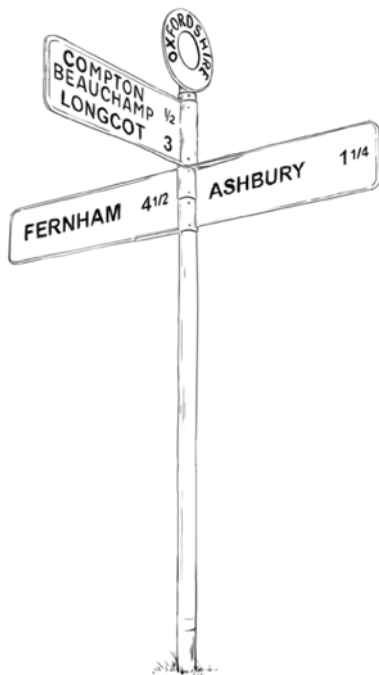


**ASHBURY
COMPTON LONGCOT FERNHAM
NEWS
APRIL 2025**



Churchyard Spring clean 5th

Easter Sunday 20th

Community Club 24th

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

As I write this column, it is the first day of Spring. I will confess that Spring has always been my favourite season. The sense of a new beginning with blossom on the trees, daffodils on the village green, and the first sightings of butterflies, all contribute to a sense of cheerfulness. We are leaving behind the dark and dismal days of last November and December. The water in our fields has started to recede and it is now fun to take my dog for a walk without him returning home caked in mud. We are also starting to have some balmy sunshine and, who knows, perhaps this is a forerunner of a lovely Summer? This may not sound particularly original but then perhaps some things are worth repeating. As one grows older, it is important to celebrate the good things in life and generate feelings of optimism, rather than focussing on personal aches and pains, or the instability of world events, no matter how alarming they may be.

This feeling of exuberance in Spring is, however, not just down to the weather but also to where one lives. In previous years my family and I have lived in busy cities from London to more exotic locations such as Naples in Italy and Skopje in North Macedonia. Each has brought its own share of excitement and wonder, but I do not believe that living in a large urban metropolis can compare with the open fields of the Vale in Springtime with its sound of courting birds and the clip clapping of horses through the village. Just yesterday a dozen roe deer took up residence in the field next to my house. I appreciate that they can be a nuisance to farmers and householders alike but seeing them wandering gracefully through the meadow munching on the grass certainly lifted my spirits.

The Church calendar may seem a little behind the vernal equinox as we are still in the midst of Lent with churches empty of flowers and services focusing on penitence and prayer. We should remember, however, that the Old English word for 'Spring' is actually 'Lent' and rather than it being simply a period of self-denial it is also a period of preparation and of growing hope. Hope that builds steadily throughout the Lenten period towards church processions taking place throughout the Vale on Palm Sunday. This then finds its crescendo on Easter Sunday when we celebrate the rising of Jesus Christ. It is a time for renewed energy and optimism – it just takes us to accept this and make it happen.

Dennis Blease, Longcot

Ashbury

Maggie Simons was nominated for this year's High Sheriff awards and we are so pleased that her nomination has been successful. Her community work for the church and village hall on top of earlier WI HQ service has been recognised with the award ceremony which took place at County Hall Oxford on 10th March.

Ashbury Village Hall

We will soon be holding the annual Village Hall Committee AGM on 13th **May**, which confirms the Committee members and agrees plans and priorities for the forthcoming year. These plans are essential to ensure the village hall is preserved as a flexible community space, enjoyed by so many.

A link to the Village Hall website which includes "What's On" is included here: <https://www.ashburyvillagehall.org/>

Over the past year, we have been able to implement new sound and projector equipment as well as having streamlined our website and booking system. Maintenance of our old and listed building continues as always. There have been many fun and inclusive events at the hall too; it's always great to see people coming together.

