

Wheatland News



October 2026

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**News from the 17 Parishes around Ditton Priors,
Highley and Stottesdon**



Editorial

Autumn is here and we're told that the El Niño this year will be the highest recorded. The name 'El Niño' describes the warming of sea surface temperature that occurs every few years, typically concentrated in the central-east equatorial Pacific.

An El Niño is declared when sea temperatures in the tropical eastern Pacific rise 0.5 °C above the long-term average. Its name "the boy" is thought to have originated as "El Niño de Navidad" centuries ago when Peruvian fishermen named the weather phenomenon after the newborn Christ.

How does this affect us? El Niño could put the UK at greater risk of a wet, stormy autumn with signs of a very unsettled spell already showing up in long-range forecasts. After the Summer drought and reduced harvests, you may think that a wet Autumn would be desirable, but too much rain would wash away seed being sown for next year. Is it any wonder that we are so obsessed with the weather!

Harvest festivals are in progress this month, in Britain thanks have been given for successful harvests since pagan times, but in ancient Iran, "Mehrgan" was celebrated in an extravagant style at Persepolis. Not only was it the time for harvest, but it was also the time when the taxes were collected. Can we stick to just the fruit and veg please!

The end of October is also when the clocks go back to GMT and the nights will start drawing in. Daylight saving originated in Ontario in Canada (can we continue calling it Lake Ontario please!) back in 1908 but was only recognized locally, the first national recognition of Daylight Savings was in Germany in 1916, but I doubt it made much difference to soldiers on the front line in the Great War.

The Romans (who else!) had an interesting take on time, water clocks had different scales for different months of the year. Daylight was always divided into 12 "hours", so that in Winter an "hour" was only around 44 minutes but at the Summer solstice an "hour" lasted around 75 minutes. I've never seen a cow looking at a clock to know when it's time to be milked, so possibly the Romans had it right. The Romans also celebrated October as the end of the military campaigning season, the weapons of the soldiers were ritually purified and stored over Winter.

At the end of the month, it's Halloween. The origin of Halloween can be traced to an ancient festival called **Samhain**, meaning Summer's End. The ancient Celts believed that the veil between the worlds of the living and the dead was at its thinnest during Samhain. Since *Samhain* was the "death night" of the old year, it came to be associated with ghosts and graveyards. After midnight, the ghosts are said to go back to rest.

October is a month that transitions from the hot summer months to dark and cold winter. It is a perfect time to get out and about, as shown in pictures from last month's Ride and Stride. Leaves are going golden brown and crunching underfoot, it's both cool enough and warm enough to enjoy long country walks.

Following on from the editorial about gene editing last month, David Poyner's has written an article on CRISPR, he's managed to condense a highly complex subject into something a layperson can understand.

Anni Calver has written about things to do in Autumn not just for us, but for wildlife as well.

If you've never been to a Steam Rally before, read the article on the one at Shrewsbury and set yourself a reminder to go to one next year.

In Sally's reflection, in a time when AI is deemed to be the greatest thing since the invention of the wheel; or the biggest disaster that will end in something similar to the Terminator films; we need to take time out to reflect on the simple things in life. There's also an article on what AI is and why it's important.

And lastly, please read the article on Orange Button Community Scheme to try to prevent suicide and if you have a chance to participate in a training session whether in-person or as an e-learning course and feel confident to wear an Orange Button I would encourage you to do so.

Please send reports to your contact for your parishes listed below. The deadline for getting your contributions for the **November 2026** edition of WN to the **Local Coordinators or the EDITOR** will be **noon on THURSDAY 22nd October 2026**. Due to editing and printing deadlines, late submissions **CANNOT** be included in the current months edition.

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Reflection – Make Time for Jesus



I am writing this in a peaceful house by the sea in Normandy and we are on holiday. It's good to be away from the stresses and strains of everyday life but even as I write I cannot help feeling anxious about all kinds of things that I can't change or even have much influence over. I am not very good at relaxing and putting down burdens and when I don't have a structure to my day and week it allows all the little gremlins that want to push their way in some space to do exactly that. I wonder if you are the same? To be honest, I am a born worrier, and this has been a trouble to me for most of my life. Because this is not a holy or faithful way to be and I am afraid that we live in such a busy, pressured noisy world that we have forgotten how to have true Sabbath time, by which I mean time

when we rest, relax and recharge. We are able to spend time with God and in His amazing creation, when we listen and really hear what it is He wants us to notice. I am afraid that endless screen time and noise press in on our consciousness and take us away from the holy and peaceful duty of Sabbath rest.

One of the things that the Pharisees charged Jesus with was his breaking of the Sabbath, because he healed the sick and performed miracles on the day of rest. And I think this misses the point, in fact Jesus Himself taught that the sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath, in other words just as God rested after his work, we also need to find time to rest and reprocess but this in itself should not become a strait jacket bound by regulations and human practices. There are many times throughout the New Testament when Jesus withdrew to a quiet place to spend time with His Father. These were not necessarily on the Sabbath itself but times when He needed the quiet and space to listen and speak with the Father for guidance and strength. He was often interrupted and usually attended with good grace to whatever he was being asked to do, nevertheless he continued to make those times happen.

And we also need to make those times in our own lives. Even if pressure and anxiety tell us to be busy and productive. We seem to have fallen into the trap of only believing in ourselves and only when we are doing something when instead we should be turning to Jesus, believing in Him and His teaching and taking time just to be. And we shouldn't feel guilty when we seek out these times with the intention of not only speaking with Him but also of making the time and space to hear what He has to say to us. I think the lesson of Elijah is significant here. Elijah didn't hear or find God in the earthquake, storm or fire but only after all the noise had ceased as a still small voice. And that still small voice is so easy to miss in the midst of all our busyness, in the storm of our endless striving, achieving and doing and the anxiety that comes along with those pressures.

So, I have decided that the time has come for me to become much more intentional about Sabbath rest. Not on a Sunday for obvious reasons, but at a time when I can stop doing and just try being instead, when I can listen for and actually hear that still small voice and when I can refresh and rebuild my inner faith and energy. And I invite you to do the same. If you don't already do so, make some regular, quiet time in your life for prayer and talking to God if you do already do this, keep going and don't give up, and start or go back to that hobby you used to love but which has got consumed in the busyness of life. This is not selfishness, it is a holy duty to observe Sabbath rest and to value the things God has given to you, often very simple things which we take so much for granted, the things we do well and which make us happy, our homes, families and gardens, good food and clean water, our animals and the beauty of the natural world. In a world where so many people do not have these things one thing we can at least do is to value them in our lives and to pray that others might also receive such rich gifts.

This kind of prayer and discipline is an excellent antidote to endless exhaustion and anxiety and finding time for prayer and Sabbath rest a holy obligation. So, don't be afraid to give it a try and don't feel guilty about doing something that makes you happy, and just as importantly, spending time with the Father who loves us beyond anything we can understand and who longs for us to notice Him amidst the chaos of the world.

Sally





Orange Button Community Scheme

Shropshire has a higher than National average for known suicides. In England and Wales there are around 5 times the number of deaths through suicide than road traffic incidents yet are rarely talked about or mentioned in the news. The Orange Button Scheme is an effort to prevent suicide by becoming a visible point of contact. The role of Orange Button holders is simply to be approachable and willing to listen, talk and signpost someone to support.

It's difficult to even write the word 'suicide' let alone talk about it, the Orange Button Scheme encourages people to speak freely about suicide. By improving visibility and accessibility of support across communities, it's aim is to reduce stigma and prevent suicides and ensure that communities are aware of the Orange Button, what it signifies and how people can be involved.

The website below gives details on the scheme and how to become an Orange Button holder.

<https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/public-health/healthy-shropshire/mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing/orange-button-community-scheme/>

Wearing an Orange Button shows your community that you're someone who:

- Is comfortable saying and hearing the word suicide
- Can listen with empathy and without judgment
- Knows where to guide people for help and support

Orange Button wearers don't provide:

- Counselling or therapy
- Long-term support
- A replacement or alternative to a local NHS service

Attending the Orange Button training and becoming a holder does **NOT** mean you are available 24x7, wearing the button is entirely your choice and should only be worn when you're feeling well enough to be able to offer support.

If you are able to, I encourage everyone to visit the website <https://zerosuicidealliance.com/> as well as giving advice on warning signs, there's a link to the ZSA Suicide Awareness Training, it's a very short online tutorial. If you wanted to take training further there are some excellent e-Learning courses that explore the subject in more detail.

Suicide rarely comes with no warning signs at all, but it can be difficult to recognise them for what they are in the moment. A suicidal crisis is a period when someone is experiencing intense emotional pain, hopelessness, or distress and may be thinking about ending their life. It doesn't always look dramatic. A person doesn't need to have a plan or intent for their situation to be taken seriously. There are many reasons why a person may be feeling suicidal, if someone is struggling, distressed, or showing warning signs, it's important to reach out.

If you see someone wearing an Orange Button and have thoughts about ending their life please reach out to them.

