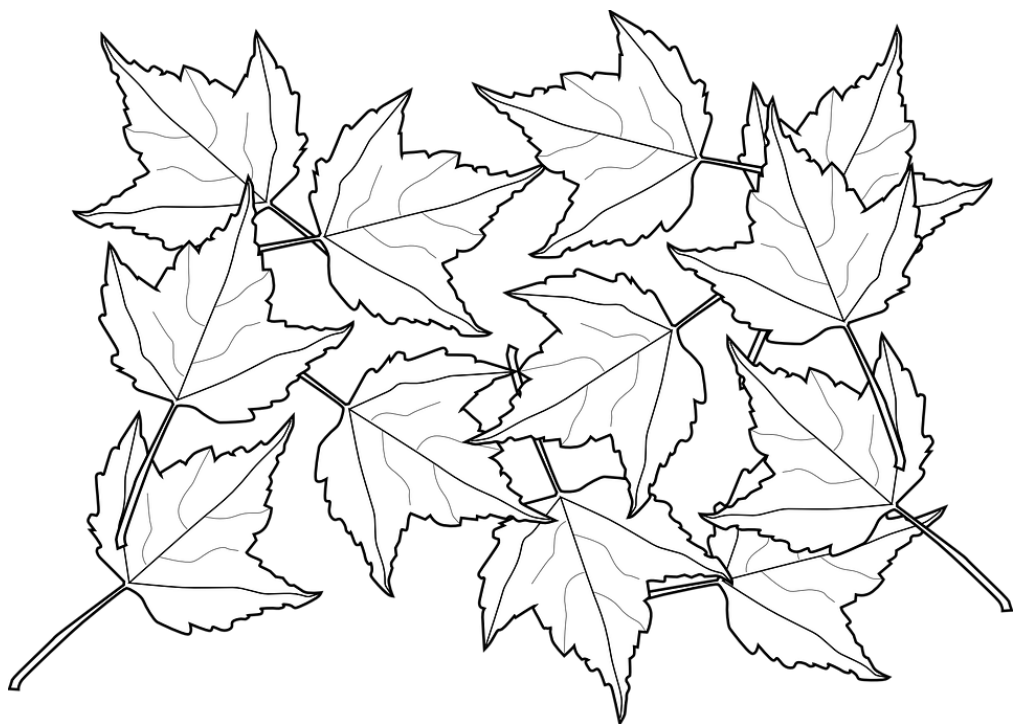


**ASHBURY
COMPTON LONGCOT
FERNHAM**

NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2017



Thought for the month-October

There are few things worse than sitting in front of a blank sheet of paper or computer screen, trying to think of something to say that will have meaning for others. At a recent conference on preaching, I was relieved to find myself in very good company. The trouble was, though all the speakers were very generous with their advice – some of it was a bit contradictory! And what can you write on a September Saturday that will make sense a couple of weeks later, particularly when the world seems so uncertain?

Perhaps the thing to do is to think about the things which are eternal – not transitory. Things like love, compassion, faith, hope and trust. These are not soft, fluffy ideas without relevance to what some would call the “real world”; they are what keep us going when that real world seems to be falling apart. They are the ideas which lead to the creation of charities which feed the hungry and shelter the homeless; charities which protect the environment; charities which support prisoners and their families; charities which comfort the suicidal, the dying and the bereaved. They are the ideas which send volunteers into disaster areas, even at risk to their own lives. The ideas which can make us better than we think we are.

In a recent book by Terry Waite (*Out of the Silence*) it is clear that these are the things which helped him survive the years of captivity in Beirut and to use those experiences to help others after his release. It's a book full of ideas and images that stop you in your tracks, like his meeting with a lady whose son had been decapitated in Iraq. She said:
“To lose a son in this way is terrible, just terrible. However, my suffering is no different from that of an Iraqi mother who has lost her child through war or terrorism”
Nothing soft and fluffy about compassion like hers.

