

**ASHBURY  
COMPTON LONGCOT  
FERNHAM**

**NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2018**

Epiphany



“...they opened their treasures and offered him gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh.” Matt.2:11

## Thought for the month

What links a former Member of Parliament, Pope Francis and the Ashbury Village Shop? The answer - a “culture of encounter”. Let me explain.

A few months ago a certain well-known communications company dug a trench in the pavement near Ashbury School, and in so doing damaged a cable, cutting off telephone and internet lines to several homes including ours. We were reassured after a few days that this was all sorted, and we were indeed reconnected – but to someone else’s line. So it began, with teams to dig holes and teams to repair cables, taking ten days to fix the problem. I need the internet for work, so over the next week or so I spent several happy hours in Ashbury Shop working my way through Lorna’s excellent coffee and hot chocolate menu whilst using the wi-fi. A bonus of this time was the many conversations with other visitors to the shop, including walkers stopping for refreshments and several residents of Ashbury and Kingston Winslow to whom I had hitherto only said hello. Once the work was completed, I reflected on what a joy it had been to meet and talk with so many people in the shop.

Thus it was with some interest that I listened to a radio programme in November presented by former MP Douglas Alexander. The premise of the programme was that we may be more connected than ever, but we are, in many ways, strangers to each other. How many of our close friends have radically different politics, values or life experiences from us? When did we last share a meal with someone from a totally different background?

In the programme, Douglas Alexander sought to find out why we have become so polarised as a nation and what we might be able to do about it. His time as a politician had convinced him that government alone cannot mend Britain's divisions. So what can we do, as a society and as individuals?

The programme considered those who have studied Britain's fault lines and traced their causes - from political and economic forces to neuroscience and psychology. It included interviews with people experienced in bringing together people from different backgrounds, from the head of the UK army to the members of an Edinburgh cooking club. Interestingly, the programme

concluded that the top three activities rated as most successful in bringing people together are singing, dancing and eating!

So where does Pope Francis fit in? Apparently he was the originator of the phrase which gave the title to the radio programme - “a culture of encounter”. Pope Francis said, “For me this word [encounter] is very important. Encounter with others. Why? Because faith is an encounter with Jesus, and we must do what Jesus does: encounter others. As members of the Body of Christ, we are each created in the image of God and loved by Him. We are called to form relationships with one another, and we are called to create a culture of encounter”.

Jesus is the primary example of someone who sought out people from every background, and met them at that deeper level of encounter rather than just acquaintance. We are called to be like him, as the Bible says in I John 4 v 11: “Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another”, so I’m excited to see what this “culture of encounter” might look like for each one of us in 2018. Are we up for the challenge of trying something new and seeing where it takes us?

**Isobel Weller**

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

### **Shrivenham and Ashbury Benefice Services in January**

<b>Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January</b>		<b>Epiphany</b>
7.45am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Shrivenham
9.00am	Matins	Watchfield
9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Compton
9.00am	Holy Communion by Extension	Fernham
10.15am	Family Service with Baptism	Shrivenham
11.00am	Morning Worship	Ashbury
3.00pm	Joint Service	Longcot Chapel
6.30	Compline and Benediction	Shrivenham

### **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> January**

9.00am	Said Holy Communion	Watchfield
9.00am	Morning Worship	Fernham
9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
10.30am	Parish Communion	Shrivenham
11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury

### **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> January**

7.45am	Holy Communion	Shrivenham
9.00am	Matins	Watchfield
9.00am	Matins	Compton
9.00am	Holy Communion	Fernham
10.15am	Parish Communion	Shrivenham
11.00am	Family Service	Ashbury
6.00pm	Evening Worship	Longcot

### **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January**

9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Watchfield
9.30am	Family Communion	Longcot
10.30am	Joint Covenant Service at the Methodist Church	Shrivenham
11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
6.00pm	Evening Prayer	Fernham

The Ashbury prayer cycle for January will be: 7<sup>th</sup> Idstone, 14<sup>th</sup> Kingstone Winslow, 21<sup>st</sup> Malthouse Close, 28<sup>th</sup> Odstone Farm and Cottages.

### **Ashbury Evangelical Free Church**

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup>** at 10.15 a.m. communion service  
**Wednesdays 3<sup>rd</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>** at 2.15pm. tea & chat.



Everyone is welcome!

## **Ashbury News**

**(See Ashbury also under Benefice News)**

### **Eileen Law**

Anne and Tina would like to express our heartfelt thanks for the kind words of sympathy and support extended to our family at the sudden loss of our Mother.