Brown Clee group of Parishes



Brown Clee Benefice

Rector – Revd Joe Simons

The Vicarage, Ditton Priors, Shropshire, WV16 6SQ

01746-599217 07872-464276

browncleebenefice@outlook.com

www.browncleebenefice.org

www.facebook.com/browncleechurches

St John the Baptist, Ditton Priors, and

Holy Trinity, Wheathill and Loughton

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Carole Smith Mark Smith: 01746-712394

St Michael & All Angels, Aston Botterell

CHURCHWARDENS:

Anne Preece: 01746-787237

Ben Upton: 07870-160039

St Giles', Chetton

CHURCHWARDEN:

Sheila Millington: 01746-789443

SS Peter & Paul, Cleobury North

CHURCHWARDENS:

Mike Bradbury: 01746-787676

Jane Bufton: 07716-877421

All Saints', Neenton

CHURCHWARDEN:

Dot Cartwright: 07854-559474

Brown Clee Services for October 2026:

Sunday 4th October. The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity

9.30am	Harvest Holy Communion	Rev Joe Simons	Ditton Priors
5.00pm	Harvest Festival & Saints Day Celebration	Rev Joe Simons	Aston Botterell. Followed by the annual Harvest Auction and light refreshments.

Sunday 11th October. The Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity

9.30am	Holy Communion	Rev Joe Simons	Ditton Priors
11.30am	Morning Worship	Rev Joe Simons	Chetton
6.00pm	Harvest Festival	Marjorie Jones	Loughton

Sunday 18th October. The Twentieth Sunday after Trinity

9.30am	Holy Communion	Rev Joe Simons	Ditton Priors
4.00pm	Harvest Festival	Keith Smith	Neenton

Sunday 25th October. The Last Sunday after Trinity

10.00am	Holy Communion	Rev Joe Simons	Chetton
6.00pm	Harvest Festival	Rev Joe Simons	Cleobury North

Sunday 1st November. All Saints Day

9.30am	Holy Communion	Rev Joe Simons	Ditton Priors
11.30am	Morning Worship	Rev Joe Simons	Aston Botterell
4.00pm	All Souls	Rev Joe Simons	Ditton Priors

Brown Clee Readings for October 2026

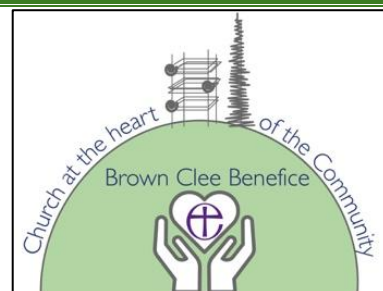
Harvest Readings		Psalm 65. Deuteronomy 8. 7-18; 2 Corinthians 9. 6-end; Luke 12. 16-30
Sunday, 4th October The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity	Green	Psalm 80. 8-16; Isaiah 5. 1-7; Philippians 3. 4b-14; Matthew 21. 33-end
Sunday, 11th October The Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity	Green	Psalm 23; Isaiah 25. 1-9; Philippians 4. 1-9; Matthew 22. 1-14
Sunday 18th October The Twentieth Sunday after Trinity	Red or Green	Psalm 147. 1-7; Acts 16.6-12a; 2 Timothy 4. 5-17; Luke 10. 1-9
Sunday 25th October The Last Sunday after Trinity. Bible Sunday.	Green	Psalm 119. 9-16; Nehemiah 8. 1-4 and 8-12; Colossians 3. 12-17; Matthew 24. 30-35



Brown Clee Benefice News



As well as our busy service pattern we have had a number of exciting events within the Benefice.



Everyone loves a **wedding** and the sun shone for **Michael Bamburgh and Hannah Rose** on Saturday 22nd September (a day which was made extra special for Revd Joe when he got to sit in a USA Army Jeep).

Michael and Hannah were joined by their dog Scarlett who carried out her duties as ring bearer perfectly – in fact she was a natural at it. We wish them all a long and happy life together.

On Saturday 5th September some 60 folk and four dogs joined us at the **Memorial on the Hill** for our **Service of Remembrance to Commemorate the Airman who lost their lives on and around the Brown Cle** during WWII and subsequent years.

We would like to thank everyone who was involved in the Memorial Service; Shelia, Tony and Charles for all their hard work in organising the logistics and refreshments, Babs for manning the reception and Emma for producing the display at Cleobury North Village Hall. For all who joined us, either in an official capacity or just to pay tribute in this special place. **We raised £76 for the Royal British Legion.**



We were thrilled to join **The Clee View Farmers** on Saturday 12th September for a **Farmers Breakfast**. Organised by Graham and Anita and hosted at the Three Horseshoes Inn this was an opportunity for us to support our local farming community, along with Di Breeze (and her mobile Wellbeing clinic) and Shropshire Rural Support. A chance to meet up over a Breakfast Butty.



Sunday 13th September saw the **Installation of Keith Smith as a Reader in our Benefice**. Mark Godson Ministry Development Officer and Warden of Readers joined us in a service to install Keith supported by Revd Joe, Revd Val and parishioners from across our seven churches. We thank God for his calling to serve us and wish him every blessing in his future ministry.

We must also thank everyone who provided such a splendid spread afterwards at Cleobury North Village Hall.



Another Thank You note to **Ben Watkins** who is helping us out in the churchyard as part of his Duke of Edinburgh award – Well done Ben.



Your Community Your Health Your Voice

It is with great pleasure that we are starting our **New Initiative:**
A Tea and Toast Health and Wellbeing Event.

Carried out in conjunction with **Di Breeze the Community Wellbeing Outreach Officer** for South Shropshire. Di will be on hand to offer free Cardiovascular Disease Health and Wellbeing checks (you can see Di in action from the Farmers Breakfast article). Along with providing support and advice on subjects such as cost of living, vaccinations, mental health, loneliness and social isolation, healthy eating, carer's support, physical activity and benefits advice – Di is there to help and put you in touch with a whole range of partners.

Revd Joe and his happy helpers will be there to provide spiritual sustenance in the form of a listening ear and copious cups of tea and toast.

We would like this to be a regular event, so please come and see us and let us know if there is anything you might want us to address in the future.

**Our first drop-in Tea and Toast Health and Wellbeing event is on
Wednesday 7th October from 10.30am to 1.30pm at Cleobury North Village Hall.**

If you have any questions or want help in attending, then please let Karen Simons know on: 07748987318 or at The Vicarage 01746 599217.



Brown Clee Benefice All Souls Service

Sunday 1st November 2026

St. John the Baptist Church,
Ditton Priors at 4.00pm

Please join us at this informal
Memorial Service to remember
all those we love

*Light refreshments
will be served*

Brown Clee Benefice Services of Remembrance



Sunday 8th November

10.15am – St. Peter & St. Paul,
Cleobury North

3.00pm – St. John the Baptist,
Ditton Priors

Wednesday 11th November

10.45am – A Simple Act of Remembrance – All
Saints, Neenton

Sunday 15th November

2.30pm – Holy Trinity, Wheathill

Ditton Priors News *Marjorie Jones writes:*

- ✝ Sunday 4th October. 9.30am. Harvest Holy Communion
- ✝ Sunday 11th October. 9.30am. Holy Communion
- ✝ Sunday 18th October. 9.30am. Holy Communion
- ✝ Sunday 1st November. 9.30am. Holy Communion
- ✝ Sunday 1st November. 4.00pm. All Souls Memorial Service

It seems we're on a countdown to Christmas now. - Christmas cards in the shops and choirs rehearsing carols. - oh please let's slow it up a bit! We have Harvest to celebrate, All Hallows, All Souls' Day and Remembrance Sunday. Let's give them all due attention before Advent Sunday, when everything takes off.

FIRST SATURDAY COFFEE MORNINGS

Continue in Church. 10.30am - 12.30pm on 3rd October, 7th November and 5th December. Come and enjoy seeing old and new faces - a lovely time to chat. There is no charge for this popular community event and all are very welcome.

RIDE AND STRIDE

I took part in visiting some of our Churches. A 'thank you' to Dot for driving me around and to all my Sponsors. Half the money raised goes to the Trust and half to St.John's. The Shropshire Historic Churches Trust has offered us a grant of £5000 towards our building works. It is good that we support them (for 35 years to my knowledge) as they are very helpful to all our Churches.

HARVEST

Our Harvest Thanksgiving Service is at 9.30am on Sunday 4th October.

HARVEST SUPPER

Saturday 10th October 6pm. for 6.30pm. in the Village Hall.

Tickets at £15 from Marjorie (712 423) or any Church member.

Please bring your own drinks and glasses and book tickets early.

SENIOR CITIZENS LUNCHEONS

Begin again on Friday 10th October. Tickets available from the Post Office as usual.

CARE HOMES

We visited the two Care Homes on 16th September and our next visits will be on 19th October.

OPEN THE BOOK

Our first visit to school this term was on 16th September and, when we recounted the story of the 12 year old Jesus visiting the Temple in Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. Our next visit is on 14th October when we move onto John the Baptist and Jesus's Baptism.

ALL SOULS

We are holding a Service at Ditton Priors at 4pm. on Sunday 1st November. This is a moving service when we remember our loved ones who have passed from this earthly life, both recently and a while back.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

8th November: 10.45am at Cleobury North Church

3pm at Ditton Priors Church

15th November: 2.30pm. at Wheathill Church

SWITCHING ON THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Thursday 26th November, 6.30pm. at Ditton Priors Church

CHRISTMAS FAIR

Saturday 21st November 10.30am. - 1pm. at the Pavilion, Ditton Priors

Please book the date.