So my prayer this month is this:

O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that with you as our ruler and guide we may so pass through things temporal that we lose not our hold on things eternal. Amen

Norma Fergusson

Shrivenham and Ashbury Benefice Services in October

Sunday 1st October

7.45am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Shrivenham
9.00am	Harvest Festival Holy Communion (BCP)	Compton
9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Fernham
10.15am	Family Service with Baptism	Shrivenham
11.00am	Morning Worship	Ashbury
3.00pm	Joint Service - Harvest	Longcot Chapel
3.00pm	Pet Service	Watchfield
6.30pm	Compline and Benediction	Shrivenham

Sunday 8th October

9.00am	Morning Worship	Fernham
9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Watchfield
9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
10.15am	Parish Communion-Choir Sunday	Shrivenham
11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury

Sunday 15th October

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	Evensong	Longcot

Sunday 22nd October

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

Sunday 29th October

10.30am	Benefice Communion	Fernham
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The Ashbury prayer cycle for October will be: 1st Pound Piece, 8th Station Road, 15th Malthouses, 22nd Walnut Trees, 29th Wixes Piece.

Ashbury Evangelical Free Church

There will be a communion service on Sunday 8th at 10.15am.
Tea and chat are on Wednesdays 4th and 18th October at 2.15 pm.
As usual, all are welcome.

Ashbury News

(See Ashbury also under Benefice News)

Proposed Closure of Ashbury Pre-school

The Trustees of the Pre-school regret to announce that the Pre-school will not be able to open on 11 September as we had hoped, and, further, that we will put forward a resolution at the AGM on 14 September for it to be wound up permanently.

I'm sure you will understand that this decision has been reached only after much discussion and active searching for alternatives and you will know from recent media coverage that ours is not the only Pre-school facing such challenges.

Whilst the immediate problem was one of staffing, it was also relevant that: we do not enough sufficient numbers to run at break-even and would probably be operating at a loss after Christmas. Although in previous years numbers have increased at the start of term, there are no signs of this happening again this year.

With only small numbers, we would not be able to meet our legal and moral obligation to offer children the learning and development opportunities necessary to prepare them for school.

It seems that the days of small Pre-schools run as charities by volunteers from the community may be coming to an end. We very much hope that suitable alternative arrangements will emerge for Ashbury.

We are most grateful to everyone who has supported the Pre-school over so many years whether as staff, parents, volunteers or friends; we should also mention especially the Free Church and the Sir William Cash Fund. Together you have provided local children with a great start to their education.

NB Parish Council Notices:

You will all have recently received **Yellow Voting Registration Forms**. Please remember to respond to these forms urgently otherwise you will **not** be able to vote in the next elections.

Parish Footpaths

The OCC Countryside Access Teams are looking to identify volunteer Parish Path Wardens. They would be responsible for reporting any blocked pathways to ensure that they are cleared. If you might be interested in becoming the Ashbury Path Warden or would like to report a blocked pathway please contact our Parish Clerk at ashburyparishcouncilclerk@outlook.com

Dog Walkers

Please do not let your dogs off their leads when walking through fields with livestock. We repeatedly hear reports of sheep being injured or stressed within the Parish so please be considerate of their space.

Vale food waste recycling. VWHDC are upgrading their vehicles and making some changes to the collection of food waste. They no longer require householders to use biodegradable bags for food scraps. Instead, we are to use newspaper to line the green bin or, (and this is not a joke) use **plastic** bags. Apparently biodegradable bags do not degrade fast enough and can't be easily extracted from the decomposing waste, whereas plastic ones can. No, I don't understand it, either. [Ed.]

Advance notice of St Mary's Christmas Bazaar: keep this date free!
Saturday 25th November . Further details to come but bric a brac welcome to Peggy Leon (710273) as are books in good condition to Marion Turner (710302).

Ashbury Community Club

Thursday **26th October 2.30pm**

Andrew Bunce will tell us about Collecting Art.

Do join us for an interesting talk followed by tea & biscuits.

All welcome. Visitors £2.

Further info from Jackie Baker tel. 710358

WI - Inspiring Women

Our monthly meeting on Thursday 12th October is showcasing areas of interest and hobbies of our local members with demos, talks and displays. Please join us to explore the inspiring talents of our members at 7.30pm in Bishopstone Village Hall.

Looking ahead to our Thursday 9th November meeting at Hinton Parva Village Hall, we have guest speaker Tom Arnold with "Stories of those who sailed on the Titanic".