A special thank you to Peggy Leon, Muriel Ferns and IV Florist for their wonderful floral tributes, to Rev'd Fergusson and her husband Richard, to Father Caulfield for performing the Mass, to James Reade for playing the hymns at the service and to the Rose and Crown for accommodating the funeral guests afterwards and for providing a lovely buffet.

Mum certainly made lots of friends in Ashbury and in the wider community. We will find strength in the knowledge that you will remember many happy times shared with Eileen whether it was floral, arts, or through her faith at St. Alban's Church or just seeing her on the '66' bus en route to Oxford.

### **New Year Family Village Party Village Hall Saturday 6th January 4.00 -- 7.00pm**

Tea, games and fun. Free entry but please bring a plate of food to share. Soft drinks and tea/coffee will be provided. This event is sponsored by the Village Hall and St Mary's Church. No need to book, just turn up.

### **Red Cross First Aid Session Village Hall Saturday 24th February 10 - 12am**

This workshop is aimed at over 65s or those living with or caring for older people who are at more risk of slips, trips and falls but they will be applicable to multiple first aid situations. Skills such as broken bones, choking, bleeding, head injuries, burns, strokes, heart attacks, harmful substances, unresponsive and breathing, unresponsive and not breathing, can be covered. Numbers are limited so please let Maggie Simons know if you would like to attend. There is no fee for this workshop.

**mail to:maggiemsimons@outlook.com 01793 710801**

**Christmas Gifts for the Homeless in Swindon** - thank you Threshold Housing wrote to express their delight with the large amount of items donated by Ashbury, Longcot and Fernham residents. They also thanked those who donated £70 in cash at the 'Ask' service at Shrivenham. Many thanks.

### **Church Christmas Bazaar and Raffle**

Thank you to everyone who donated goods for sale, donated raffle prizes, ran a stall, bought raffle tickets and those who came and spent their money at the Bazaar. We raised the fantastic sum of £1353.45 for Church funds.

Margaret Smith

*A very big thank you to you all for helping with the Christmas bazaar, with a special thank you to Margaret for organising it all so well and especially for organising the raffle - for getting such superb prizes and for coordinating the door-to-door collections.*

### **Womens Institute - Inspiring Women**

If you are interested in the history of Swindon, please join us for our monthly meeting on **Thursday 11th January** when Andy Binks will be our guest speaker featuring "Swindon History in Photos". A showcase of images from the 1860's through to present day from the archive of Swindon's Photography Society and telling tales about the towns history including changes that are going on now. Our meeting is at Hinton Parva village hall starting at 7pm and this will be an opportunity to meet with fellow members and may spark an interest in our WI! For more information please contact **Maggie Simons: 01793 710801 or email: maggiemsimons@outlook.com**

**Friends of Ashbury School** A huge thank you to everyone who supported the Ashbury School Christmas Fayre on 30<sup>th</sup> November. We raised a fantastic £965 for the Friends of Ashbury School which will be spent on projects and events in the school over the next year. An amazing achievement in just two hours, so thanks once again! Kate Watkins

## **Longcot and Fernham News**

The door to door collection for the annual **Poppy Appeal**, among the villagers of Fernham, raised a total of £183.04. Many thanks to all those who donated. Ken Diccox

### **St Mary's Longcot & Longcot 800.**

Community kitchen and toilet installation in St Mary's.

Thank you to all who attended the series of three Amick Vocal Concerts in St Mary's Longcot on:

19 October – Mike Christie

20 October – White Horse

14 December – Mary-Jess

Each of the three evenings featured wonderful singing and background music and much audience appreciation of the different music styles and content.

Thanks also to the volunteers who set up the church, flowers, lighting and bar and particularly to Belinda Boyd who created the concerts, produced all of the publicity and liaised with the individual performers.

The three concerts together raised £730.00 which will be added to the Longcot 800 charitable funds to fund the creation of the community facilities in St Mary's.

### **Fernham & Shellingford WI**

**We are to have an extraordinary meeting on Wednesday January 17th 2018 in Fernham Church Hall at 7.30pm.**

Our WI Adviser Lyn Coleman will come along to suspend our WI as we are unable to form a new committee. We are only a small WI, the older members have all done their share in the past and the younger members are unable to commit themselves at this time. It is possible to reform in the future, our funds will be held over for 3 years.