CHRISTINGLE

Sunday 29th November, 4pm. in Ditton Priors Church

This is Advent Sunday, the real start of the Christmas period.

CLEANING ROTA FOR OCTOBER

- Sunday 4th October. Mrs Carole Hancox and Mrs Maureen Lloyd.
- Sunday 11th October. Mr and Mrs Graham Russell
- Sunday 18th October. Mrs Shirley Wall and Mrs Anita Casswell
- Sunday 25th October. Debbie Jones and Mrs Anne-Marie Shilling
- Sunday 1st November. Mr and Mrs Dennis Griffiths

100 CLUB RESULTS FOR SEPTEMBER AS FOLLOWS:

- £20. Frank Waterworth
- £10. Emma Parker
- £5 x three; Irene Jones, Dot Cartwright, Les Wall/Callum Mitchell.

Wheathill and Loughton News *Marjorie Jones writes:*

We had a visit to Wheathill from Bishop Richard on Sunday 13th September at 3.15pm. as part of his 24/7 Prayer Movement week of Prayer. We had a short Service and 16 of us joined the Bishop - it was good to see him and chat.

Photo: Bishop Richard with Ruby (Churchwarden for 40 years), and Joyce (current Churchwarden)



Sunday 20th September was a Harvest Service at Wheathill.

It is so good to be worshipping in these small Churches. They have been used to honour God for so many centuries and are still very special.



Sunday 11th. October. 6pm. Harvest Service at Loughton.



Sunday 15th. November. 2.30pm. Remembrance Service at Wheathill.



Saturday 5th. December. 3pm. Carols at Loughton.



Thursday 24th. December. 7pm. Carols at Wheathill.

Aston Botterell News *Anne Preece writes:*



Sunday 4th October. 5.00pm. Harvest Festival and Saints Day Celebration.
Followed by the Annual Harvest Auction and Light Refreshments.



Sunday 1st November. 11.30am. Morning Worship.

Thank you to our local pop star Ben and his son Sam, who entertained us alongside Cooper and Davies at The Boyne Arms...we are blessed to have so much talent in our village.

We hold Dan and Helen in our prayers as Dan is undergoing treatment at the moment.

Sunday 4th October: Harvest Festival at 5pm, followed by light refreshments and an auction sale. Please come along and join us. Donations of produce for the sale and help with refreshments would be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Aston Botterell Christmas: please look up our local artist, Meg Hawkins, online for Christmas gift ideas. Our Christmas service will be held on Sunday 20th December and will include Cleobury Mortimer Brass Band, mulled wine, mince pies, Father Christmas, carols and Christmas music — a wonderful way to begin the festive season.

We welcome Keith Smith, our new Reader, to the benefice and hope he enjoys his new role.

Last but not least, many thanks to everyone who helps to support us.

Aston Botterell PCC Draw September

- £20- Ian Morton and Pam - 119
- £10 - Rosemary Ashfield - 134
- £5 - John Preece - 194
- £5 - David Green - 213

Church Lotto, anyone wishing to purchase a ticket, please get in touch.

Chetton News *Shelia Millington writes:*



Sunday 11th October. 11.30am – Morning Worship.



Sunday 25th October. 10.00am – Holy Communion.

Flowers & cleaning

Anne, Elisabeth and Sheila.

100 club

£15.00 Grace Downing no 100.

£10.00 Marilyn Maiklem no 28.

We held a joyous group service at the end of August, thank you Rev Val. This was followed by a delicious lunch with parishioners from all across the Benefice, many thanks to Charles and Lisa for hosting yet again and to all who contribute with food. Not to forget Sylvia who is invaluable with her washing up skills!

The Churchyard grass has recovered well from the dry summer and Joe is kindly keeping up with the mowing. We plan to arrange another working party to tidy round in the New Year.

Chetton Heritage Museum



Chetton Heritage Museum and the Midland Oil Engine Club recently presented a cheque for over £2000 to the Midland Air Ambulance and £900 to St Giles Church, Chetton. This was from donations collected from their show held earlier this year.

Thanks go to the Midlands Oil Engine Club, Tony Maiklem who organised the tractor run, museum volunteers, air cadets, traders, exhibitors and everyone who made the day a success. Next year's show will be held on Sunday 16th May, 2027.



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION POPPY APPEAL 2026

Tony Brown writes:

As we approach this years RBL Poppy Appeal, commencing 22nd October 2026 and culminating with the National Armistice Day Service on Sunday 8th November 2026, I think of my involvement as local Poppy Appeal Organiser for the past 40+ years and the many changes that have taken place. I took over the 'Poppy Appeal baton' from local well known RBL member John Hinton, who at that time would annually marshal his army of 20+ house-to-house collectors, including legends Jim Hurford, Marian Garrett, Phylis Rollings, Maude Massie and many others.

Also, I must mention the late departed Margaret Griffiths, who was collecting for the Poppy Appeal in her 101st year – What an achievement.

Sadly, at this time we have only one remaining house-to-house collector and that is Paul Massie of Abdon, son of Maude, who collects substantial sums in his area. However, to compensate the loss of house-to-house collectors we now have Poppy Appeal collecting boxes located in local shops/stores, garage, school and public houses where RBL poppies and other materials can be purchased.

We annually collect in excess of £2,000 for this wonderful charity. Without the support of these local businesses etc we would not be able to contribute to the Poppy Appeal in the way that we do. So, as we approach the Poppy Appeal season, I ask that we all reflect on the work of the RBL in their support of the Military families and do whatever we can to help.

I do appreciate, we as a community are called upon to support many worthwhile charitable organisations who require our financial support, but we always come to the fore and help in any way we can. Remembrance Services will be held at our local churches, please see this magazine for details.

Thanking you in anticipation

Tony Brown

Local Poppy Appeal Organiser.

Cleobury North and Burwarton News *Jane Bufton writes:*



Sunday 25th October. 6.00pm Harvest Festival followed by light refreshments.

The licensing of Keith Smith went well, thanks to all who helped and supplied food for after the service at the Village Hall. Thanks to Carole for playing the organ and all in the choir. The church looked lovely which is a credit to Glynis and Barry who cleaned and dressed the church with their garden flowers.

Our Harvest Festival is on Sunday 25th October at 6pm. The church will be open on Saturday 24th October for anyone who has any produce or could help with the flowers.



Advance notice – On Saturday 14th November we are holding a Clothes and Bric-a-Brac sale in Cleobury North Village Hall from 11am to 3pm. Proceeds to the church. Donations are very welcome and Jane will collect – please phone on 07716877421.

Neenton News *Dot Cartwright writes:*



Sunday 18th October, 4.00pm Harvest Festival

As I write this, summer is over and autumn is well and truly with us, it's been quite exhausting with all the summer activities, thank you to everyone who helped in anyway, and thank you for all your support.

Building and electrical works are being done on the church at present and will hopefully all be completed by the end of October. Anyone wishing to contribute to these works can contact Dot Cartwright on 07854 559474, any donations would be much appreciated.

Our harvest festival is scheduled for the 18th October at 4pm, please come along and support us. The church is being decorated on Friday 16th - 2pm till 4pm, if you would like to help please come along. All donations for the harvest this year will be going to Bridgnorth Food Bank, so any items donated for the harvest, should reflect this. If no one is at the church, or times don't suit you, items can be left in the porch on 16th October. Thank you.

Tote winners for September are as follows;

1st. prize. Toni Cartwright

2nd. prize. Shirley Wall

3rd. prize. Sarah Mottershead

St John the Baptist Church, Ditton Priors

NEW BUILDING PROJECT APPEAL Building a Future For All

****CORECTION TO OUR DETAILS
FOR DONATIONS IN LAST
MONTHS WHEATLAND NEWS****

**Donations to Lloyds Bank, St
John the Baptist Church Fund**

Sort code 30-91-19

Account 01087428

Reference – Building Project



Funerals



Saturday 12th September

Interment of Ashes for the late Ms Barbara Louise Wear–
St. John the Baptist, Ditton Priors

Brown Clee Community

Brown Clee Patient Participation Group. *Tina Ranson writes:*

The last meeting of 2026 is on Tuesday 20th October, at Ditton Priors Village Hall, from 7.00 pm to 8.00 pm (doors open 6.30pm and hot drinks will be available).

The first part of the meeting is the AGM. Chair Report will be given by Tina Ranson, for the final time as she is stepping down from the Committee. Judith Miles will give the Treasurers Report and we hope that committee members Yemmi Agbebi, Ade Robinson, Linda Jackson and Judith Miles will confirm they are willing to serve another year.

This will be followed by the normal Open Meeting where we hope to hear from either Dr Bassett or Dr Bravey. Vicki Brassington and Luke Allen will also be attending to answer your questions about any aspect of Practice administration, and Luke will explain to us how to take photographs suitable for attaching to an eConsult message. If you would like to ask Vicki and Luke a question, please let the PPG know in advance, so that Vicki can make sure they have an answer for you on the night. Just message to Browncleeppg@gmail.com

Look forward to seeing lots of you on the night.

Chetton Village Hall. *Sue Bayliss writes:*

Flicks in the Sticks.