We also have an evening visit arranged for a personal tour of Ramsbury Brewery & Distillery on Wednesday 29th November at 6pm. A traditional country estate in the heart of Wiltshire near Marlborough produces a range of delicious ales, single estate vodka and gin, smoked fish and game, and cold pressed oils - perhaps an opportunity to get in some early Christmas present ideas as there will be a chance to visit their shop (but no obligation to buy).

Our Art Lovers' Group will be enjoying another Art Study day (in Wanborough) with Jenny Lyall (art historian and member of NADFAS) on Wednesday 4th October featuring "Ravilious and the Art of Colour". We also have a day at The National Gallery in London where National WI has teamed up with National Gallery experts, including curators, educators and conservation staff to learn about the fascinating world of "Children in Art".

Your local WI has members from the villages of Ashbury, Bishopstone, Hinton Parva, Wanborough and Liddington, and we always welcome new members. Our monthly meetings take place on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7.30 - 9.30pm in either Bishopstone or Hinton Parva village halls, and we have groups which also meet outside of our monthly meeting; e.g. Reading, Art Study and organised trips for members and their friends. Come along to one of our meetings to see if you like it - no obligation to join unless you want to!

Please contact Maggie Simons (710801) if you would like any further information.

Ashbury Village Hall

Saturday 28th October at 7.30 in the Village Hall

Flying Seftons Theatre Company present: Are You Sitting Comfortably? Ten Tall Tales.

Tickets cost £10 including a light supper, bar and raffle.
Please contact Lin Clarke (710326) or Margaret Smith (710800) for tickets.

Reminder DATE for your diaries!

STAGE 2: Working party for the planted space external to the railings of the Wixes Piece Play area- Sunday October 29th 10 – 1

We really need lots of help on this day – we will be digging up a large number of the shrubs on the side facing the Open Space and replanting some of these and digging out any deep rooted weeds and grass – so that this area can be grass seeded next April.

Please bring with you: spade, digging fork, gloves and a flask or so of fluid/drinking sustenance!

The excess shrubs including Spirea (pink flowered variety) Acuba, various varieties of Viburnums, compact Hebes and some bush Roses.

will be available to you all to collect from the site from 11.00am, for a donation to the Open Space fund – (to be used to buy benches for example)

For more details contact David Pain 07910 018287, Jonathon Loose 07876 570499 or Pauline Smith 07711 910502

Many thanks Ashbury Planters Group

Longcot and Fernham News

Fernham & Shellingford WI

The October meeting will be in Shellingford School Hall at 7.30 on Wednesday 18th. Liz Woolley will join us once again, this time to give a talk on 'Lord Nuffield', the founder of the Morris Motor Company and owner of Nuffield Place in Oxfordshire.

We are a very sociable WI, starting the evening with wine and nibbles and ending with hot drinks and biscuits.

We are only a small group but are always pleased to welcome visitors for a small fee, just come and join us on the evening.

Contacts - Joan Turner 01367 820607 or Elli Wickham - 01367 820544

Longcot Church Wildlife Garden

Our grateful thanks to Bernie Cooper for cutting the meadow again this year. The churchyard is looking good and the September work party cleared the hay and raked the area, so we are now ready for the autumn leaves! Thank you to our secret well-wisher for a kind donation which will go towards bird food this winter.

We took part in the Big Butterfly count in August and in a 15 minute survey recorded 16 butterflies of 6 species, which was quite good as it has been a poor season for butterflies.

There are hedgehogs in the churchyards and we like the sound of being a hedgehog friendly village. We shall be thinking of them from now on and leaving undisturbed areas under hedges and the log pile so they have plenty of places to hibernate. Maybe we should have a village hedgehog survey next year?

contacts: Jan 782265 or Shirley 782989. E-mail: hirsley-village@mybtinternet.com

Longcot Churches working together -Chapel News

SUN. 1st 3pm Everyone is welcome to our monthly joint service which this month will take the form of our Harvest Thanksgiving led by Mrs Ann Coventry. Harvest Tea will be served after the service.

FRI. 27th 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.

Community News

Oxfordshire County Council and our Waste Strategy Team are raising awareness that **our current DIY 1,2,3 for free scheme is changing on the 1st October.**

We appreciate that this change may not be popular with some residents. We only charge for small number of non-household or DIY items, which means we can keep all of our Household Waste Recycling Centres open.

