

**ASHBURY
COMPTON LONGCOT
FERNHAM
NEWSLETTER MAY 2017**



Christian Aid Week
14-20 May

Thought for the month-

The editorial for the January newsletter was based around one of our children's favourite stories by Dr Seuss, called the Spooky Old Tree. As we have recently celebrated the birth of our third grandchild, we have spent a good deal of time between Ashbury and Leicester, helping out with his two siblings, aged five and two, which has inevitably and happily involved lots of bedtime/lunchtime/early morning stories with them. So please indulge us as we recall another favourite story, The Selfish Giant, written in 1888 by Oscar Wilde and "intended to be read to children".

It is particularly appropriate to be read at this time of year as we enjoy the rapid explosion of spring colours and bird song, and have recently celebrated Christ's resurrection from death to new life at Easter. The story concerns a giant who returned to his castle after seven years away, and forbade the children who used to play in the garden from coming in, by putting up a large wall. As a consequence the garden remained trapped in the depths of winter, which perplexed the giant, until one day some children found their way back in and the blossom began to return. All except for one corner that is, where " it was still Winter. It was the farthest corner of the garden, and in it was standing a little boy. He was so small that he could not reach up to the branches of the tree, and he was wandering all round it, crying bitterly. The poor tree was still quite covered with frost and snow, and the North Wind was blowing and roaring above it. 'Climb up! little boy,' said the Tree, and it bent its branches down as low as it could; but the little boy was too tiny."

Suddenly the giant realised how selfish he had been to keep the children out, and he gently helped the little boy climb up into the tree, and the blossom returned to that tree too.

So the children were once again allowed to play in the beautiful garden, but then the little boy disappeared for many years until the giant was quite old and frail. Then one day the giant saw the little boy again but noticed that his hands and feet bore the marks of nails. The giant was angry and said 'Who hath dared to wound thee?' 'Tell me, that I may take my big sword and slay him.' 'Nay!' answered the child; 'but these are the wounds of Love.'

'Who art thou?' said the Giant, and a strange awe fell on him, and he knelt before the little child.

This is not a story from the Bible but it has echoes of Christ's sacrifice for us, with the "wounds of Love". The giant was trapped in a joyless existence and could not recognise the little boy until he acknowledged his own selfish nature, and was then able to welcome in all the children and enjoy colour and life once again. What barriers might we put up to keep Christ out of our lives? What do we miss out on by wanting to do things our way, and shutting out other people? I read this story with my grandchildren with renewed thankfulness for Christ's sacrifice, and a resolve to try not to shut him out of my life.

Isobel Weller

Shrivenham and Ashbury Benefice Services in May

Sunday 7th May

7.45am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Shrivenham
9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Compton
9.00am	Matins	Watchfield
9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Fernham
10.15am	Family Service with Baptism	Shrivenham
11.00am	Morning Prayer	Ashbury
3.00pm	Joint Service	Longcot Chapel
5.00pm	Choral Evensong and Flower Festival	Longcot
6.30pm	Compline and Benediction	Shrivenham

Sunday 14th May

9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Watchfield
9.00am	Morning Worship	Fernham
9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
10.30am	Joint Christian Aid Service	Shrivenham Methodist
11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury

Sunday 21st May

7.45am	Holy Communion	Shrivenham
9.00am	Matins	Compton
9.00am	Holy Communion	Fernham
10.15am	Parish Communion	Shrivenham
11.00am	Café Church	Ashbury
6.00pm	Evening Prayer (BCP)	Watchfield
6.00pm	Evening Worship	Longcot

Thursday 25th May

Ascension Day

7.00pm	Holy Communion -followed by drinks in the King & Queen	Longcot
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Sunday 28th May

9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Watchfield
9.30am	Family Communion	Longcot
10.15am	Parish Communion	Shrivenham
11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
6.00pm	Evening Worship	Fernham

The Ashbury prayer cycle for May will be 7th Kingstone Winslow, 14th Malthouse Close, 21st Odstone Farm and Cottages, 28th Pound Piece.

Ashbury Evangelical Free Church

Starting from May 2017, unless otherwise stated, we will meet once a month for a communion service on Sunday mornings, rather than weekly. This will be the **second** week of each month at the usual time of 10.15 am. so this month it will be:

May 14th Communion Service 10.15 a.m.

Tea and chat will continue the first and third Wednesday afternoon of each month so will be **3rd** and **17th** of May. It's free and all are welcome.