Our next event will be in honour of the late Dolly Parton, showing 9-5, on Thursday 8th October at 7.30pm. Doors open at 7pm for refreshments. Tickets £5.00 and are available to book online at Arts Alive.

The Elderly Brothers will be performing again at the Hall on Saturday 3rd October , 6.30pm for 7pm start. Tickets are £15.00 to include supper with veggie and gluten free options. There will be a licensed bar and raffle.

In November we are holding a concert, with jazz from B D Lenz and his bass guitarist, who are visiting from the United States. Lenz is the composer of the score of 'Breaking Bad' and we are very honoured to be hosting him at Chetton. Tickets are £15.00, Concert commences at 4pm on Saturday November 14th, with two 45 minute sessions and an interval with a licensed bar, concluding at 6pm.

Chetton and Glazeley W. I.

The next meeting will be on October 14th and will be the AGM, followed by a bring and buy sale.

For further information on exercise classes, ballroom dancing etc please contact Sue on 01746 789239, the hall is available for hire at competitive rates, we also hire out tables and chairs.

Cleobury North Village Hall. *Sharon Jenkins writes:*

Autumn is fast approaching and as the nights grow darker, it is that “cosy” time of year, where the colours of the trees are changing and we are looking forward to Halloween and to celebrate the harvest season.

October is a busy month for bookings and includes meetings for the Shropshire NHS Mental Health , Brown Clee Football Club, the Wheatland Hunt, Julia’s coffee morning which is always held the last Friday of the month and a special welcome to the Shropshire Council Community Wellbeing Outreach Team and Brown Clee Benefice, who will be visiting Cleobury North Village Hall on the 7th October 2026.

We do have spaces for more bookings for private parties as we head through the Autumn, so please think of us if you wish to hire a space for your loved ones to meet or to celebrate an occasion. Please note booking information below.

May I take this opportunity to thank all of our regular and new customers whose bookings help keep this vital service for the local community.

Remember if you wish to book the hall, please contact Sharon on sharonjenkins1605@yahoo.com or 07854538645.

Ditton Priors Halls.

Louise Tyson writes:



Ditton Priors Firework Party

Saturday 14th November 2026
@ the Playing Fields (WV16 6SP)

Gates open 6.00pm
Fireworks 7.00pm (approx.)

Adult £7 (16 and over)
Child £1 (3-15 years)

BBQ Burgers, Sausages & Jacket Potatoes
Beer Buz Licensed Bar
Mulled Wine

Sweets, Homemade Cakes & Soft Drinks
Tea, Coffee, Hot Chocolate & Marshmallows
Buz Beats Radio Show



No unaccompanied children under 18
Absolutely no Sparklers or your own Fireworks



FESTIVE WORKSHOP

SATURDAY 12TH DECEMBER
10:00 TO 13:00

DITTON PRIORS PAVILION

Make a Christmas Wreath

£20.00 PER PERSON

Tickets available in November
(limited numbers available)

Includes a Glass of Prosecco, Tea, Coffee and a Mince Pie

All materials provided, but please bring secateurs and gloves, plus anything you would like to use to personalise your creations.



Ditton Priors Ladies Friendship Group. *Jo Speech writes:*

Ditton Priors Ladies Friendship Group is starting up again on October 7th with a social evening, visitors very welcome to come along for a free taster and to find out what the group programme is this year. We meet on the first Wednesday of each month, 7.30pm at The Pavilion, Ditton Priors Playing Field.

For queries, please call Gill 01746 712231 or Margaret 01746 712030



Ditton Priors Local History Group. *Robin Greenwell writes:*

Secrets of The Iron Bridge

On Tuesday 1st September at Ditton Village Hall our audience enjoyed a fascinating talk about The Iron Bridge! Author and historian David de Haan provided a detailed insight into not only the construction of the bridge from the beginning, but also the many challenges through best part of 250 years!

Amongst other facts, we learned that the cost of the bridge was £3,200.11s, and how that was raised (much of it from Abraham Darby himself!), that the bridge's huge ribs were mainly cast at Bedlam, not Coalbrookdale, as is stated on the bridge itself, that the original colour was not the rust-red it has been 'restored' to today, but was in fact... grey! It was also revealed that just before WWII, good old Shropshire Council wanted to demolish it and build a lovely new concrete one, even obliterating the toll house! And during hot weather, that the bridge can rise between 9"-12" at its centre!

There is so much more to tell about this talk but I think we would need the whole edition to ourselves! So if you want to know the rest of the story, David's beautifully illustrated book on the subject is with the printers and out very shortly!

A big thank you to our 50 strong audience for coming along and of course, thank you to David de Haan for a thoroughly absorbing and highly educational evening. 🙌



Friends of St John the Baptist Church, Ditton Priors. *Helen Groves writes:*

Thanks to all our members for your support. One of the Trustees will be contacting you in October for your yearly donation.

Work on supplying water and drainage to the church is ongoing with a future view of installing a toilet. Also lighting and heating issues are being discussed. We shall keep you up to date with progress.

New members are always welcomed. Debbie Lowe 01746 712368 07773181877. Pippa Martin 07581073474. Marjorie Jones 01746 712423. Ruth Jones 01746 712029. Helen Groves 01746 712466

Shrewsbury Steam Rally



If, like me, you love old vehicles, then the Shrewsbury Steam Rally at Onslow Park is a must-see. There were about 100 full size steam tractors and rollers with another 30 "mini-engines". These

latter ones were definitely not "toys", think modern sit-on lawn mowers. If you had a small-holding you'd want a small steam tractor, they could do everything but on a smaller scale.



Most of the steam engines were immaculate and had taken many years to get back into original condition. They had a small number of more "working" engines that had been restored, but only to get them

working and able to do the job they were intended for.

As well as the traditional steam traction engines they had steam powered commercial vehicles I don't think I've ever seen any of these before.



They also had a collection of old prams, bicycles, motorbikes, cars, tractors and commercial vehicles. The earliest pram was a 3-wheeled "bathtub" type of pram from 1865. Did you know that laws banned 4-wheeled vehicles (including prams!) from footpaths until legislation was changed in 1875 when the "bassinet" became popular.



They had some beautiful pre-war cars, but I'm always drawn to the 1970's rust-buckets since I passed my test in a Mk 1 Escort and the car that every young man wanted was a 2.8L Ford Capri – in bright orange of course! If you've never seen it just google the cars used in the '70's TV series The Professionals.

They had several Fairground Organs. Because they are wooden framed with leather bellows and had been extensively towed to circus's and fairgrounds many had deteriorated to such an extent that several had been hand-built in recent times, but using original pipes and music. They produced a sound in keeping with the steam rally.



I was really interested in the demonstrations they had set up. Steam tractor driven threshing, sawing and stone crushing. The picture is a tree being stripped of

bark and squared off before going to a steam powered circular saw to be cut into posts.



They also had slightly more modern diesel tractors in ploughing, harrowing and levelling demonstrations. But for me the best working demonstration was horse-pulled ploughing. One of

the handlers explained that with a pair of Shires they owned the smaller one was the brains of the pair while the larger one supplied the brawn. With Shires 'smaller' is, of course relative. The photo is Lofty and Thor, a pair of Norwegian Fjords, aged 22 and 21, they have been a plough team for over a decade.



There was so much to see that it's impossible to do with one visit. The good news is that it's an annual 2-day event taking place on August Bank Holiday Sunday and Monday. I'll be there next year.



RIDE+STRIDES

Pictures from some of our intrepid Ride and Striders, courtesy of Sean and Monika:



Chorley Methodist Chapel



*Inside Stottesdon church, Janet, Monika,
Clare and Bertie the Springer Spaniel*



No stopping Sean, only 11 more miles to go



Meeting the locals



*Sidbury
Church is
always
picturesque*



Cyclamens in the woodland



The Severn Valley Group of Parishes

Rector: Revd Kina Robertshaw - Revkinarobertshaw@gmail.com

www.stmaryshighley.co.uk/st-marys-highley

Revd David Poyner, Assistant Curate - email D.R.Poyner@aston.ac.uk,

Tel 0780-100-9693 (mobile) or 01746-861121

Revd Angie Foster – Assistant Curate (in training) revangiefoster@icloud.com

St Mary, Highley

CHURCHWARDEN

Carl Hinkinson

St Mary, Billingsley

CHURCHWARDEN

Vacant

St Peter, Chelmarsh

CHURCHWARDEN

Vacant

St Bartholomew, Glazeley

CHURCHWARDEN

Vacant

Severn Valley Benefice Services

4th October

9.30am	Morning Prayer	Chelmarsh
10.30am	Holy Communion	Highley

11th October

9.30	Holy Communion	Chelmarsh
10.30	Morning service	Highley

18th October

9.30	Morning Prayer	Chelmarsh
10am	Holy Communion	Glazeley
10.30	Holy Communion	Highley

25th October

8.00am	Holy Communion	Billingsley
9.30am	Holy Communion	Chelmarsh
10.30am	Informal worship	Highley

Chelmarsh News:



As I write, we are preparing for the harvest festival on Thursday 24th September, with the harvest supper the next day. I do repeat my appeal for more helpers for the harvest supper, to help our team who are enthusiastic but, it is rumoured, may be getting older each year. The community events we do in Chelmarsh such as this and the plant sale earlier in the year are practical expressions of us being the body of Christ and serving the village. They are well attended and provide much needed glue to help people come together and stay connected. I suspect they will become an even more important part of our ministry in the future.

