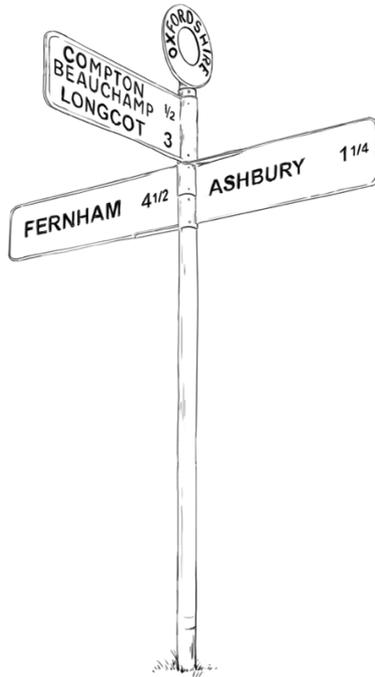


**ASHBURY
COMPTON LONGCOT FERNHAM
NEWS
APRIL 2021**



Easter - with Churches re-opening

Titanic Connections

Thought for the month

Just over a year ago as I write, on 15th March 2020, Norma led the monthly Communion service in Bourton Church. On impulse, Sarah, the warden there, recorded the sermon on her phone. The theme was Mothering Sunday, and a week later, when the rest of the Benefice celebrated Mothering Sunday, we posted the recording on Facebook. Who could have imagined then what that would be the start of? In the year since, we have posted a total of 102 sermons and other reflections, 231 services and 34 other events – enough for a post every day of the year. And for most of those there have been readings and orders of service available on our website. A huge amount of work, by many, many people, not least Lucy and Sarah, who have been the driving force throughout.

Of course, one of those ‘other events’ was the virtual Stations of the Nativity, when we were able to follow Mary and Joseph through the streets of Ashbury to the manger in the Manor barn. It’s an indication, I think, of how far we have come. We cannot (yet) provide virtual mince pies and mulled wine, but we can now reasonably reliably live-stream worship from at least 5 of our churches, including both St Mary’s in Ashbury and Longcot. And, as we slowly, cautiously open up the church buildings for live worship, we shall continue to use that capability to reach those for whom visiting church in person remains a step too far. When we tested the stream from St Mary’s, we had reactions from people on-line just in the few seconds we were ‘on air’ – and indication of just how vital this line of communication is in reaching our wider community.

A quote from the Bangtan Boys (a S Korean boyband, Google tells me), which gained currency over the last year says: “The only reason you should ever look back is to see how far you’ve come.” I’m not sure I entirely agree, but, as we do reflect on a year of pandemic and lockdown, on everything and everybody we have lost, let’s remember also what, out of hardship and necessity, we have achieved. And how we might use our regained freedoms to do things better, more effectively, but also more generously, more lovingly, in the days to come.

Richard

Views expressed in “Thought for the month” are those of the contributors

Ashbury News

Churchyard “Spring Clean” Saturday, 24th April 10am- Noon

We would greatly appreciate as many helpers as we can to carry out our annual Churchyard “Spring Clean” on Saturday 24th April at 10am. Usually we attract about 24 people such that as well getting the Churchyards ready for summer but also is a very social occasion. Hot refreshments will be available. As well as appropriate garden tools (secateurs, hard brush, trowel) those who can please also bring a wheelbarrow or strimmer that would be very helpful.

As we will be still under Covid restrictions please bring a mask and we will be social distancing.

Welcome pack for new residents

A pack has been prepared for new residents which contains:

Welcome letter,

Details of local organisations and activities,

Parish Council information,

Map of Ashbury indicating

Landmarks and various walks,

Copy of the current monthly newsletter

Postcard of the Ashbury Parish Textile Map.

If you have moved into the village this year and would like to receive a pack, or if you have new neighbour, please contact Roger Simons (710801) or Margaret Smith (710800).