We have members coming from Trowbridge, Lechlade, Highworth, Faringdon and Shrivenham, so we hope to continue to meet up regularly and still enjoy the lunch club and the monthly walks.

Our WI was founded in 1939, so it is a very sad that we will not quite make our 80th year.

Hope to see all members at the meeting as this affects everyone, especially the use of our remaining funds. 75% of members are needed to vote on all issues.

**For contacts Elli Wickham - 01367 820544 or Joan Turner - 01367 820607**

## **Longcot Churches working together -Chapel News**

**SUN. 7<sup>th</sup> 3pm** Everyone is welcome to join us for this joint service at the Chapel, to be led by Richard Fergusson.

**FRI. 26<sup>th</sup> 3pm** T Time Fellowship which is open to everyone who would enjoy the chance to chat to friends old and new over afternoon tea. There is no charge but contributions to our chosen charity are always welcome. If transport would help or you'd just like to know more please contact **Stella on 01793 782584.**

## **Benefice News**

### **Prayer**

I think it's fair to say that 2017 has not been without its challenges, so my prayer for the New Year is this:

To a troubled world,  
peace from Christ.  
To a searching world,  
love from Christ.  
To a waiting world,  
hope from Christ.  
Amen

### **Happy New Year**



## **Thank you**

Christmas in the Benefice is always very special and this year has been no exception with a variety of services and events in our churches, schools, village halls and, of course, outdoors in all sorts of weather! Many, many thanks to everyone who has given their time and talent to help us celebrate the real meaning of Christmas.

And a special thank you to Marion and Judy who edit and print this magazine, and to those who deliver it throughout the villages. We are most grateful to all of you.

**Breakfast Groups** – why not make it your new year’s resolution to join us?

Men’s breakfast: will be held on Saturday 6 January in the Village Hall as usual. Everyone is welcome, the conversation is great and the breakfast is free – we just ask for a donation if you can.

Breakfast Bible Study: this will meet again at 8am on Saturday 20 January (a week earlier than usual) at Anica Nishio’s in Kingstone Winslow. Again, all are welcome to chat over a cup of coffee and a simple breakfast.

**Norma**

## **Country Matters**

Talk of snow seemed unlikely to me so early. I cannot remember a fall here in the second week of December before. We had charge of our grandchildren from London and on Sunday morning Barnaby aged three and Matilda aged one were looking out to a white scene. It was just right for snowballs and the making of a snowman. So the lawn now sports a substantial snowman. His eyes are tomatoes which were still lingering in the green house and his nose is carrot. Rather strangely he was given a Mohican look with clothes pegs on top! The dog loved it, biting at lumps and dashing about. Barnaby wanted to know where the snow came from in the same manner as he might ask later “why is the sky blue”. Snow can be a mixed blessing on a farm with work to do but on this occasion it was all good fun.

But in January 1881 heavy snow caused a tragedy, a tale which is a cruel reminder of our fickle climate. A Mr Thatcher from Longcot had sent four carts to deliver coal to the gas house at Lambourn. The carts were in charge of an experienced man called Patient who was accompanied by Mr Thatcher's son Robert aged 11, a man called Goddard and a lad of 17 called Daniels. The coal was delivered and the party started back at 1pm taking the track over the downs past Knighton Bushes heading for Compton Beauchamp as the shortest route home. It soon began to snow heavily with the party losing their way. By 4.30pm the blizzard had exhausted the horses and they could go no further, near Honey Bush Corner. Patient left Goddard and Daniels with the horses and carts and struggled on with young Thatcher on his shoulders. At last he found shelter, reaching the house of Lord Craven's keeper Jesse Jones at about 1 o'clock at night. But unfortunately his burden had by then become a corpse and he had had to leave the dead boy behind in the snow. Jones organised relief and they found Goddard frozen to death but Daniels had just survived, crouching against the horses. Two of the horses had also perished.

**Richard Green**

#### **Benefice Clergy**

Vicar	Rev Richard Hancock	01793 780183
NSM	Revd Norma Fergusson (Except Monday and Friday)	01793 710055

Newsletter entries for February 2018. Submit your entries for February by **19<sup>th</sup> January** to: M. Turner Claremont, Ashbury SN6 8LN.  
[marionlturner@me.com](mailto:marionlturner@me.com) 01793 710302

For more of "what's on" and local information see the Ashbury Village Website [www.ashbury.org.uk](http://www.ashbury.org.uk) and the community page on Facebook.