We know that **three of our team will be standing down at the AGM**, after much valuable service, and **we would love to bring in some new folk to join us** to help us continue to improve, and also help us make the most of our Village Hall for the benefit of our community. If you are interested in supporting us in any way, please let us know.

On behalf of the Village Hall Committee, Sandra Dagnall (sandrajdagnall@gmail.com) and Chris Millard (710352, Chris.Millard@btinternet.com)

PLANT AND CAKE SALE FOR PROSPECT HOSPICE - Saturday 10 May 2 pm

We would be very grateful for donations of plants and cakes to raise much needed funds for our local hospice - the hall will be open from 11.00-12.30 to receive these. As well as plants and cakes we will be selling second-hand gardening equipment. We hope you will be able to come and support the Prospect Hospice and find a bargain or two!

Margaret Smith and Sarah Loney

NEW RESIDENTS to Ashbury, Idstone and Kingstone Winslow

A pack is available for new residents which contains useful information. If you have moved into the village recently and would like to receive a pack, or if you have a new neighbour, please contact Jackie Baker (710358) for Ashbury & Idstone or Anne Taylor (07491 035582) for Kingstone Winslow.

Ashbury Community Club Thursday, 24th April, 2pm. Ashbury Village Hall 'Living Life Afloat'

An English couple have swapped the Australian sunshine and 40 acres of land for a new life on the UK waterways. Their home is a 15 year old, 57ft narrowboat called Impetuous and they have over 2000 miles of adventure ahead.

Come along to hear what it's really like to live on a narrowboat !

Visitors: £2 which includes tea & biscuits - All welcome

CHURCHYARD "SPRING CLEAN"

Saturday, 5th April 10am- Noon

We would greatly appreciate as many helpers as we can to carry out our annual Churchyard "Spring Clean" on Saturday 13th April at 10am. Usually we attract about 25-30 people such that as well getting the Churchyards ready for summer it is also a very social occasion. Hot refreshments will be available. As well as appropriate garden tools (secateurs, hard brush, trowel) it would also be helpful if, those who can, could bring a wheelbarrow or strimmer

Newcomers to the village are especially welcome where you can get to know other locals

Sustainable Flower Arranging Demonstration

Hinton Parva Village Hall Tuesday 8th April from 2.30 – 4.30pm with Beth Bruce-Gardner £10.00 a ticket

Cotswold based artisan florist Beth Bruce-Gardner (Honeymoon Fern Flowers) is a Cotswold based artisan florist. She uses locally grown seasonal flowers, striving for sustainable floristry.

Beth will be demonstrating how to create a variety of floral arrangements without the use of floral foam which is very bad for the environment. After her demonstrations there will be refreshments and a chance to ask questions, discuss her ideas and chat to Beth

Everyone welcome Tickets from: Maggie Simons – maggiemsimons@outlook.com – 01793 710801

Longcot

Spring Concert with the Clarinet Collective on Saturday 10th May

The Clarinet Collective returns to St. Mary's Church, Longcot on Saturday 10th May to present another evening of relaxing and uplifting music for clarinet sextet. The programme features new arrangements of well-known works by Bach, Mozart, Dvorak and Ravel alongside popular numbers from the twentieth century, including Singin' in the Rain and, to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day, Vera Lynn's wartime classic, It's a Lovely Day tomorrow.

Themed flower arrangements can be viewed in the church at the concert and also every day during South Oxfordshire Artweek, from 11th - 18th May.

Admission is free with a retiring collection. All seats should be reserved in advance by emailing victorialmedcalf@gmail.com Profits will be shared between St. Mary's Church and the Longcot Village Trust. The bar will be open from 5.30 pm and at the interval.