Please also consider volunteering for other groups in the village that run events and venues; I am sure new blood is always appreciated.

Billingsley News



We have just had our harvest festival, helped by Astley Abbots and Tasley Choir, who celebrated evensong with us.

In spite of difficult growing conditions, the church was well decorated with produce from gardens and local farms. We are very grateful to everyone who donated to us and for our small team who then laid this out in the church.

The choir were magnificent; there was a wall of sound coming from the chancel and it was also great to hear the organ being played. We are very grateful to the choir, Stephen Lomas their director, Clive Munday for officiating and Hugh (see below...) for playing the organ.

We had around 20 people in the congregation and with the choir as well the church was crowded for the post-service refreshments. This was the last evening service for the year, but they have been very well supported. We are now planning for next year and also for Christmas, when again we hope to have an organist; it really makes a difference to the music.

Whilst evening services have now concluded, our 8am Holy Communion services run all the year long and are the bedrock of regular prayer and worship in the church. They take place on the 4th Sunday of the month and all are welcome.

Glazeley News:



Last month, I was looking forward to welcoming Rachael Davenhill to play the organ at our August service. Rachael did indeed arrive and started to play but there was no sound from the organ; fortunately we discovered this before the service had started. We ended up singing unaccompanied; there was a particularly splendid rendition of Jesu, lover of my soul to the tune of Aberystwyth. Organ tuner Phil, already booked for a routine visit was summonsed with renewed urgency and with assistant Hugh (known to attenders of Daddy's Hat concerts), he diagnosed the problem.

Mice had chewed through the main

air pipe. This has been repaired, the organ serviced and we are looking forward to Rachael playing for us when she is next available, in December.

I am pleased to report that the entire drive past the church has now been resurfaced; many thanks to Laura and Andrew for doing this work. The church was able to make a donation to help with the cost. This makes access to the church much easier, especially for the less mobile, where the potholes were a real issue.

Our harvest festival occurs too late for this month's news, but I will report on it next time. We will also be having our usual monthly breakfast at the Down on 17th October at 9am; please contact myself (d.r.poyner@aston.ac.uk) or Marion (marion.corfield@talktalk.net) if you want to come; cost £10



Burwarton and District Gardening Club. *Bev Harris writes:*

It's that time of year again...

In October we hold the first meeting of the gardening club and introduce the new programme of events for the year. The format remains the same as previous years, but we have some new and exciting speakers once again this year. On October 8th, Sue Mabberley who gardens at Nant y Bedd near Abergavenny is visiting to talk about 'Rewilding your garden'. In her talk she will look at nine top tips to bring more life into your own garden, showing us how she has been wild gardening for more than 40 years and hoping to inspire us to adopt some of her ideas.

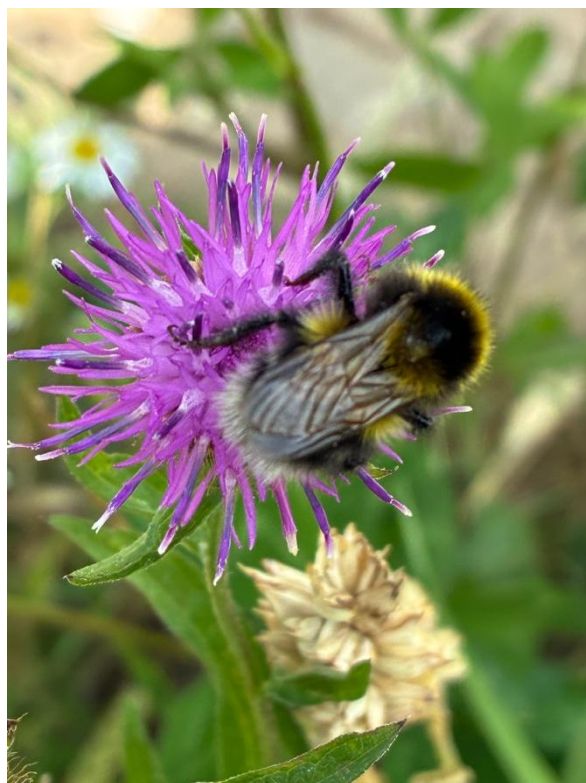
In November, Mark Duffell's talk on 'Darwin the Botanist' will be something a little different. Mark is a passionate and skilled Botanist and Horticulturist. His talk is an exploration of the many botanical discoveries Darwin and his contemporaries made. Mark explains some of Darwin's lesser-known discoveries and compares them to our current understanding.

February's speaker is the one I think I am most excited about.

Gavin Stoneystreet is a cultural botanist and writer. He works most often in garden heritage, in advising, curation, and conservation. In his talk, Gavin explores the unique landscapes of William Morris' gardens to reveal how nature and vegetal life shaped Morris's famous prints.

Our final speaker in March is again this year Samantha Hopes. Last year, Samantha delighted us with her talk 'Plants with a story'. Next year she will be talking about 'Ashwood Specialities' where she and her husband work. Ashwood Nurseries is in Stourbridge in the West Midlands and is renowned for many wonderful plants including; Hellebores, Hepaticas, Cyclamen, Salvia, Hydrangea, Snowdrops and more! We are hoping she might bring along a few with which to tempt us.

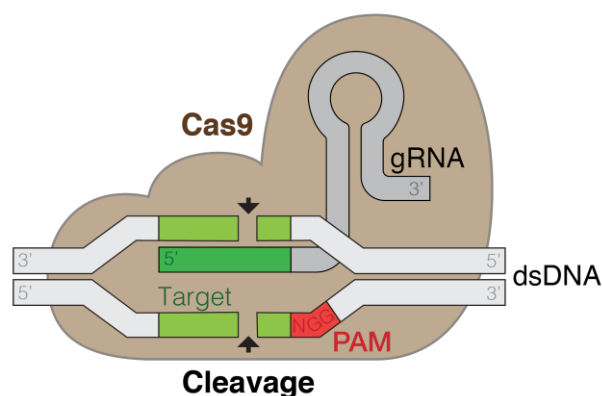
In addition to our four speakers, we will be holding our usual events; Members' talks, Christmas afternoon tea, a quiz and a Christmas decoration competition in December. In April we will hold our Spring Show and photograph competition and in May our AGM and plant sale. There will also be an annual luncheon in January, a garden visit in June and a garden picnic in July or August. If you are interested in joining our small, friendly gardening club or just visiting for one of our talks, then come along to Stoke St Milborough Village Hall. We meet on the second Thursday of the month at 2.00pm. Details can be found on our website; www.stokestmilborough.info/burwarton-gardening-club or by contacting me at burwartonanddistrictgardening@gmail.com. Everyone is welcome regardless of gardening knowledge or ability.



Molecule of the month; The CRISPR toolkit *by David Poyner*

As a scientist I spend a lot of time looking at molecules and trying to understand how they work. One way of doing this is to take them out cells and study their properties in isolation. This is a very powerful approach that has served biochemists well throughout the history of their science and it lies at the heart of what I currently do, which is to find new ways of isolating proteins that are found in the membranes (the outer wrapping) of cells. However, it has its limitations. What most biologists really want to know is what molecules do in their native environment, inside cells in living organisms. As a pharmacologist, I try to do this with drugs. But sometimes there are no drugs available. Since the late 20th century an alternative has been to manipulate the way cells make proteins by targeting the DNA.

Figure 1 The molecules of CRISPR



DNA is the blueprint of all the proteins inside a cell. It holds the instructions which specify exactly how a protein is made. Proteins are made of small components called amino acids; the DNA tells the cell which amino acids are needed for a protein and the order in which they are to be joined together. This information is stored in DNA by chemicals called bases, themselves joined up in a particular order. Much of the art of the discipline known as molecular biology lies in changing a base at a particular region in DNA so in turn changing the protein. This can be done in very precise ways. For most of my scientific career, I have worked with colleagues who do this for me outside of cells. However, now it has become routine to do this inside a cell. By altering a protein inside a cell to make it more or less active, we can see how it really works in its natural environment. This is known as gene-editing. The game changer over the last decade or so has been the routine use of the technique called CRISPR

CRISPR starts with a protein called Cas9 that can attack the DNA inside cells and remove individual bases. In nature, this is used to protect bacteria against viruses; it can destroy the viral DNA. However, it has now been adapted to work in cells from any organism. Cas9 attaches to the DNA of the cell it is targeting by means of a short stretch of bases known as the PAM site. These are very common and so this step is not a problem. However, because they are so common, PAMs cannot be used to guide the CAS9 to change only a precise site found in just one type of protein. This is where the second molecule comes in, the g(uide)RNA. This is able to read the DNA around a PAM; if it matches the bases found only in the DNA that codes for the protein of interest, it will bind and so stick the Cas9 to this spot. The Cas9 then acts like a pair of scissors to cut the DNA at that precise point. All cells have proteins that will naturally repair cut DNA. However, the final step in gene editing is to subvert this process. In addition to the Cas9 and gRNA, another molecule is introduced that is almost a perfect match to the DNA that has been cut; almost but not quite. A small number of alterations will have been introduced into it by the experimenter. The natural repair process mistakenly used this artificial molecule to guide it. Instead of returning the DNA to its original condition, instead it will change it to match the introduced molecule. As a result, the DNA in the cell has been changed to whatever the experimenter has decided. In turn, when the DNA is then used to make the protein, the structure of the protein will be changed.