The current scheme which has been running at their Household Waste Recycling Centres for 15 years allowed residents to deposit up to three DIY waste items for free before being charged a small fee of £1 for each additional item.

From the 1st October 2017 this changes to a small fixed fee per item of £1.50 for most non-household or DIY items.

Residents can still deposit household waste for free at their local Household Waste Recycling Centre.

More information about the changes can be found online at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/chargeablewaste

Registration for Oxfordshire Artweeks

May Festival 2018 is now open

- CLOSING DATE for entries is the 31st December 2017.

See www.artweeks.org or contact Jo Golding - Artweeks

Administratorartweeks@artweeks.org 01865 865596 for more details.

Don't miss your chance to take part: Artweeks is non-selective and open to all amateur and professional artists and craft makers living or working in Oxfordshire. Artweeks is also open to artists that live outside the county but are members of an established Oxfordshire based art group, society or guild. Artweeks festival is organised by a not for profit members company. If you are new to Artweeks you may like to attend one of our free taking part events.

Come and meet the festival director and hear more at our free sessions:

Cornerstone Arts, **Didcot**; Wed 4th Oct 2017 6.00-7.00pm

The Jam Factory, **Oxford**; Monday 9th Oct 2017 7pm-8.30pm

The Mill, **Banbury**; Tuesday 10th October 2017 7pm-8.30pm

West Ox Arts Gallery, **Bampton**; Thursday 19th October 7.30pm-9pm

Please do let us know if you are planning to come -

at artweeks@artweeks.org - in case there is any last minute change to the arrangements.

Jo Golding Administrator NEW ADDRESS

Oxfordshire Artweeks, 57 Bushy Close, Oxford, OX2 9SJ Tel: 01865 865596

www.artweeks.org

Be a part of Oxfordshire's largest visual arts festival. 2017 festival dates: 6th-29th May (South 6-14th; North & West 13-21st; City 20-29th). Follow us on @OxonArtweeks.

Benefice News

Ride & Stride

A huge thank you to everyone who braved the rain, rode and strode, welcomed, baked, served refreshments, directed visitors to the nearest loo and generally participated in this year's event. And still made it into church on Sunday morning! This is a wonderful and simple opportunity to raise funds both for our own churches and for the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust, which gives grants to churches so it's really a "win-win" arrangement. Why not think about it for September 2018?

Breakfast Groups, open to all

Men's Breakfast: in the Ashbury Village Hall on Saturday 7 October. Everyone is welcome, the conversation is great and the English breakfast is free – we just ask for a donation if you can. Please call Norma (710055) if you'd like to come.

Breakfast Bible Study: this monthly discussion group will meet again at 8am on Saturday 28 October (venue to be confirmed). Again, all are welcome to chat about anything and everything over a cup of coffee and a simple breakfast. Just call Norma on 710055 to confirm.

Open the Book

Open the Book is a way of bringing Bible stories alive for schoolchildren which is great fun for adults, too. The group meets in Ashbury School at 8.45 on alternate Mondays for about three quarters of an hour. If you think you might wish to help with this, please contact Richard Fergusson on 710638.

Science & Faith: Big Questions

A series of four talks hoping to shed some light on challenging issues from the perspectives of both faith and science; all at 7.30 in Faringdon Corn Exchange. Free entry and refreshments.

12 October: **Has science killed God?** Dr. Sharon Dirckx

3 November: **Creation or Evolution – do we have to choose?** Dr Denis Alexander

11 January: **Designer babies: should we play God?** Bishop Lee Rayfield

8 February: **God or the Big Bang?** Rev'd Dr Rodney Holder

Longcot Ocktaves – Autumn and Winter Programme

Mike Christie - Autumn Tour 2017

St Mary's Church Longcot – Thursday 19th October 2017

Part of the Amick Vocal Concert Series 2017 starring Mike Christie in October and Mary-Jess on 14 December (details to follow).

Early Bird Tickets: £15 each or £28 both concerts. After 15th October: £17.50 each/£30 both Under 16: £12.50 each/£20 both. VIP Tickets: £35 reserved seat plus Meet & Greet at 6pm

Singer and composer Mike Christie is back on the road with an exclusive solo Autumn Tour!