Church Matters

Normal Services will be resumed! (No services in Fernham)

Thursday 1 April 19.00pm Holy Communion Shrevenham Maundy Thursday

APRIL SERVICES IN ASHBURY, COMPTON & LONGCOT WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:

Good Friday 2 April	Midday Noon Reflections on the cross	Longcot
2.00pm	Reflection at the Last Hour on the Cross	Ashbury
3.00pm	Reflections on the Cross	Compton
Easter Sunday 4 April	9.00am Holy Communion	Compton
	9.30am Holy Communion by Extension	Longcot
	11.00am Holy Communion	Ashbury
Thursday 8 April	10.00am Holy Communion	Ashbury

Sunday 11 April	9.30am Holy Communion	Longcot
	10.30am Morning Prayer	Ashbury
Sunday 18 April	9.00am Matins	Compton
	9.30am Morning Prayer	Longcot
	11.00am Holy Communion	Ashbury
Sunday 25 April	9.30am Family Communion	Longcot
	10.30am Morning Prayer	Ashbury

Our churches are open once a week for private prayer

Ashbury 10am – 4pm on Thursday, Compton Beauchamp 9am – 5pm on Sunday

Longcot 10am – 3pm on Wednesday

All online services can be watched on the Shrivenham and Ashbury Facebook

If you are unable to join us in person, do join online through services and study groups on the benefice Facebook page. You do not need a Facebook account to access these events.

Ashbury Prayer cycle for April:

4th Berrycroft, 11th Berrycroft Lane, 18th Chapel Lane, 25th Church Lane

Covid Precautions at Services

We are doing our best to ensure that our church is COVID safe for anyone who would like to come to our services.

1. Services will be shorter and there will be no sermon as these will be available on Facebook and YouTube.
2. Orders of service and weekly sheets will be placed on pews in advance.
3. Service leaders will maintain a safe distance from the congregation. They will be masked where this is not possible e.g. when distributing communion.
4. Everyone should observe Covid safety rules, hand sanitise on arrival (available inside church), sign in or use the NHS QR code, ensure social distancing before and after the service by standing and sitting at least 2m apart in marked pews, wearing masks (spares are available in church). Please remain in your pews at the end of the service until asked to leave and then go straight outside.

Please do not come into church if you think you may have symptoms of Covid 19.

PASTORAL CARE

If you have need for prayer or pastoral support, do not hesitate to ring Canon Paul Richardson on 710241.

GENEROSITY

The quality of being kind and generous; the quality or fact of being plentiful or large; a willingness to give help or support; liberality in giving; amplitude; abundance. These are some of the dictionary definitions of generosity.

One of the good things that has come out of the Covid 19 pandemic have been the signs of generosity we have seen in our communities. People have looked out for one another, shopping for elderly or housebound neighbours is just one example. There are many more. I have difficulty thinking of any other attribute that brings such mutual benefit. Both the giver and receiver of generosity receive so much in the transaction, both are left the better for it.

The events of Good Friday and Easter over 2,000 years ago showed us the ultimate extent of God's love and generosity towards us, towards all the world. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3.16). How do we begin to respond to such a generous gift!

As we come out of Lockdown, over these coming weeks and months, I hope that we do not lose those qualities of generosity which have been developed through this time of need. Generosity of our time, concern, and money to those in need, and generosity of heart and spirit.

We have come through hard and difficult times. As we meet again as family and communities, let us be sure to have the generosity to make time and space for one another once again.

From Associate Vicar: Paul.

[The benefice of Shrivenham and Ashbury will be celebrating "Generosity Week" from April 18th – April 25th, with daily reflections and a focus on Generosity on each Sunday.]

LONGCOT CHURCHES WORKING TOGETHER – CHAPEL NEWS

Easter Sunday falls on the first Sunday of the month which is when we normally hold our monthly united service in the chapel so it is doubly sad that the building has to remain closed until a later date. However let's look forward to when we shall be able to re-open and in the meantime give thanks for the glories of spring and for the message of hope that the Easter story brings.

We pray that everyone has a blessed, peaceful and happy Easter. God bless.