Ashbury News

Help Save Ashbury Pre-school

I made an appeal in the March newsletter for new trustees for Ashbury Pre-school. Although we have since recruited one new trustee (thank you very much Christina!), we have not had any volunteers for the role of chair. I have served for five years but must stand down in September and if we cannot find a new chair ***our Pre-school will face closure***. This would be very bad news, not just for our excellent staff and dedicated volunteers and trustees, but also for the village, which has had its own small but highly successful Pre-school for over 40 years. If you would like to contribute to our community and help ensure that our Pre-school continues to provide a friendly, imaginative and exciting start to education for local children, please get in touch to find out more.

Elizabeth Derrington

Chair of Trustees, Ashbury Pre-school

Tel: 01793 710813 Mob: 07722 867493 Email: contact@ashburypreschool.org

Vacancy for Parish Council Clerk

There will be a vacancy as from the beginning of May for the role of parish council clerk. James Greenham has decided to step down at the council's AGM after 13 years' service.

The role is largely administrative, including organising meetings, minute taking, financial management & reporting and liaising with the district and county councils where necessary.

Please contact Kate Watkins (Chairperson of the PC) by email (kate_l_watkins@hotmail.co.uk) or 01793 710444.

Beat the Bounds' 500th Anniversary Walk

Join us on the 500th anniversary of the oldest written account of Beating the Bounds. Written by Abbot Beere in 1517, his "Terrier and Perambulation" recalls his description of the parish boundary as he traversed it with several men of the village in order to reaffirm the boundary. This is your chance to do the same 500 years later!

The bounds walk will start on **Saturday May 6th at 9am** in front of the pub. Rather than following the actual boundary, which would be very difficult today, we take a more relaxed view and don't quite do the entire boundary. Everyone is welcome, including children and dogs, and although the entire walk is about 12 miles you can come for as little or as much of the walk as you like. More info on the website

at <http://www.ashbury.org.uk/leisure/welcomeevents/beat-the-bounds-walk/> or call Steve Treadwell on 710369. Come and explore the parish and enjoy lovely views of the downs and vale that you will only ever experience on foot, and share a connection with the parishioners of 500 years ago.

Ashbury Market - Sunday 14th May - Ashbury Village Hall - 11am to 1pm. In aid of Ashbury Pre-School (registered charity 1156122) Come and support our local businesses! Stalls will be selling: Meat, Bread, Milk, Vegetables, Rapeseed Oil, Jam, Cakes, Chutneys, Soaps, Jewellery, Cards, Sand Art, Books, Gifts and a Village Treasure Hunt! For more information contact: Kate Watkins 01793 710440 (Kate_L_Watkins@hotmail.co.uk).

Ashbury Village Treasure Hunt - Sunday 14th May - Ashbury Village Hall - 11am to 1pm. In aid of Friends of Ashbury School (registered charity 1100425) Bring the family and follow the clues to track a trail round the village. £3 entry per family and a prize for finishing!

Longcot and Fernham News

Longcot Flower Festival 6-14 May in St Mary's Church The church will be open 10 – 4 each day. *Proverbs and Petals* is the 9th flower festival in our beautiful church and we look forward to welcoming you to our way of saying it with flowers.

Also there will be Cream Teas in The Chapel on Saturday and Sunday both weekends from 3-5pm. in aid of church funds.

On Sunday 7th May at 6pm there will be a celebratory Choral. Evensong in the church.

Again we are supporting village artists open for **Oxfordshire Artweeks**. For art exhibition locations and times see details under Emma Ablitt, Pat Elmore, and Sharon Rich at www.artweeks.org Contact: Shirley Dalton-Morris: 01793 782989 or hirsley-village@mybtinternet.com

Fernham & Shellingford WI

The May meeting will take place on Wednesday 17th at Greenacres. 7.30pm as usual. Joan is hosting this meeting and Elli will take us through her visit to Austria with a 'Sound of Music' theme. We will have our usual refreshments and raffle.

Enquiries to Joan Turner - 01367 820607 or Elli Wickham - 01367 820544

Village Quiz

Fernham is holding a village quiz on Friday 19th May in the Church Hall at 8pm. We will have teams of 6 - form your own team or come along and join a table. £10 per person to include hot food served during the interval and drinks will be available.

Reserve tickets by contacting :- Charles Wickham - chelliwick@phoncoop-coop or Freda Dawes - fredawes9@hotmail.com or just turn up on the night.

Longcot Churches working together -Chapel News

SUN 7th MAY 3pm - NO service in the chapel as there is to be Sung Evensong in St Mary's at 6pm as part of the Flower Festival.

FRI 26th 3 - 4.30pm T- time Fellowship. Do come and join us for the chance to enjoy a chat over afternoon tea. There is no charge but the chance to donate to Helen House, the children's hospice in Oxford.