As an experimenter, I have worked with colleagues to change the type of protein made in the cells in which we were working. We then were then able to see how the new protein influenced the cells. However, CRISPR is now also starting to be used medically. In genetic diseases, a particular protein has been changed so that it no longer works, because the DNA is sending the wrong instructions. With CRISPR, it is now sometimes possible to correct the DNA so the normal protein is made. This is an exciting approach in medicine. And, as the editor alluded to in the last edition of the Wheatland News, CRISPR can also be used to make genetically modified plants or animals.

Since Bishop Richard visited Wheathill in September (not sure if he was on his immaculate old Harley Davidson motorbike or not) I thought it would be good to include his latest message.



Last week, I was on one of my prayer pilgrimages around the diocese. I had the pleasure of visiting 25 different churches, most of which I had never visited before. At some indeterminate point in the future, I will be retiring, and I am determined to visit all the churches in the diocese before then. We have over 400. I still have some way to go, but I think I'm pushing 300 now.

In each church we prayed a simple liturgy together asking for God's blessing on the work there. The fact I haven't visited usually means they don't have a service every week, or they are serving very small remote communities, sometimes of only a few houses. Many are achingly beautiful in a wonderful setting. I always think it's difficult, confronted as we are by the wonder of creation, to be an atheist in the diocese of Hereford.

I think some were puzzled by my choice of Bible reading. We read from Revelation 4, John's vision of a throne surrounded by a sea of glass, bowing elders in their thrones, and overshadowed by rainbows. Not much in there about prayer. However, the context in which Revelation was given is important. Apostle John was in a Roman labour camp on the Island of Patmos – not something you want in your 80's. The Emperor Domitian was doing his best to wipe out as many Christians as he could. An objective observer would be forgiven for thinking the early Christian movement was on the way out through the combination of external persecution and internal failure. Even John at the beginning of Revelation hints that his confidence in God's power is shaky.

Revelation is a difficult book, full of symbolism which requires work to interpret, throughout our history Christians in extremis have taken great comfort from this book. It reassures that however dire the circumstances or hopeless the outlook, God is still working his purposes out towards a good end. If one continues through the somewhat blood curdling imagery of the rest of Revelation, you eventually come to rest in chapters 21 and 22: the vision of a new heaven and a new earth. The plan is complete; the purposes worked out.

Not only is this reassurance intended to comfort us that we are part of this story that God is telling, but it also validates the little, the local and the ordinary. There is a danger the contemporary church is so obsessed with growth, measurement and success that we forget the measures of success in the kingdom of God are not key performance indicators.

That is not to say that we mustn't examine ourselves to see whether we are being faithful to God's word, nor perish the thought, that it doesn't matter whether people become followers of Jesus or not. The commission to make disciples is central to the church's *raison d'être*. However, the heroes of the book of Revelation are largely recorded as faithful souls who got killed for their trouble! Even if they were unsuccessful their faithfulness, love and perseverance counted for something. Ultimately, the value of our actions is judged in eternity, not in the short-term horizon of our earthly lives.

Going back to my prayer pilgrimage, that's why I chose that reading. Our little local, ordinary churches are served by faithful people who work incredibly hard, giving of their time, money and talents to sustain the worshipping life of the church and keep our witnesses in stone standing. Part of the purpose of our diocesan strategy is to keep as many of these places open.

We also prayed for a fresh wind of the Holy Spirit to bring people to faith and deepen our Christlikeness.



Autumn Time

Summer is over and Autumn is appearing but not all on 1st October. It usually lets us get used to it as the month unfolds. I like this month and I love the colour changes October paints for us. The leaves are turning so we have shades of green lightening to oranges and yellows and then to brown. Enjoy this landscape from 1st to 31st.

Apples are something else to enjoy. Living in rural Shropshire many of us have fruit to share or we know those who have fruit falling off the trees they have so many. My offering is Apple Cake, my best (only) baked offering always appreciated by friends and grandchildren. The apples, cooked with cinnamon – what is not to like about this warm tasty combination.



Sticking with food I resort to my favourite breakfast, the bowl of porridge which in my case is topped with stewed apple all winter if possible. How often does the conversation at the coffee morning turn to who likes what on their porridge!



A dry October day can encourage a walk and if you are near park or field the chances are the horse chestnuts are shedding conkers – sometimes still in the bright green case or already freed and showing off their bright shiny winter coats. I can pick up lots of green and brown things and love building up an annual bowl of nature's offering. Hydrangea heads dried and touched with a spray of gold (or silver) spray paint in a bowl shared with acorns and conkers; small pieces of ivy with the seeds still attached; sprigs of polished holly leaves add a bit more colour but leave the potential red berries to the winter. This concoction adds a talking point to any house.

Putting regular food out for the birds is another chore for this month and the local hedgehog will really enjoy a bit of the dog/cat's meaty food. www.hedgehogstreet.org will give you ideas on how to help a hedgehog! Water in saucers and in bird baths is also good for all sorts of small mammals and birds. It's the start of a winter routine.



Getting out for walks is good for all our health and many a village has a walking group. If not in yours then time to start one – just remember walks not marathons! A brisk walk also justifies hot chocolate when you get home. Harvest Festivals at the local church is usually a nice outing with lots of colour and music and people and cake but remember to take a tin for the Food Bank basket.

Watch out for “Trick and Treat” at the end of the month and be generous with the sweets. October is a busy month, but I think you can make the best of it if you stay positive. I hope I have given you some pleasant ideas.



Anni Holden Calver

Secretary Shropshire Churches Tourism Group

www.discovershropshirechurches.co.uk

Trustee of Caring for God's Acre

www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk



Stottesdon group of Parishes



St Mary, Stottesdon
CHURCHWARDEN
Clare Tibbits: 01746-718007

St Mary, Cleeton St Mary
CHURCHWARDEN
Sue Dolphin: - 01584-890583

St Giles, Farlow
CHURCHWARDENS - VACANT –contact the key holder, Pam Phillips – 01746-718475

Holy Trinity, Sidbury
CHURCHWARDEN – vacant – contact key holder, Andrew Sierakowski - 07934-714149

St John, Middleton Scriven
CHURCHWARDEN - vacant – contact Parish Rep Ann Constable 01746-789420

St Michael, Silvington
CHURCHWARDEN - vacant – contact Parish Rep Katie Hickman

Rector – Revd Dr. Sally Wallace-Jones. Email: revsamwj@gmail.com Phone: 01746 599076 / 07999 482107

Services in the Stottesdon Benefice in October

Sunday, 04 October

9.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Farlow
10.30am	Harvest Festival	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Stottesdon
6.00pm	Harvest Festival	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Farlow

Sunday, 11 October

9.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Cleeton St Mary
10.30am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Stottesdon
6.30pm	Harvest Festival	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Silvington

Sunday, 18 October

10.30am	Informal Worship	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Stottesdon
11.45am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Sidbury

The Archdeacon of Ludlow, the Venerable Sam Hustwayte will be attending the above Sidbury service. She will be swearing in the two (yes two!!) churchwardens.

3.00pm	Pet Blessing	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Stottesdon
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Sunday, 25 October

9.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Silvington
10.30am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Stottesdon

Sunday, 1 November

9.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Farlow
10.30am	Morning Prayer	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Stottesdon

In addition to the above there are Harvest meals at Middleton Scriven on Saturday 17th Oct at 7.00pm and Sidbury on Sunday 25th Oct at 12 noon. If you wish to attend one of these, details are in the benefice and community news sections for those parishes.



Don't forget the Pet Blessing Service at Stottesdon on Sunday the 18th October at 3:00pm. I'm wondering if some of the pets might be interested in the Harvest leftover offerings if they are within their reach!

News from Middleton Scriven

Ann Constable writes



Harvest Supper

Saturday 17 October 7pm

Middleton Scriven Church

Butcher's Steak Pie
or
Luxury Fish Pie
served with vegetables
Selection of Desserts
Cheeseboard
£20.00 pp

Harvest Quiz to add to the fun
Indulgent **Raffle** prizes to be won
BYOB - please bring your own drinks and glasses

Book your place now
with Rachel on 07711 126785 (phone, text, Whatsapp)
stating choice of main course
Please notify us when booking of special dietary requirements

Payment in advance by BACS to:
Middleton Scriven Parochial Church Council
Sort 20-53 22 Account 00624888
or by cash in advance to Rachel

Our popular monthly coffee mornings continued this month with amazing cakes from Rachel, including a special birthday chocolate cake, millionaires' shortbread and scrummy apple cakes.

To Make sure you don't miss out on these community events - here's the dates for the upcoming ones:

October 10th: 10-12 Coffee morning

November 14th: SoupaSaturday 11-1

December 12 10-12 Christmas coffee morning and Christmas bake sale.

Harvest was completed weeks ago at record early dates.

Our thanksgiving Harvest Supper is on October 17th 7pm in church.

Please see the poster opposite with details on how to book your tickets.

