welcome to join us as we enjoy eats and a video, songs and our 'Quiet Time'.

Friday 26th 1.45 pm Friday Fellowship to which all are welcome. This month's speaker is Mr Ian Taylor from Lechlade who will delight us with his 'Easter Offerings'; a miscellany of words and music for Eastertide.

Sat 27th 10.15am-Coffee Morning in aid of Methodist Homes, one of which, Fitzwarren House, is only a few miles away at Kingsdown, catering for sufferers of dementia from the surrounding district. Please come and join us, enjoy a chat over coffee and help us raise plenty of money for such a worthy cause.

Thank you to everyone who helped us raise £45 at January's coffee morning for Root and Branch at Watchfield, followed by the talk by Mr Ted Talbot, a volunteer with that charity.

Benefice News – Country Matters

People have been asking how we coped with snow. I expect that when you read this it will be long forgotten. Shelley wrote "I love snow and all forms of radiant frost." As I write this we have had a month of it and it has been more like the winters of the past. The early 80's brought some severe winters causing us to redrill 80 acres of cereals killed by frost but the daddy of them all was 1962/3 as far as snow was concerned, with drifting filling up roads 6 ft deep and cutting off communities for ages. I can also just remember 1947 which was equally difficult.

This year, to be slightly controversial, it has not been too bad. The milking got done with production actually rising in the cold; though one morning the severe frost prevented half of the plant functioning properly and we finished two hours late, but Oxfordshire in comparison with Glos and Wilts have not done a good job on the roads. Have they run out of grit and salt or money or both? This was a contributory factor in our milk being collected late on two occasions, resulting in about 2000 litres having to be discarded. This is the first time this has happened in 50 years, but now of course food hygiene rules prevent temporary containers for milk and in 1963 our milk was processed locally at Faringdon and I took it there in churns with a tractor.

In such weather our hill road at Idstone to the Ridgeway becomes dangerous and we take to the fields to reach and feed the 180 cattle that live up there in the winter months. A butane heater is invaluable

for thawing frozen pipes but care is needed on the plastic. I did hear of some farm buildings that got so frozen up that the farmer turned the cattle out to eat snow for water.

Our farm at this time of year also plays host to three flocks of sheep totalling 750, grazing surplus grass before the spring. The sheep were trying to expose the grass through the snow with their feet but I did take them some round bales of silage during the worst of the snow.

And then the thaw and several burst pipes to mend but our arable crops would seem to be undamaged, helped by the snow cover; though pigeons are now eating the oil seed rape crop.

Winnie the Pooh said, “the more it snows tiddly pom, the more it goes tiddly pom, the more it goes tiddly pom on snowing” and on Jan 6 a lot of people could not get to work and parents and children were having the time of their life sledging. I even came across a family on a steep arable field well beyond the Ridgeway and my son Oliver, just back from Switzerland, could not resist on Sunday Jan 10 skiing here for the first time of his life but as Shelley observed “if winter comes can spring be far behind” and it must surely be so now.

Benefice Clergy

Vicar Curates	Rev Richard Hancock	01793
	Rev Anne Bell (duty days Tuesday, Wednesday, Sunday.)	780183 01367 820091
	Rev Canon Edwin Clements (duty days Tuesday, Friday, Sunday)	01793 710811
	NSM	Rev A K Weaver
Methodist Minister	Rev Graham Tidmarsh	01793 782584

Please Note: Newsletter entries for April 2010

Submit your entries for April to M. Turner at Claremont, Ashbury SN6 8LN, by **13thMarch**. mlt@mltgnt.com (01793 710302)