New Life



St Mary the Virgin

The Monthly
Magazine for the
Parishes of
St Mary the Virgin,
Fen Ditton,
St Peter, Horningsea
and
All Saints, Teversham

September 2025



St Peter

₩ 50p

THE PARISHES OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN, FEN DITTON, ST PETER, HORNINGSEA AND ALL SAINTS, TEVERSHAM

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September 2025 Contents

Page	
4	A message from Nick
5	Ride & Stride
7	Our Parishes Study evenings
9	Pilgrimage Ancient Shepherds' Book Club Teddy Bear Picnic
10	Horningsea's Connection with the Abolition of Slavery: the next chapter
11	Bell Ringing resumes in Horningsea
12	Besom Update
14	Saturday 27 September: a day of many concerts Fen Ditton 200 Club
15	Save Honey Hill update Horningsea dates for your diary
18	Creationtide—Climate Change Games in Horningsea Ride & Stride sponsored event
22	Announcing Climerick Cards
26	All in the month of
27	Mouse Makes
28	Church Services



Dear friends

I write this in what they call the 'silly season': news-wise August is supposed to be quiet and so strange stories creep into newspapers and daily bulletins. With significant things still happening in Ukraine and Gaza that has hardly been the case this year, but nonetheless there has been one 'silly' event at least that has been grabbing attention.

The Swedish city of Kiruna (north of the Arctic circle) had been in danger of collapsing due to the mining of precious minerals underneath their feet (and buildings). They have been rebuilding their city several miles away, clear of underground excavations. This has largely involved demolition and rebuilding, but their 113-year-old church is wooden and made of so many pieces that dismantling and rebuilding it was not an option. So instead we have been enjoying a magnificent piece of what they call slow television – the transportation of the whole church three miles to its new home. Travelling at a snail's pace, specially designed trailers are moving the vast wooden structure to its new resting place. Thousands of people in this country have been watching this live on the BBC News feed – and just as I have written this an update has pinged in to say that the church has safely arrived at its new home.

I can't resist the temptation, sermon-like, to draw some lessons from this.

First, the church (and not just its buildings) is a large and complicated structure, carefully built and beautified a long time in the past. It is not easy to move and, if moving has to be done, it will only happen at a snail's pace – not least because if you try to move it too quickly there will be a danger of the whole thing falling apart. Movement may be glacial but, with the right sort of engineering, it can be done.

Secondly, the efforts being taken, and the local interest shown in the news stories, shows that the church building matters to people. All that money is being spent transporting it because it would be unthinkable not to do it – just as it was unthinkable for the French not to rebuild Notre-Dame after its devastating fire. Of all those I have been watching who care deeply about what is going on I suspect only a small mi-

nority regularly enter the building for worship (or other activities). What matters to most people is not what goes on inside but the very fact that it is there.

Thirdly, I notice from the pictures on the live feed that the new resting place of the church is amidst a lot of buildings that have already moved. It's as though the church has now caught up with them – it took its time, but it has now arrived.

The whole question of how the Church can maintain its integrity and at the same time move with the times is at the heart of what we struggle with in our contemporary debates and decision-making. Though not all in the Church of England agree, slowly decisions have been taken in recent decades that have allowed women to be deacons, priests and, most recently, bishops. We are still working through the Church's response to issues of human sexuality and gender where a majority (but by no means an overwhelming one) are for change – but many of those who might be labelled 'progressive' in these issues would be regarded as very conservative by secular campaigners for assisted dying: at the July meeting of the General Synod over 90% expressed opposition to the legislation recently passed by the House of Commons.

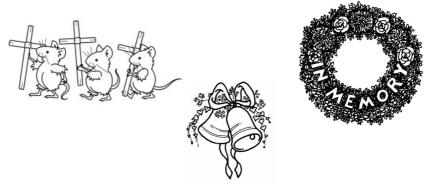
When we need to move and when we need to maintain our integrity – this is where the Church's 'engineers' (our theologians) need to be most on top of their game. If we don't move at all we risk being left behind and there will be nobody left to populate it; if we move too quickly we risk falling apart. Can the engineers find a way to avoid both ends?

It is the Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust big event on **Saturday 13 September**. Cyclists and walkers will be visiting our churches and raising sponsorship money in the process. If you would like to take part do look at the website, https://camhct.uk/ride-and-stride/.