ST SWITHUN'S CHURCH, COMPTON BEAUCHAMP - ELECTORAL ROLL

The St Swithun's PCC would welcome anyone who lives in the parish or regularly attends *worship in St Swithun's, to enrol on the church's electoral roll. By doing so, you are demonstrating your interest in your beautiful church whilst expressing a desire to support its ongoing purpose. Joining a Church Electoral Roll means that you can vote on Church matters, attend the Annual Parochial Church Meeting and stand for election to the PCC. If you would like to join the electoral roll, for an **electronic copy of the form, please contact the Benefice Administrator, Lucy Laird, stating which church you wish to join on info@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk or you can pick up an application form in the church porch.***

Feel free to contact our churchwardens Joanna Lambert (jrlambert@aol.com) & Jimmy Watson (jimmy@jwatson.me.uk) or the treasurer Louise Slater (louise@louiseslater.net) if you require further information.

We would also like to remind you that you are most welcome at any of the services held in the church, please see the details of when in this newsletter. And lastly, if you have 5 minutes to spare, take a wander round the churchyard – it is looking particularly beautiful with signs of Spring wherever you look and the peace & beauty of the space is a welcome haven from our busy lives.

CHURCH MATTERS

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

The service times are correct at the time of writing (6 March). For the latest news and information, please download the weekly Newsletter from our website.

The churches in Ashbury, Longcot and Compton Beauchamp are also open daily for private prayer.

Sunday 6 April	9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
	11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
Sunday 13 April	7.45am *	Said Holy Communion	Shrivenham
Palm Sunday	10.00am*	Palm Sunday procession from Methodist Church to St Andrews followed by	
	10.30am*	United service	Shrivenham
Maundy Thursday 17 April	7.00pm	Holy Communion with foot washing	
			Compton
Friday 18 April	12.00pm	Hour at the Cross	Longcot
Good Friday	2.00pm	Hour at the Cross	Ashbury
Sunday 20 April	9.30am	Holy Communion	Longcot
Easter Day	11.00am	Holy Communion	Ashbury
Sunday 27 April	10.30am	Benefice Holy Communion with Choir	
			Fernham

**Although everyone is welcome to attend any services, those marked with an asterisk are designed as services for the whole benefice*

Virus Precautions at Services

Please do not come to Church if you think you may have Virus symptoms.

All online Morning Prayer, Communion services and sermons can be watched on the Shrivenham and Ashbury Facebook page.

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. Details of online services are also on the weekly sheet and on Facebook.

Ashbury prayer cycle for April - 6th April Church Lane, 13th April College Farm Lane, 20th April Ashdown Estate, 27th April High Street

PASTORAL CARE If you have need for prayer or pastoral support, or wish to discuss a wedding or baptism, do not hesitate to contact Rev'd Patrick Mabhunu (vicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk) on 07471 434276).

Support your local church or the Benefice with a text donation using the numbers below.

For Ashbury - Text **STMARYS 5** to **70085** to donate **£5** or Text **STMARYS 10** to **70085** to donate **£10**

Longcot and Fernham - Text **LONGCOT** to **70085** to donate **£4**

For Compton Beauchamp- Text **5CB** to **70450** to donate **£5** or Text **10CB** to **70460** to donate **£10**

For the Benefice as a whole - Text **GIVEfive** to **70470** to donate **£5** or Text **GIVeten** to **70470** to donate **£10**

Your standard text message rate applies.

Thank you!

CHURCHYARD "SPRING CLEAN"

Saturday, 5th April

10am- Noon

We would greatly appreciate as many helpers as we can to carry out our annual Churchyard "Spring Clean" on Saturday 5th April at 10am. Usually we attract about 24 people such that as well getting the Churchyards ready for summer it is also a very social occasion. Hot refreshments will be available. As well as appropriate garden tools (secateurs, hard brush, trowel) it would also be helpful if, those who can, could bring a wheelbarrow or strimmer.

Newcomers to the village are especially welcome where you can get to know other locals .

'TEA & CHAT' 1st Tuesday of each month from 2.00 to 3.30pm 'Tea & Chat' will take place in 'the cabin' at **Ashbury** Ambassador Bible Church (known also as Ashbury Evangelical Free Church). Plenty of coffee and cake to be had as well as 'tea and chat'. Admission free. All welcome, including children.