Huge thanks to everyone who contributed to the £30 sent to Guide Dogs for the Blind after last month's tea.

Community news

Oxfordshire County Council elections – it's a vote for your community. Oxfordshire County Council provides many of the important services in your community, such as Fire and Rescue, looking after vulnerable children and adults, libraries, roads, waste disposal, school nurses and tackling rogue traders, to name just a few.

The county council elections on **Thursday 4 May** are your opportunity to directly influence how these services are run in your area.

The councillor elected in your area will be representing you and your community, taking important decisions that affect where you live. They will

also be the person you get in touch with if you want to improve services over the next few years.

You can find the full list of candidates standing in your area and your nearest polling station at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/elections

The elections take place on **Thursday 4 May from 7.00am to 10 pm**. The election count takes place on Friday, May 5 in Abingdon.

If you care about local services, don't forget to vote and remind your friends and family too!

Benefice News

Breakfast Groups

Men's breakfast: in the Ashbury Village Hall on Saturday 6 May – Everyone is welcome, the conversation is great and the English breakfast is free – we just ask for a donation if you can. The donations cover the cost of the produce and any surplus at the end of the year is donated to a charity selected by the group. Please call Norma (710055) if you would like to come along,

Breakfast Bible Study: this monthly discussion group will meet again at 8am on Saturday 27 May. Again, all are welcome to chat about anything and everything over a cup of coffee and a simple breakfast; please call Norma on 710055 for more details.

St Mary's Longcot will be hosting two special services this month. Do come and join us for either or both

Sunday 7 May at 6pm – choral Evensong for the Flower Festival led by the St Andrew's choir

Thursday 25 May at 7pm – service of Holy Communion for Ascension Day

Thank yous

We are in the middle of the season for annual church meetings which reminds me to thank publicly

those who hold formal roles of responsibility within the PCCs
everyone who keeps the churches so beautiful – cleaning, flower arranging, maintaining the churchyards

those who set up for services and really do make people feel welcome when they arrive
people who make coffee after services
the bell ringers
everyone who reads the lessons, leads the prayers and assists with Holy Communion
the people who quietly get on with the things which need doing
everyone who leads worship
and, not least, those who continue to pray for us and our villages

And a special thank you to everyone who led services and decorated our churches during Holy Week and on Easter Day

A Prayer for the forthcoming election

Heavenly Father

source of all truth and wisdom, who knows and loves the whole creation,
watch over our nation at election time:
that truth may prevail over distortion,
wisdom triumph over recklessness
and the concerns of every person be heard. Amen

Norma

Country Matters

Is it my imagination or is the white blossom on the black thorn stronger than ever this year? A nice warm rain would be welcome.

March 16th was one of those days you wish had never happened. I had just got home rather lighter in the pocket from the Cheltenham Festival looking forward to some supper. There had been a nasty accident involving our cattle on the Idstone road out of Ashbury. It was dark and our men Peter and Martin needed help so out I went. Fortunately no human casualties but a suckler cow lost her life that night and Tony Constance's new BMW was badly damaged. Apparently he had no chance to avoid her when she jumped down a bank into the road right in front of him.

I wrote about this cow last November; she had calved unexpectedly and suckled her calf over the autumn and winter into a strong young heifer that was ready to be weaned. We had kept them in separate shed and fussed

over these two and they had escaped. Then we had the difficult task with torches of manoeuvring the confused calf in the dark into our neighbours' shed at Ildstone farm where she would be secure for the night. Some 25 years ago we had seven Angus heifers escape and they led us a pretty dance. Five were recovered in a few days from the steep cutting above the road on the Peploe's land where they had been lying up in the shade by day in hot weather. But two more wandered as far as White Horse Hill. With no water and little fencing on the downs we found they had drunk from a wet dew pond above Woolstone and they had turned feral. It was suggested to me that they should be shot but I would not entertain it. I used to get up early in the cool mornings searching for them with binoculars. Spences were still milking then and eventually after several weeks we managed to drive them into their coombes field above Ashbury where they had a bunch of their own cattle. We were so grateful for our neighbours' help in this matter that we had Bill and Cherry Mawle and Mac and Elisabeth Spence to dinner as a thank-you. Why do they stray? Sometimes it is human error, sometimes gates are not shut by walkers, it can be cut fences by hare coursers which we farmers hate. It seems it is rarely the most obvious thing such as they are hungry or they have pushed over bad fencing.

Richard Green

Benefice Clergy

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

Newsletter entries for June 2017 Submit your entries for June by **19th May**
to: M. Turner Claremont, Ashbury SN6 8LN. marionlturner@me.com 01793
710302

Ashbury Village Website www.ashbury.org.uk