Our Parishes

If you would like to discuss baptism or thanksgiving for the birth of a child, the reading of marriage banns and weddings, or arrangements for a funeral at any of our churches, please contact Nick, our Rector/Vicar (see inside cover for contact details).



Do you have something to announce, someone to thank or congratulate, or a request to make? If so, send your message to the Editor and see it published here!

Study evenings

This year marks the 1700th anniversary of the First Council of Nicaea, a highly significant event in the early centuries of the Church. Regular churchgoers will know it best for the Creed that came out of it (so 'The Nicene Creed') – which is used at nearly every service of Holy Communion to this day. We've asked Ben Quash to talk to us about this at a study evening on **Wednesday 24 September**, 7.15 for 7.30pm, at St Mary's Fen Ditton. 'The Nicene Creed': why is it important, why do we still use it, what on earth does it all mean?

Advance notice too of a study evening in October to mark Black History month (and a bit of intriguing Horningsea history), with Sharon Byrne and Lindsay Davies – **Wednesday 22 October**.





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Pilgrimage

A group of twelve of us (a good biblical number...) will be setting off in the early hours of **Friday 5 September** on our pilgrimage to Lindisfarne (otherwise known as Holy Island). We will be following in the footsteps of the great saints who brought the Christian faith to Northumbria (and hence revitalised it in all of England) – Paulinus, Oswald, Aidan and Cuthbert. Our journey's end will be Cuthbert's final resting place, built as a shrine for his mortal remains, now known as Durham Cathedral.

There will only be one service in our Three Parishes that day – 10.30am Holy Communion at Fen Ditton, led by the Revd Shirley Holder (kindly visiting us as all our resident clergy are out of town...).

Ancient Shepherds' Book Club

Please contact Carol on 07941 492271 for further information or just join us at The Plough, where we currently meet.



Wed, 3rd September, 7.30pm, 'Things We Do For Love' by Miranda Dickinson

Wed, 1st October, 7.30pm, 'Yellow Face' by Rebecca P. Kuana

Teddy Bear Picnic

On a warm Sunday at the start of August over a dozen children and parents plus assorted teddies gathered in Horningsea churchyard. We had a lovely time, playing games and picnicking, singing songs and getting in a muddle with the actions. It was a joy to watch the children getting to know each other, and the parents having a chance to relax a bit and chat. Sharon hopes to hold another event in the early autumn before the church gets too chilly and we will make sure posters and flyers are out in lots of time to get into diaries.

Horningsea's Connection with the Abolition of Slavery: the next chapter

Earlier this year the Fitzwilliam Museum had a fascinating – but disturbing – exhibition entitled **Rise Up: Resistance, Revolution, Abolition** which looked at the period from 1750 to 1850 when Britain became one of history's largest empires. Britain at the time played a central role in the Atlantic slave trade, trafficking more captive African people than any other European power. Meanwhile, anti-slavery groups and individuals campaigned for abolition and Cambridge played a leading role in the 1780s. The exhibition included 18th Century paintings of abolitionists and slave traders, 21st Century reworkings of some of those portraits, African face masks and carved figures, examples of instruments of torture and writings by and about former slaves. Part of the rationale for the exhibition was that the Fitzwilliam itself was funded on wealth that originated in South Sea Trading stock and the Royal African Company stock, in other words, it came from the slave trade.

The links between Cambridge and the slave trade and also the leading role in abolition played by people living or working in Cambridge featured significantly. The most well known being Olaudah Equiano, the freed slave who married Susannah from Ely and who settled in Soham. One of his daughters subsequently died in Chesterton and is buried in St Andrew's church.

Where does Horningsea fit into the picture? I have written before about George Gurney, who was baptised in St Peter's Horningsea in 1807. The register described him as "a negro, born in Kingston Jamaica aged about 8". I have written also about the two African heads on the outside of the Church - added probably in the 19th Century. But now there is an additional connection.