The Ambassadors Bible Church meet at what was the Ashbury Evangelical Free Church at 10:00 am each Sunday morning. All are welcome and there is also a Sunday School for the Children which meets at the same time.

Country Matters

I am not sure what you would make of this verse. It is entitled “God Speed the Plough” and “Industry Produceth Wealth”.

“Let the wealthy and great roll in splendour and state. I envy them not I declare it. I eat my own lamb, my own chickens and ham. I shear my own fleece and I wear it. I have lawns, I have bowers, I have fruits, I have flowers. The lark is my morning alarmer, so jolly boys now: here’s God Speed the Plough, long life and success to the farmer.” These rather romantic lines adorn a mug that has come down the family. It does conjure up an idyllic rural scene of a carefree happy farmer always well placed to survive by living off the land.

This is exactly what my wife’s mother’s ancestor had to do in colonising a patch of Upper Canada. John Arkell wrote home in 1831. He was explaining how he had cleared virgin ground in the face of hordes of biting insects to plant wheat so that he would have bread. How, from the forest he had built a cabin to withstand the coming harsh winter. From this he survived, with his family founding the town of Arkell there. My own grandfather James Green, the youngest of eight, came from Somerset to farm at Shellingford in 1901 as a tenant of Lord Faringdon. The mug intones Industry produceth wealth and these forebears led the way.

How do we in this generation compare and given tough times how would we live off the land? Rabbits would help and I would have to relearn the guile I once had with gun and snare. I also remember as a youth collecting watercress from a farm stream and delicious bread, butter and watercress sandwiches. I have been searching hard in Ashbury and Bishopstone for watercress.

Despite ideal sites and the commercial activity of harvesting watercress between the wars I have managed to find only two remnant sources in Bishopstone, one in Danny Finch's garden and another beside Church Lane. I can find none in Ashbury despite a cottage of that name.

I remember my mother churning the butter from rejected milk. For eggs, our cowman Leslie Terry was partial to moorhens' eggs in season off the pond. For fruit there are blackberries, sloes, crab apples and wild cherryplums in our hedges. Passable wine can be made from blackberries and elderberries. I would shoot pigeons and even rooks for a rook pie on branchers day May 13th.

A delicacy, but without much taste would be get out the nets and fish for crayfish. We used to do this at dusk along Rosey Brook near Stanford in the Vale in the 50's early 60's. Red and steaming from the boil, they looked marvellous. The bush telegraph proclaiming the presence mushrooms in the autumn used to work before the days of Facebook, WhatsApp and Snapchat.

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

Defibrillators: On the wall by the School entrance and outside the Rose and Crown.

St Mary's Ashbury Parochial Church Council

Church wardens: Maggie Simons 01793 710801 Richard Green 01793 791310
Vicar (Shrivenham) Revd Patrick Mabhunu
<mailto:vicar@shrivenhamandashbury.co.uk> 07471 434276

Ashbury Village Hall

Chris Millard <mailto:villagehall@ashbury.org.uk>
Secretary Margaret Smith 01793 710800 mbsmith5@hotmail.co.uk
Bookings: Laura 07766 338551 and Steve Pilkington 0773 9692076 [mail to: steve_pilkington@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:steve_pilkington@yahoo.co.uk)

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

Tim Miller 01793 710259
<mailto:office@ash.faringdonlearningtrust.org>

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: Katherine Foxhall 07916 285305

katherine.foxhall@whitehorsedc.gov.uk and Viral Patel
viral.patel@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

County Councillor: Yvonne Constance: 01235 751475/07976934884

yvonne.constance@oxfordshire.gov.uk

M.P. for the Witney constituency: Charlie Maynard:

charlie.maynard.mp@parliament.uk

Newsletter entries for May '25. Submit your entries for **May** by **20 April** 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.