All payment to be made in advance please.

Farlow and Oretton

Caroline Bilson writes

Harvest Service Sunday 4th October at 6pm

Carol Service Thursday 17th December at 6:30pm

Cleeton St Mary

Sue Dolphin writes

100 CLUB NUMBERS FOR AUGUST.

£20 Bryan Phillips	24.
£10 Heidi Robinson	113.
£10 Megan Smith ,	41.
£5 Jeff Dolphin ,	58.
£5 Joanne Gibbon ,	11.

Thanking you all for renewing for another year, also new ones that have joined, hope you all have good luck!

Please see the separate article on the St. Mary's common treasury project

Stottesdon & District WI



On Wednesday 16th September, we held our monthly WI meeting at Farlow Village Hall.

We had a brilliant talk from Tyne Hipkins who works as a fundraiser, amongst other things, for West Midlands Air Ambulance.

West Midlands Air Ambulance covers 6 Counties and is the largest in the UK.

It is totally community funded, receiving nothing from the Government, National Lottery or the NHS. I think we were all very surprised by this. They must raise £16 million per year to keep it running which is quite an achievement and it has been running for 35 years successfully.

Each time a helicopter takes off it costs just under £3,000 and the critical care cars cost just under £300 per journey.

Members gave most generously to support this charity which is so important to the rural community.

We finished our meeting with a raffle and wonderful tea and cake.

If you are interested in finding out more about Stottesdon and District WI, then please contact me.

Debbie Haynes

07780113869

debbiehaynesflp@hotmail.co.uk

President of Stottesdon and District WI

News from Stottesdon

Back to school and a sense of new beginnings for us all. It has rained and the grass is an almost unbelievable shade of brilliant almost shiny green showing up the holes dug by the not so new puppy now 6 months old. As a pup she was easy to weigh (required for calculating the correct amount of wormer etc) using the tried and tested method of the human standing on the bathroom scales and then picking up the dog, 9kg. Not so bad at 16 kg either, the wriggling causing one or two problems with the human trying to hold her steady whilst peering at the scales and trying to avoid being well washed by said pup. However, there was no chance of the human trying the same method at 6 months old. Hence a trip to 'Mutts are Us' and their secret under-shelving slide out scales. What fun and games? Oh no adorable picture-perfect teenage lab sits on scales whilst the staff ooh and ahh and find her treats. Oh, and in-case you wondered.... 21kg, thanks goodness the human didn't try to pick her up.

A visit to East Anglia to see Suffolk churches and then on to farming relations that side of the country showed a landscape as parched and browned as ours here. If anything, they had had slightly more rain than we have had but had been feeding livestock since the beginning of June. That part of the country is frequently drier than elsewhere, but the summer just past presented even more challenges than usual for them as it has for us. Discussions about water storage and bore holes as an essential rather than as a nice to have, are happening here on this side of the country as something new whereas for East Anglia they are a day-to-day issue. And certain relaxation and extension of water abstraction licenses might help but have come too late for some. And in any case will put further strain on aquifers and the like. The immediate issue of potential shortages of common food stuffs such as potatoes has yet to be reported in the press in any serious way however the fundamental issue of climate change and us all just using less and taking more care with what we do use are being pushed ever further into the future.

News from Sidbury:



On the 18th July Sidbury church welcomed Linda Miles Cartwright to talk on Horton cemetery. It was riveting. Linda gives up her time to research the life stories of unfortunate souls that were in the local mental institutions and buried in the cemetery. The cemetery is now redundant and slipping more into disrepair with the threat of planning always present. The stories of the people buried there were fascinating and thankfully the research that Linda and numerous others do has brought them to the forefront of people's attention.

Linda was such a natural and interesting speaker kindly supported by Clive her husband and we in Sidbury thank her very much for sparing her time.

On September 20th after our monthly service, we held a coffee morning whilst announcing the much anticipated results of the sunflower competition.

The winners of the children's competition were **George and Alice Williams** 187cm

Adults results

1st **Dave Crook** 310cm

2nd **Mandy Williams** 297cm

This was great fun. Thank you to Megan for organising it and we look forward to growing our sunflowers again next year.

Judging will take place in the next couple of weeks for the Sidbury calendar. This year the theme was trees. We've had a preview of the entries and there are some wonderful photographs of trees around Sidbury, and the calendars will go on sale shortly just in time for Christmas.

We are holding our harvest festival on **Sunday 25th October** following on to Upper House for a shared lunch where we all pitch in and bring a plate of food to share with our friends and neighbours. **Everyone is welcome.**



The next Messy Church will be on **Friday 23rd October at 3.20pm** in the Stottesdon Primary School hall.

If you would like more details, please ring Rev Sally on 01746 599076. Children do need to bring an adult or two with them, but everyone is very welcome.



....and the latest news from the fruit and vegetable stand outside of the Old Stores is that we have now raised over £350 for the Severn Valley Hospice, we are hoping to make it £400 before the table is packed away. Thank you everyone who has contributed to the table and everyone who has donated. This is brilliant when you think much of the fruit and veg on the table is surplus and might have been wasted.



St Mary's Common Treasury Project



The *Common Treasury* project at St Mary's Church, Cleeton, has given people the opportunity to make their own ceramic tiles from local clay with potter Rupert Brakspear. This clay was dug from around the village from deposits laid down over 300 million years ago. Each has been stamped with names or words associated with the Common and will hang in the church once refurbishment work is complete.

For Heritage Open Days in September the church showcased more project activity. Visitors could take a new self-guided walk over the common past abandoned coal mines, deserted farms and prehistoric remains. Younger visitors enjoyed making their own model 'squatters' cottage from material found on the

Common and the redundant organ was converted to play recordings of oral histories and music from *Song of the Hill*.

One visitor commented: "It's so good to see churches alive and doing interesting things. There is so much fascinating history in these places."

The project volunteers also discovered the location of the old village well and cut a new path in the bracken for people (and sheep!) to visit this ancient spring. Rev. Sally Wallace led a well blessing ceremony and locals shared memories of grandparents fetching water daily.



A textile project is underway led by artist Alana Jelinek. This will take inspiration from the common land and traditional banners in the church to create new collaborative works. Alana is keen to meet anyone who is interested in becoming involved. Please contact hello@cleetonstmary.uk

What the project really needs is your information, your photographs and documents to help share this important community heritage. If you have material relating to Cleeton St Mary or the land around it, the project team would love to see it. Please get in touch or come and join one of our events.

Contact hello@cleetonstmary.uk www.cleetonstmary.uk



On Saturday
17TH OCTOBER AT 3:00PM

Daddy's Hat

IS COMING TO
**ST MARY THE VIRGIN,
JACKFIELD!**

Playing
**Saxon Fire
Hugh Walker
Lindsay and Fleur**

No tickets, no charge - just a donation to the Hat if you wish,
shared between the hosting church and musicians' expenses.

EVERYONE WILL BE WELCOME
Soft drinks, nibbles and a chat afterwards!

HOW TO FIND US
What3Words:
[exacted.mixes.preheated](https://www.what3words.com/exacted.mixes.preheated)






From September Daddy's Hat at St. Mary's. Bridgnorth

PAGE'S MEADOW TALKS AND FILMS

Agroecology in action on the Clee Hills



With

Lucy Grove, (MRes, BSc Hons) - Agroecologist
“Agroecology in Action”

Farmers are vital to the regeneration of our landscapes and associated ecosystems. This talk explores how farmers and agroecologists, working together, can create powerful opportunities for landscape regeneration.

Discover local examples of farm-scale wetlands, landscape-scale habitat connectivity projects for Dormice, Great-crested newts and Redstarts and examples of innovative farming practices.

Lucy will talk about her role in the ‘Regenerative Agriculture Accelerator Programme’ for local farmers, and how by engaging and empowering these farmers, and the next generation, we can produce nutrient dense food, restore biodiversity, and help combat climate change.

7.00pm THURSDAY 8th Oct 2026

CLEE ST MARGARET VILLAGE HALL

ALL welcome donation suggested £3.00. Includes tea coffee local apple juice and biscuits.

Marches Meadow Group and the Importance of Meadows



A widely cited statistic suggests that over 75% of species-rich hay meadows in the UK have been lost over the past 80 years; the wording may vary and the quoted percentage is too conveniently equivalent to three-quarters to be a precise figure, but it is close enough to the reality to be acceptable.

Why does this matter? Most of Britain's farmland supports very few species – modern pastures and silage fields may be almost solely perennial ryegrass, or a ryegrass-white clover mix, and arable fields no longer have the wide variety of 'weeds' they once did. With so few plants there will be few insects and few seed or insect feeding birds, bats and other small mammals.

One has only to think of the number of species that have meadow as part of their English names to realise how important the meadow habitat was: meadow buttercup, meadow crane's-bill, meadow foxtail, meadow saffron, meadow saxifrage and meadowsweet (all plants), meadow pipit (bird), meadow brown (butterfly) and meadow grasshopper. Many more species use meadows even if the word doesn't feature in their name.

Marches Meadow Group (MMG) was set up in 2015 under the less-than-snappily entitled Stiperstones and Corndon Hill Country Landscape Partnership Scheme. MMG's original aim was to provide a hay-making service for owners of small or hard to access meadows, but it has since expanded its activities. It has grown in membership and influence and its geographic range now includes all of Shropshire and neighbouring areas of Powys.