In the exhibition, in the section "celebrating Black Cambridge History" there was a book written by Moses Roper (1815–1891) "Narrative of the Adventures and escape of Moses Roper from American Slavery" published in 1838. He was born into enslavement in North Carolina. His father was a slave owner, who owned his mother. He was sold and resold across various states in the Deep South but when he was 17 he ran away to the free states of New England. In order to remain free he travelled across the Atlantic to Britain which had just voted to abolish the Slave Trade. In Britain he travelled the length and breadth of the

country lecturing about the story of slavery, the tortures, the losses and the need for abolition. He married a Welsh woman and they had four daughters. At one point they moved to Canada but by 1861 they were back in Britain. Moses Roper spent time in Cambridge but his wife and daughters lived in Merthyr Tydfil. In 1861 he resumed his lectures. In January 1861 he came to Horningsea. The Horningsea Chronicles give a detailed account of the lecture given in the school room on Tuesday 8 January 1861. It was described as a "highly interesting and intelligent lecture". He spoke about his attempts to escape, his treatment, being bound in irons, and having learned the direction of the Pole star, he followed it to escape. He spoke about the hundreds of slaves who escaped to Canada. He said that the election of Mr Lincoln as President, an abolitionist, was looked on as favourable to the abolition of the slave traffic. "The lecturer is an excellent orator of worthy encouragement".

After 1861 Moses Roper seems to have returned to Canada without his family. They assumed he had died but in fact he continued to live an itinerant life in until 1891 when he was found in a very poor physical condition "with little more than \$100 in his pocket and accompanied by a dog named Pete". He died in Boston and was buried in a pauper's grave. Obituaries in major newspapers in Boston and New York noted the importance of his abolitionist work in the US and in Britain.

There will be a talk about this on Wednesday 22 October (venue tbc) by Sharon Byrne and Lindsay Davies.



Bell Ringing resumes in Horningsea Church on Wednesday 10 September at 7pm and then on the second Wednesday of each month

When the news emerged that the sewage works move has been cancelled, many people suggested that the church bells should be rung out! It is good to know that the ringing of the bells remains such an important part of village life. This autumn you could come along to the practices and learn to ring so that the next time there is a reason to celebrate we can try to have more ringers from the village involved. You don't need to be musical, you don't need to be fit! You just need to be able to pull steadily and listen – and concentrate. For more information you can contact Barbara at blegallez@yahoo.co.uk

Besom Update

Have you seen Besom's new van? Another answer to prayer. There is now a white van running around the area which says in pink: Love – Pray – Give – Go. That sums up Besom's Christian approach to need, and is a reminder and an encouragement whenever the van is ahead of us in the traffic!

You may also have seen Besom's request for help with organising the Christmas hampers this year. It's a wonderful thing to do and brings much needed help and cheer to so many, but does need someone (or a small team) from the churches with a good head for organisation, who enjoys working with volunteers and is available in the later autumn and the start of Advent. Sadly this year Besom has no one in place to lead the hamper arrangements, and it would be so sad if after 10 years this wonderful project had to end. To get the arrangements planned in good time, Besom really need a leadership team in place in early September. If you would be interested in helping or finding out more, please do let Jennie Pratt or Sharon Byrne know.

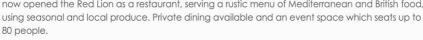


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The Coffee Pot



20	25

9th	Jan	Village Hall	3rd	Jul	Recreation Ground [⋆]
6th	Feb	Village Hall	7th	Aug	Recreation Ground*
6th	Mar	Village Hall	4th	Sep	Village Hall
3rd	Apr	Village Hall	2nd	Oct	Village Hall
1st	May	Village Hall	6th	Nov	Village Hall
5th	Jun	Recreation Ground*	4th	Dec	Village Hall

^{*}Weather permitting

Saturday 27 September: a day of many concerts...

Cambridge Early Music will be beginning its new season with an unusual event – a tour of four villages in one day with a short concert in each place. And **St Mary's, Fen Ditton**, is one of the venues.

It's all happening on **Saturday 27 September** and the performers are the six-part male voice ensemble **The Gesualdo Six**.

Our concert will be at 4pm and is entitled 'Palestrina at 500'.

'Palestrina was one of the most highly acclaimed musicians of the sixteenth century, and wrote a tremendous number of musical works, refining the musical style of his time. His compositions, characterised by a sense of elegance and balance, reflect his steadfast adherence to traditional melodic and harmonic conventions. Palestrina's artistry also finds expression in the intricate interplay of secular and sacred madrigals, weaving narratives both poignant and jubilant.'

Full details of the day's programme can be found at www.cambridgeearlymusic.org/event-listing/?event=Villages-Tour. The other venues are St Andrew's Girton (11.30am), St Vigor's Fulbourn (2pm) and St Andrew and St Mary, Grantchester (6pm).

