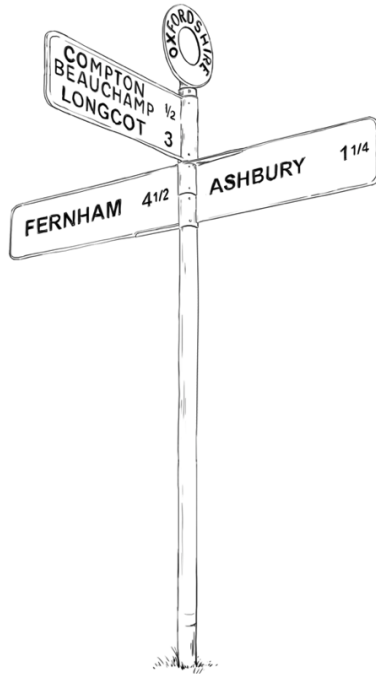


**ASHBURY
COMPTON LONGCOT FERNHAM
NEWS
OCTOBER 2021**



Re-opening of St Mary's Longcot

Future events announced: Ashbury Bazaar and Stations of the Nativity

Thought for the month

The last time I wrote here, I included a quote from the S Korean boyband The Bangtan Boys that: “The only reason you should ever look back is to see how far you’ve come.”

As I write now, we see all around us the signs of the harvest being gathered in; a reminder that despite all that has happened and continues to happen, there are some things which remain right with the world. Signs of things of which Thomas Hardy wrote that “...this will go onward the same though Dynasties pass.”

We who live in Shrivenham, Ashbury and their surrounding villages have I believe largely been blessed, sheltered from much of what has ravaged the world around us.

Our shops, our Post Offices and other amenities, have remained open and their shelves have mostly remained stocked, particularly with local produce. When, during the first lockdown, Norma and I were forced to isolate in the Vicarage, it needed but a phone call to Bloomfields, and within the hour Tim would appear in our drive with a box of essentials. Our doctor’s surgery has continued to care for us. Our churches have reopened – we can even sing again.

But, also as I write, the media are full of alarming stories of escalating fuel prices, and, as we prepare to receive our booster jabs, statistics of how few outside our shores have yet received any vaccine. Reminders that our little island in the Vale cannot forever remain immune to the stresses in the world outside. A reminder that ‘pandemic’ means what it says on the tin – that none of us is safe until everyone, all humanity, is safe.

So, as we once again sing ‘We plough the fields and scatter...’ and give thanks for the harvest home, let’s remember too the bigger picture. And, in the choices we make in the months to come, about how we use energy, about health care, about our place in human society, let’s remember not our rights as human beings, but our responsibilities to humanity as a whole, and to the God who created us.

Richard

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

Ashbury News

See Future Events for Ashbury Bazaar and Stations of the Nativity dates.

Safari Supper

A fantastic evening was had by 35 guests at the 2021 Neighbourhood Safari Supper held on Saturday 4th September. Guests explored the villages of Ashbury and Kingstone Winslow as they searched for the secret locations of their 3 courses, all hosted by different families in the village. We had an amazing evening, and £530 was raised for St Mary's Church. **Thank you to everyone who took part.**

Interested in the natural history of this area? Jonathan Widdicombe of Idstone is hoping that others are too. You can contact him at jhwiddicombe@ucdavis.edu or 01793 710219