MMG offers members a free plant survey and advisory report to help them achieve their aims of maintaining or creating species rich meadows at all scales from lawns upwards. When diverse meadows and hay-making were widespread plants were able to move between adjoining meadows. Nowadays we usually have to help spread additional species, either by sowing seed or using green hay from an existing species-rich meadow. MMG can help with identifying sources of seed or green hay.

MMG also provides talks, visits and workshops and was instrumental in organising the first National Meadows Conference (NMC) in 2024 and the NMCs in 2025 and 2026. In the past two years MMG has organised an Open Meadows Day which allows anyone interested in meadows to visit a selection of MMG members' meadows. Details of these activities can be found on the MMG website (<https://www.marchesmeadowgroup.com/>) where there is also a free to download leaflet on creating a meadow.



Before retiring to Shropshire in 2012 Richard Small lectured at Liverpool John Moores University, where he led the Wildlife Conservation degree course. His academic interests include ecology and its application to conservation of habitats and species. He specialises in conservation grazing and now manages a 10 ha smallholding at The Bog, near the Stiperstones National Nature Reserve, with hay meadows and hill grassland for its wildlife interest and for his flock of Hebridean and Manx Loaghtan sheep. Richard is Secretary of the Marches Meadow Group and a Middle Marches Community Land Trust Board member.



What is Artificial Intelligence and why is it so important and controversial?



Artificial intelligence (AI) is the ability of computational systems to perform tasks typically associated with human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, problem-solving, perception, and decision-making. Instead of a human programmer writing strict instructions for every single choice, the computer uses mathematical formulas to find patterns in massive sets of information and improves its performance over time through trial and error.

How the Learning Process Works

- 1) You give the computer a huge collection of examples, such as thousands of email messages labelled as "spam" or "not spam".
- 2) The algorithm makes an initial attempt at solving the task, often getting things wrong at first because it is just starting out.
- 3) The system measures how wrong its guess was (called loss) and automatically adjusts internal settings—similar to turning fine-tuning dials—to reduce future errors.
- 4) By running through millions of data points, the adjustments get better until the computer can reliably make accurate predictions on brand-new, unseen data.

The main risk of AI is that machines often replicate, inherit, or amplify existing human prejudices. Because AI learns entirely from historical data, it does not naturally possess human concepts of fairness or morality. If the training data contains historical inequities or uneven representation, the resulting AI model will build those flaws into its predictions. An example of how this can affect in real-world scenarios, is where a company had to scrap its AI hiring tool after discovering it automatically penalised resumes containing the word "woman" because it was trained on a decade of male-dominated tech industry resumes.



Deep learning systems often operate as a "black box," making it incredibly difficult for engineers or auditors to trace exactly why a specific decision or prediction was made.

Recent news has focused on the use of AI in the military and how it can break (hack) into other computer systems. AI use in military includes processing battlefield information at a scale and speed that humans cannot match, for example targeting uncrewed drone swarms – think about the war in Ukraine, you could not have a thousand independent human operators of attack drones coordinating their efforts, but AI can.



An AI agent hacking into another unrelated computer system has also hit the news with the Hugging Face incident in July this year. If you haven't heard the term "sandbox" before, it's a theoretically self-contained environment where nothing can get out. Think about building a Lion's cage, you can build it strong but at some point there has to be a gate to the outside world to put the Lions in the cage in the first place. In a sandbox this "gate" is a vulnerability that an AI agent can exploit to leave the sandbox, in the Hugging Face

incident the agent found a previously unknown vulnerability in an internal package server, enabling them to gain unauthorized internet access and break out of the sandbox.

As computers and software are getting faster and more sophisticated the only way to counter a malicious AI is by using another AI agent.

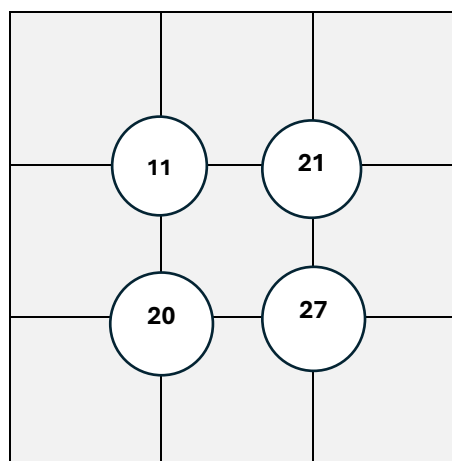
But AI can also be used for incredible benefits to humanity. In David Poyners article about proteins and gene-editing, biologists struggled with figuring out the shape of proteins that took years of expensive, painstaking lab work. AlphaFold AI used deep learning to predict the 3D structures of virtually all known proteins in just a few years. By making this database free and open-source, it has accelerated global scientific progress by decades.

Love it, hate it, worry about regulations controlling it and which country can exploit it best, AI is here to stay.

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10	14	21
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Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces in the grid so that the number in the circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces and each of the columns equals the total at the bottom. It's trickier than you think!

Puzzle Page

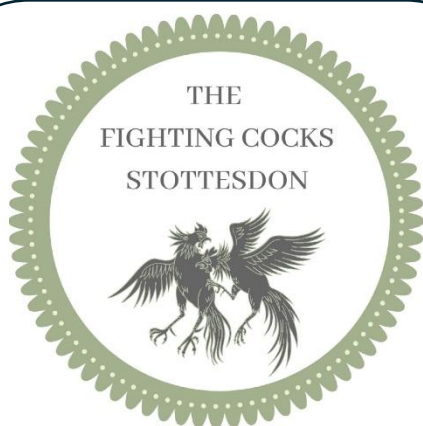
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<u>L</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>O</u>

From these letters make words of four or more letters, always including the central letter "N". Answers must be in the Oxford Dictionary (no cheating!), excluding plurals – that is you cannot have the same word twice, once as a plural form.

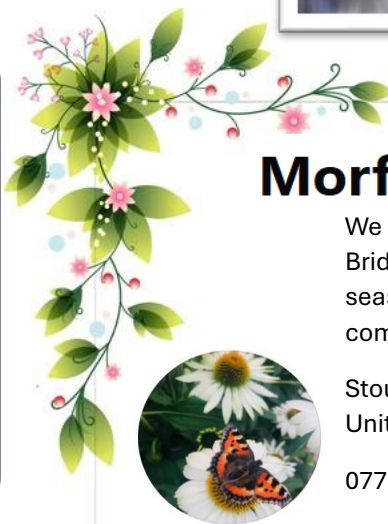


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The Back Page

October is commonly associated with the beginning of Autumn, but among the Anglo-Saxons, it was known as Winterfylleth (Pinterfylleþ), because at the October full moon, winter was supposed to begin. If you're into stargazing October is often a good month if it's a clear sky because sunset is earlier and the sky is generally darker to observe stars. Nasa's Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope has recently been launched on a journey that will take it roughly one million miles from Earth to explore dark energy and black holes and should significantly expand the search for planets beyond our solar system.



Shropshire is having an Oktoberfest including an Oompah band held in Shrewsbury over the weekend of the 2nd and 3rd of October, there's a silent disco as well, not sure if it's just me but I wonder if they could be persuaded to have a silent Oompah band! If you're into beers and ciders there will be no mainstream beer brands, just local breweries, cider makers, drinks producers, and distilleries serving up tasty tipples.

If that isn't quite your scene there is a Male Voice Choir at Castle Hall, Bridgnorth, on Saturday 17th October in aid of Alzheimer's Society.



At the end of October is Halloween, it's highly commercialised now, particularly in supermarkets, but parts of the country still mark Halloween by making soul-cakes. Similar to shortbread with currents and sweet spices. The cakes, often simply referred to as souls, are given out to soulers (mainly consisting of children and the poor) who go from door to door during the days of Allhallowtide, singing and saying prayers "for the souls of the givers and their friends". There are different interpretations but the tradition of lighted pumpkins are from soulers visiting houses with "hollowed-out pumpkin lanterns" with a candle inside which represented a soul trapped in purgatory.

A lot of interesting things happened during the month of October; in 1066 William, Duke of Normandy, became "the Conqueror" at the Battle of Hastings; the first television transmission of a moving image was made by Scottish inventor John Logie Baird in 1925; in 1831 English physicist Michael Faraday demonstrated the dynamo, founding the science of electro-magnetism; Lord Lucan led The Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava during the Crimean War in 1854; Admiral Lord Nelson was mortally wounded at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805; in 1967 Transport Minister, Barbara Castle, introduced the breathalyser, a way of testing a person's blood alcohol concentration level at the roadside; in the classic horror novel by Bram Stoker, October 3rd is when James Harker and Van Helsing find Renfield has been bitten by a vampire and we discover what Count Dracula really is; and in 1957 Captain Pugwash made his television debut.



John Betjeman probably summed up Autumn best in an extract from his poem "Diary of a Church Mouse":

*For me the only feast at all
Is Autumn's Harvest Festival,
Where I can satisfy my want
With ears of corn around the font.
I climb the eagle's brazen head
To burrow through a loaf of bread.
I scramble up the pulpit stair
And gnaw the marrows hanging there.*

Have Fun!