Tickets (book via the website above) are £15 per concert or £50 for the whole day (concessions for students).

And on the same evening the **Blue Skies Big Band** will be returning for a concert at **All Saints Teversham** at 7pm. Tickets are £10 (at the door, or from Ian Hunt, 01223 292388, 07784 318124).

FEN DITTON 200 CLUB

The lucky winners for **September** were:

£50 Jo Miles (107) £10 Stephanie Shaw (139)

£20 Cheryl Page (165) £10 Jackie Ambrose (59)

£10 Jill Waters (81)

SAVE HONEY HILL UPDATE

The Sewage Works Relocation has been cancelled.

Anglian Water's project to relocate Cambridge Sewage Works from Cowley Road to Honey Hill will not now go ahead. The Government has withdrawn the grant from the Housing Infrastructure Fund which was to have funded the relocation.

The Development Consent Order which was granted in April this year by the Secretary of State for DEFRA, against the recommendation of the Planning Inspectorate, has not been cancelled. It lasts for 5 years unless extended.

The Save Honey Hill team is delighted by this announcement which has come after five long years of campaigning. We thank our supporters from the bottom of our hearts and send you all a very big THANK YOU for sticking with us throughout this campaign!

Save Honey Hill will, by the time this edition comes out, have held an Extraordinary General Meeting at Horningsea Village Hall on Saturday, 23rd August 2025 at 2pm. Members and supporters have been invited for a small celebration and to find out what lies ahead as Save Honey Hill plan to remain vigilant in case Anglian Water and the City Council are able to access funding and decide to revisit this project in the future.



Horningsea dates for your diary in early October

Saturday 4 October, 7.30pm in St Peter's Church: Concert by the Horningsea Recorder consort

Sunday 5 October, 10.30am: Horningsea Harvest Festival. If you can help decorate the church for Harvest – and if you have flowers, fruit and vegetables to add to the display please contact Liz Harrison on lizhakeman@hotmail.com

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ELKIN. EPSON

Creationtide – Climate Change Games in Horningsea Churchyard Sunday 14 September at 4pm

September is "Creationtide" when the Churches are asked to look at the wonderful world we live in and to think what we can do to preserve and improve our wildlife. On Sunday 14 September we will be holding a special, family friendly Village Service based around Climate Change games and exploration of the churchyard. Anyone of any age will find an activity they can join in – throw bean bags through a frame called "Do you give a toss?", pick stones from an oily beach, investigate our bug hotel, see what fruits there are growing in the hedgerow to feed the birds, look for signs of bats, hedgehogs and foxes, celebrate the trees and the ants, use AI to identify the birds flying around the churchyard Or just lie on your back and look up at the sky! If it is wet, wear a raincoat and wellies!!!



Ride & Stride sponsored event Saturday 13 September – any time!

The annual Ride & Stride event will take place on Saturday 13 September. It is organised by Cambridgeshire Historic Churches and the money raised is divided between the Charity and the local Church. In Horningsea we are trying to raise £100,000 to pay for the new floor in the northern side of the church and to carry out improvements to the Tower access. We will be applying to the Historic Churches for a grant so we would like to show them we can contribute too! To take part you can get a sponsorship form from one of the churchwardens and work out a route to visit as many churches as you can. You can cycle, walk, ride a horse, drive or go by bus (now we have such a good bus service in Horningsea)! We hope people from all over the area will call into Horningsea Church (as well as Fen Ditton and Teversham) during the day. More information is available at camhct.uk/ride-and-stride



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Please quote "New Life Mag" www.artofclean.co.uk I guess by now, my commitment to helping to 'Keep the Climate conversation alive', will have been noticed by most readers of 'New Life'.

By the time this issue has come out, the next stage of my endeavours should be up and running. This comprises the selling of CLIMERICK CARDS. These are blank message cards of both A5 and A6 sizes and they will look like this:



This card is one of three in the first available set: other fronts feature cows & methane, and glaciers. Each comprises an image and an associated CLIMERICK. Large (A5) cards will be sold individually; small cards will be sold in packs of 3 or 6 cards with one or two cards of each per pack. They are aimed not only at Climate campaigners who either can't or prefer not to take part in vigils, marches or other forms of protest but a whole range of others who might be possible purchasers and might include YOU! See the suggestions on the next page.