Ambassadors Bible Church (at AEFC) While the current situation is so fluid please look at our website www.ambiblechurch.co.uk

Titanic connections

How the Parish Churches of St Mary Longcot, St John Fernham and St Swithun Compton Beauchamp are linked to the Titanic tragedy

Many people in the Shrivenham and Ashbury Benefice will know that the chancel in St Mary's church Longcot, displays a brass plaque in memory of two of the victims of the sinking of the Titanic in 1912. The story of the tragedy is well known, but less well known is the history of the two people remembered on the plaque. They are the Reverend Ernest Courtenay Carter and his wife Lillian Carter (nee Hughes).

Ernest was the son of George Carter from Coventry who moved with his wife Catherine to become rector of St Swithun's church in Compton Beauchamp. Ernest was born here on February 17th 1858 and the family appear on the 1861 census for the village. He was educated at Charterhouse London, and St John's Oxford. In 1888 he took holy orders, and between 1889 and 1896 was the curate at Chieveley in Berkshire. In 1890 he married Lillian Hughes and in 1898 the couple moved to live in the vicarage of St Jude's church in Whitechapel in the tough 'East End' of London where Ernest had been appointed the new vicar. The couple had no children.

Lillian's father was Thomas Hughes from Uffington, and is remembered for writing 'Tom Brown's Schooldays', he is still celebrated in the lovely museum in Uffington village where the family worshipped.

Both Ernest and Lillian were keen to continue the excellent work of their predecessors at St Jude's, and both worked tirelessly to support the impoverished families of their parish. They were both highly respected. St Jude's church was a chapel of ease to St Mary's Whitechapel, and had been constructed in 1847 in response to the growing population in that part of East London. One of a number of churches built in London around that time, it was described rather unkindly as "Cockney Gothic". In 1873 the Bishop of London had described the area as, "the worst parish in my diocese, inhabited mainly by a criminal population". The area had earned notoriety in 1888 when it was the location of the 'Jack the Ripper' murders.

The couple boarded the Titanic in Southampton as second-class passengers. The Reverend Carter led a service for the second-class passengers in their designated dining room, supported by Lillian, on Sunday evening, 14th April 1912. The

congregation sang, 'Lead kindly Light', 'Eternal Father Strong to Save', 'On the Resurrection Morning', and 'Now the Day is Over'. Before each hymn, the Rev'd Carter gave a brief summary of the history of the hymn and the background to its author. The service ended at about 10.00pm and most of the congregation retired to their cabins for the night. The ship struck an iceberg less than two hours later at 11.40pm.

It is believed that the Carters made their way to the boat deck when the order was given to abandon ship. Survivors insist that they were offered places in a lifeboat but declined. Instead, they encouraged others to save themselves, and Lillian refused every encouragement to leave her husband, and enter a lifeboat. They both died in the sinking and their bodies, if recovered, were never identified.

The people of Whitechapel were shocked to hear of their deaths, and their church erected a memorial to the couple which was placed in the chancel. The brass tablet read:

"In loving memory of Ernest Courtenay Carter born 17th February 1858 and vicar of St Jude's Whitechapel from November 1898 to April 1912 and of Lillian his wife, daughter of Thomas Hughes the author of Tom Brown's Schooldays, born 3rd March 1867, who after 14 years of self sacrifice in the cause of religion and humanity in this parish, met death when the Titanic foundered in the Atlantic after collision with an iceberg on the 15th of April 1912.

"Lovely and pleasant in their lives, in death they were not divided". She refused to leave him when offered a place in a boat.

In 1923 St Jude's church closed and was demolished, the vicarage surviving until World War Two when it was damaged beyond repair in the Blitz. The brass memorial was removed from the church before its demolition, and relocated to St Mary's Longcot where Lillian's uncle, John Hughes, had once held the position of vicar. Rev'd Hughes, himself, is now buried in the churchyard at St John's in Fernham.

Once lockdown is over, why not visit the churches and churchyards and follow the story for yourself?