Come and enjoy an evening of well-known classics including opera, pop, musical theatre and self-penned songs from Mike's debut album 'to the fore', plus songs by Gershwin, Elton John, Flanders & Swann, Rodgers & Hammerstein and many more.

Bass-baritone Mike Christie shot to fame as a member of multi-platinum selling vocal harmony group G4, who were Runners Up on the very first series of ITV's The X Factor. An alumnus of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, Mike has performed in musicals in the West End, pantomime across the UK and numerous operatic roles, and has just finished his second summer season at Opera Holland Park in London. He has also written an opera called The Miller's Wife, which premiered in London in 2013.

AND

The White Horse Whisperers

St Mary's Church Longcot – Friday 20th October 2017

Doors open at 7pm for an 8pm start

Tickets £10 in advance or on the door

Our own local contemporary folk band! Formed in 2013 these versatile multi-instrumentalists quickly established themselves on the local folk scene. With a growing repertoire of original material inspired by their diverse musical heritage, geographical and historical roots, and the world around them, the band combine strong vocals and harmonies with an ever growing collection of instruments to stirring effect. Contact Norma Fergusson (710055) for details and tickets.

Norma

Country Matters

With us harvest was completed on September 1st. Our malting barley was a struggle between the showers. Everyone is reporting that they have had big losses with the barley heads buckling close to the ground and going under the knife as a result of the storms. Happily it looks like passing for beer, with the valuable malting premium. The wheat which we did last, was easier in better weather but some may not make milling grade because the rain made it pre-germinate. This spoils the gluten elasticity. Millers also need 13% protein and a good specific weight which on both counts looks good. Deer and badger damage is a big issue at the south end of our farm and several miles of anti- deer fencing is being planned for next year.

With this year's emphasis on wheat milling quality or lack of it on the downs with this problem reaching across into the high ground of Wiltshire it is worth reminding ourselves of the historical connection of the harvest with our heritage and our downland villages. Our villages were settled on the spring line offering good water to drink and mill races to grind wheat for breadmaking. My mother's maiden name was Miller. My brother lives in the miller's house at Moor Mill, Uffington. In the Domesday Book Upper Mill is mentioned at Ashbury and the Victorian County History records a mill at

Bishopstone in the 13th century. By the 1881 census there were 4 millers working in Bishopstone with 5 bakers/grocers. Not far away in Ashbury at the same time there were three working mills and two in Hinton Parva. It is probable these downland mills supplied bakers in the Vale at Shrivenham and Faringdon.

I recall the lovely bread made by the Brooks family at Fernham and also at Faringdon by the Hicks family. As a child I was taken to Mr Hicks who was asked to cure warts on my knee. They went!

There are several monuments in St Mary's church, Ashbury to the Brown family who ran Upper Mill and farmed Kingston Farm. In 1913 they were working 24 hours/day there producing 200 sacks/day. At the Lower Mill the Pound family were millers there for 100 years and their name lives on with the houses of Pound Piece. Florence Pound was alive in 1953, who with one of her sons kept the mill going until 1939. A picture hanging in the church's Lady Chapel commemorates Robert Pound, church warden for 33 years and shows the vermilion painted walls of the chancel at this time.

The Lower Mill was restored to working order some 25/30 years ago by the late owner John Tyrer and I think it is entirely acceptable that the current renovations by the new owner will involve a degree of residential use whilst preserving the milling machinery there.

In Bishopstone early millers were Robert Tothill and Robert Row. William Titchener followed in 1758 and his name lives on in the form Titchener's cottage in the High St. Later millers on the 19th century were William Milsom and even a John Grist. The bakers were the Wallis and Higgins families, the latter baking at the Old Bakery near the Old Post Office. The Old Mill, sold by the Church Commissioners was only converted to residential use in the 1980's. Before this it had been used for some corn storage by Rob Selbourne as part of his farm tenancy.

Richard Green

Benefice Clergy

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

Newsletter entries for November 2017. Submit your entries for November by **20th October** to: M. Turner Claremont, Ashbury SN6 8LN.

marionturner@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.