I invite you to look carefully at the back of the card: You will notice that there are invitations for purchasers and recipients of the cards to visit my Eco-verses and *The Cross and The Cosmos* blogspots. The

cards are deliberately designed not only to raise awareness of Climate Chaos and Climate Justice but to be mission outreach focused as well. So by purchasing and sending these cards, when they become available, if you fall into any of the categories below, you will be contributing to spreading the word in two powerful senses.

The cards will be available, either from me, or from Etsy on the internet, in which case, you will need to search Etsy, then CLIMERICK CARDS. Any purchases you might make will be much appreciated; and when the campaign is in full swing they will support climate justice charities and NGOs (unfortunately, that can't come about until the sales reach a much higher volume than is likely at this early stage).

Who might send

CLIMERICK CARDS?

(Climate change wisdom in five short lines)

- Mums and Dads to show the children you DO care about the world they will face.
- Children to let mums, dads and other grown-ups that you are anxious or concerned about the planet.
- Students to let the 'oldies' know you want their urgent help to improve your future.
- Grandparents to show grandchildren you are 'in touch', feel sorry about climate chaos, and want to do something about it.
- Community leaders to affirm your commitment to the environment.
- Environmentalists to reinforce your messages in a nonaggressive, engaging way.

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All in the month of...

It was:

1,100 years ago, on 4th Sept 925 that England gained her first ever king, Aethelstan.

200 years ago, on 27th Sept 1825 that the world's first public railway opened.

175 years ago, on 9th Sept 1850 that California was admitted as the 31st state of the USA.

150 years ago, on 3rd Sept 1875 that Ferdinand Porsche, Austrianborn German automotive engineer was born.

100 years ago, on 7th Sept 1925 that Laura Ashley was born.

Also 100 years ago, on 8th Sept that Peter Sellers, actor and comedian was born.

90 years ago, on 3rd Sept 1935 that British driver Malcolm Campbell set a new world land speed record of 301.13 mph in Bluebird.

Also 90 years ago, on 15th Sept 1935 that the Nuremberg Laws were passed in Germany.

80 years ago, on 2nd Sept 1945 that VJ Day (victory over Japan Day) took place.

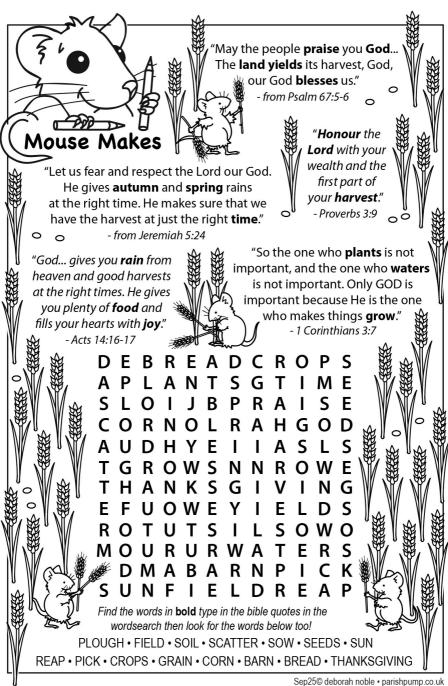
70 years ago, on 22nd Sept 1955 that Britain's first independent TV channel was launched. ITV ended the BBC's monopoly.

Also 70 years ago, 26th Sept 1955 that Bird's Eye frozen fish fingers went on sale in the UK.

50 years ago, on 24th Sept 1975 that Dougal Haston and Doug Scott became the first Britons to reach the summit of Mount Everest.

30 years ago, on 3rd Sept 1995 that the online auction site eBay was founded (as AuctionWeb).

15 years ago, on 19th Sept 2010 that the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was finally sealed after gushing oil for almost five months.



THE THREE PARISHES

SERVICES FOR SEPTEMBER 2025



St Mary's Fen Ditton



ST PETER'S HORNINGSEA



ALL SAINTS TEVERSHAM

		10.30am United Holy Communion	28 September 15 th after Trinity
10.30am Holy Communion	10.30am Holy Communion	8.30am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer) 10.30am All-age Worship	21 September 14 th after Trinity
	8.30pm Compline (Night Prayer)		Wednesday 17 September
10.30am Holy Communion	4.00pm Village Service – Creation games	10.30am Holy Communion – Patronal Festival	14 September 13 th after Trinity Blessed Virgin Mary
		10.30am United Holy Communion	7 September 12th after Trinity