Tom Lill-Arnold

Country Matters

The dawn chorus heralds the morn and to me it's stronger at 6 than at 7. As spring rushes forward, already our aconites have just finished flowering after showing a vibrant yellow for only 7 weeks and snowdrops are passing their best. The story of the spring as it affects the farm was one of unrelenting rainfall again this winter, then came the good frosty period finishing with some biting winds which started the drying process and now as I write a clear dry week has given us the chance to get on with the spring planting. My cousin Bob Green farming at Fairford records rainfall. He tells me that his normal average is 26 inches/annum. With the July floods of 2007 he recorded 40 inches which was again repeated in the past year 2020. And he had measured 9 inches in the first two months of 2021.

I enjoyed seeing the Eastbrook farm dairy cows prancing out to a bite of grass in early March. After such a wet winter we have actually already finished our spring planting campaign except for the shooting patches and forage maize we grow for a neighbour. They come later. We have sown 230 acres of spring barley, 54 acres of spring planted winter wheat and 90 acres of spring beans all in a week. This progress has been possible because none has had to be pre-ploughed, all was direct drilled and has gone in well. I am told this is called "regenerative farming" reducing emissions to counter climate change. The key is that nearly all the ground was sown in the autumn into a loose surface with an over wintered mix of phacelia and vetch to give a friable undisturbed seedbed for the spring. Soil structure is key and this year's frosty spell has also helped condition the soil. I know this in my vegetable garden because it was a joy to plant the broad bean bed at the beginning of March.

A dopey pigeon was caught by the dog in the garden. I tied it up, wings outstretched, in a laburnum tree. We love this tree when it flowers, but this was done to frighten and deter the pigeons that roost there and pollute the patio beneath with their droppings. Within a day it was stripped to the bones by crows.

On a walk near oaks on the downs I detected a faint tapping, almost metallic and so much quieter than the drumming of a woodpecker. Then we saw the little bird climbing vertically up the trunk. It's good to know that nuthatches are about here.

Richard Green

Contacts

Ashbury Parish Council

Chairman Cliff Davies 01793 710712 chairman@ashbury.org.uk

Clerk to the council: Laura Evans email clerk@ashbury.org.uk

Defibrillator: On the wall by the School entrance

St Mary's Ashbury Parochial Church Council

Associate vicar: Paul Richardson 01793 710241

Church wardens: Maggie Simons 01793 710801 Richard Green 01793 791310

Secretary: Roger Simons 01793 710801 rogersimons1@outlook.com

Vicar (Shrivenham) Revd Norma Fergusson 01793 784338

rev.n.fergusson@btinternet.com (not Monday)

Ashbury Village Hall

Maggie Simons 0193 710801 maggiemsimons@outlook.com

Secretary Margaret Smith 01793 710800 mbsmith5@hotmail.co.uk

Bookings: Lin and Kevin Clarke 01793 710326

Ashbury with Compton Beauchamp CE(A) Primary School and little Berries Preschool

Headteacher Rachael Smith 01793 710259 www. <http://www.ashburyprimary.org.uk>
office.3851@ashbury.oxon.sch.uk

Ashbury Village Shop 01793 710068

G.P. Surgeries Shrivenham 01793 782207 Lambourn 01488 71715/72299

Post Office at the Rose & Crown Wednesdays and Fridays 9.30-11.30am

Vale of the White Horse District Council 01235 422422

<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/>

Recycling/Rubbish collection queries admin.vale@biffa.co.uk

Food waste is collected weekly, green/black bins alternate each week. Garden waste brown bins fortnightly. Mondays except Bank holidays.

Your Local District Councillors are: Elaine Ware 01973 783026

elaine.ware@whitehorsedc.gov.uk and Simon Howell 01793 784491

simon.howell@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

County Councillor: Yvonne Constance: 01235 751475/07976934884

yvonne.constance@oxfordshire.gov.uk

M.P. for the Wantage constituency: David Johnston david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk
0207 219 3000

Newsletter entries for May 2021. Submit your entries for May by **19th April** to: M. Turner Claremont, Ashbury SN6 8LN. marionlturner@me.com 01793 710302 For more of "what's on" and local information see the Ashbury Village Website www.ashbury.org.uk and the community page on Facebook.