A BRIEF NATURAL HISTORY OF THE PARISH OF ASHBURY

The parish of Ashbury is approximately rectangular, 5 miles long by about 2 miles wide. The southern half is chalk downs; the northern, clay lowlands. The Icknield Way (B4507) follows the spring line where the porous chalk meets the impervious clay. There are extensive, ancient oak woodlands around Ashdown House. Raptors occur in the following relative frequencies: Red Kite > Buzzard > Kestrel > Sparrow Hawk >> Montague's Harrier. Ravens nest in the woods by Ashdown House. Jays and Treecreepers are also found there. Snipe are present in the wet pastures behind Zulu farm. Lapwings and Golden Plovers are found throughout the parish in winter. Stonechats are found mainly on the Downs in winter, but nest in Bishopstone. Wheatears are common during autumn migration along the bridleway just south of Botley Copse. Some unusual bird sightings include: Pied Flycatcher, Great White Egret, Lesser Egret, Kingfisher, Egyptian Goose, Gadwall, and Curlew. There are six species of orchid in the parish: Pyramidal, Chalk Fragrant, Common Spotted, and Fly, plus Broad-leaved and White Helleborines. Good spots for orchids are Kingstone Coombe, the track at the top of Odstone Coombe, and the plantations that parallel the Ridgeway opposite Waylands Smithy. There is a patch of Herb Paris among the Dog's Mercury in Botley Copse. Badgers are abundant on the chalk, with a very large and obvious set in Kingstone Coombe. Herds of Fallow Deer, up to hundred strong, can be seen on the Downs. Roe Deer and Muntjac are common on the clay. I have recorded twelve species of butterfly. Peacocks and Red Admirals are particularly common and noticeable. A patch of lawn outside the Rose and Crown has the interestingly shaped fungus, Black Earth Tongue. Other dramatic fungi include Stinking Russula, Shaggy Parasol, and Shaggy Ink Cap. **J.W.**

CHURCH MATTERS

(Longcot is opening on 3rd October following completion of the building work)

Sunday 3 October	9.00am	Harvest Communion	Compton
	11.00am	Morning Prayer +Baptism	Ashbury
	3.00pm	United Service to celebrate re-opening	
	Longcot		
Sunday 10 October	9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
	11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
Thursday 14 October	10.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
Sunday 17 October	9.00am	Matins	Compton
	9.30am	Morning Prayer	Longcot
	11.00am	Taizé Service	Ashbury
	3.00pm	Sunday School	Longcot
Sunday 24 October	9.30am	Holy Communion	Fernham
	11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
	3.00pm	Sunday School	Ashbury
Sunday 31 October	10.00am	Benefice service with choir	Bourton

PAUL'S MESSAGE

Dear friends

October 4th is the day on which the Church commemorates St Francis of Assisi. St Francis was the son of a 12th century wealthy cloth merchant who gave up all his wealth to serve God. By the time of his death at around 44 years of age in 1226 he had gathered a Community of Friars who taught God's love and concern for all people, indeed all of creation, and especially the poor and outcast. His influence transformed the Church of the time. It became much more outward looking towards those who were unable or forbidden (such as lepers) from attending services. St Francis also wrote prayers and hymns that spoke directly to his contemporary situation, and found ways of bringing the message of the Gospel more directly to ordinary people. He was the person who invented the Christmas Nativity Crib, leading people to a cave at the edge of their town where he had arranged for some of the community to dress as Mary, and Joseph, Shepherds and Wise Men, with a donkey, an ox, and sheep adding to the nativity scene. St Francis message of God's concern for all creation still speaks strongly to us today, and in Ashbury our annual Stations of the Nativity owe its origin to St Francis first nativity scene more than 800 years ago.

FUTURE EVENTS

We are pleased to let you know that we will be holding our Christmas Bazaar on Saturday 27th November. Mindful of concerns regarding Covid we are planning to hold this at a lower level than usual but still with most of your favourite stalls including teas, cakes, gifts etc. The stalls will have more space around each and the raffle will be on the day only – we will not be selling tickets in advance. This allows us, should there to be serious concerns over Covid at the end of November, to cancel the event at the last minute. More details on stalls will be in the November Newsletter.

It is also our intention to hold our traditional Stations of Nativity around the village on Wednesday 22nd December starting at 6pm at Ashbury Crossroads and walking through the village to the Barn at Ashbury Manor where the large doors can be left open to allow lots of air through. Again, if we are in a difficult Covid situation this may have to be cancelled but we really hope not.

Covid Precautions at Services

We are doing our best to ensure that our church remains COVID safe for anyone who would like to come to our services. We request you continue to observe Covid safety rules, wear a mask, hand-sanitise on arrival (available inside church), sign in or use the NHS QR code. We are now singing hymns again but would request you wear a mask or sit a safe distance apart – there is plenty of room to do this. Please respect the concerns of others in the congregation. Please do not come into church if you think you have symptoms of Covid 19.

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 October:-

3rd Berrycroft, 10th Berrycroft Lane, 17th Chapel Lane, 24th Church Lane,
31st College Farm Lane.

PASTORAL CARE

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

LONGCOT CHURCHES WORKING TOGETHER – CHAPEL NEWS

SUNDAY 3rd Oct. Sept. 3pm – This month’s service will be a bit different. We shall be joining with our Anglican friends in St Mary’s Church, Longcot as they celebrate the re-opening of that church following the recent building work carried out there. The service will be led jointly by Revd. Norma Fergusson and Revd. Rachael Wilson, Methodist minister. Everyone is welcome.

FRIDAY 29th Oct. 3pm - Everyone is welcome to join us for afternoon tea in the Chapel when we enjoy plenty of chat and laughter as we exchange local news and have a general ‘catch up’. There is no charge but contributions to our chosen charity are always appreciated.

Sunday School and “Come and See with Cake and Tea” family service.

The Church of England parishes of the Shrivenham and Ashbury Benefice start a new Sunday School on Sunday 26th September at St Mary’s Church Ashbury. We welcome children aged 4-11 years of age to take part. Our Sunday School leaders and helpers will be DBS cleared and have safeguarding training.

Drop your child off for a 3.00pm start and then at 4.15pm come and see what they have been doing and have a cuppa and cake as we celebrate their work with a short family service, heading back home around 4.30pm. Any parent/s who wish to stay for the whole time are very welcome to do so.

The venue for the Sunday School will change each week as we move around the churches of the benefice from Ashbury, to Watchfield, Longcot and Fernham, and Shrivenham, but each week we start at 3.00pm and finish by 4.30pm.

October 3rd Watchfield, 10th Shrivenham, 17th Longcot, 24th Ashbury, 31st Venue tbc.

No need to book in advance, you can register your child when you turn up, but if you would like to register now, please contact our Benefice Administrator who can send you a registration form. info@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk

Further information from Revd Canon Paul Richardson, Associate Vicar. 01793 710241 or associate.vicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk

Country Matters

Had a good harvest? Farmers are regularly asked this and of course many years ago it was of vital importance to society in general. Starvation was a real spectre and in 1879 the summer was so bad that many crops were not worth harvesting and most of the hay crop was spoilt. Come rain or shine most farmers have learnt to cope. If coping is a problem it's probably best to hand over to someone who can overcome the stress and challenges that the weather throws at us.

The weather this year has been sunnier and drier in the north, whereas the south has been generally wetter and cloudier and we had those persistent frosts in April which impeded rooting and development on spring sown crops.

As I write this on September 17th most harvesting is complete but there are still fields of spring beans and some linseed uncut. Most forage maize will not be ready until October. This is a week or two later than usual.

Now to answer my original question, farmers on the Cotswolds which have soils which like wet summers have enjoyed good yields. Farmers on the chalk round here have not done so well and ours has been disappointing. However, we may get of out trouble with better prices and our barley and wheat look like being good enough to get quality premiums.

Returning to the weather. It is wise to treat its vagaries as a capricious mistress and always with respect. Never miss a chance. A week or a day in politics can make all the difference as Matt Hancock and Gavin Williamson have discovered. The same in farming.

When we cut our winter barley at the end of July some of the straw was too green to bale, then rain came and when it was dry to bale over two weeks later we planted rape immediately. The new crop emerged well into a moist soil but has been attacked relentlessly since by flea beetles and will probably not be worth risking to make a crop. Whereas our first field combined which was cleared and planted over two weeks earlier has not suffered and looks fine. A day can make all the difference.

Richard Green

Contacts

Ashbury Parish Council

Chairman: Christopher Prentice 01793 710821 chair@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 (not Monday or Tuesday)

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](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 November 2021. Submit your entries for November by **22nd**

October 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.