

THE LINK

A COMMUNITY MAGAZINE FOR THE
SEVEN PARISHES IN THE SOUTH
WARWICKSHIRE 7 BENEFICE

DECEMBER 2025

£1.20



■ BARCHESTON with WILLINGTON ■ BARTON-ON-THE-HEATH
■ BURMINGTON ■ CHERINGTON with STOURTON ■ LONG COMPTON
■ WHICHFORD and ASCOTT ■ THE WOLFORDS

December Events Update (VH = Village Hall; Ch = Church)

Tues 2	Coffee Morning	Wolford Ch	10:30
Thurs 4	Farmers Market	The Hall, Stourton	18:00
	Butterfly Talk	The Kiln Shed, Whichford	19:00
Sat 6	Christmas Tea Party	Long Compton VH	15:00
Sun 7	Xmas Wreath Making	Little Compton VH	13:00
	Charity Pub Quiz	Red Lion, Long Compton	19:30
Weds 10	History Society	Long Compton VH	19:30
Fri 12	Carers 4 Carers Xmas Tea	Kineton VH	10:30
	Feel Good Friday	The Hall, Stourton	14:00
Sat 13	Coffee Shop/ Xmas market	The Hall, Stourton	10:30
	Children's Christmas Movie	Wolford VH	14:30
	Christmas Movie	Wolford VH	18:30
	Winter Gathering	Burmington VH	18:30
Sun 14	Carol Service	Barcheston Ch	10:30
	Christmas Bazaar	Long Compton Chapel	10:00
Tues 16	Cameo Xmas Lunch	Burmington VH	12:00
Weds 17	Feldon Military and Naval Soc	The Hall Stourton	20:00
Thurs 18	Christmas Meditation	House of Bread	08:00
	Country Market	Moreton WI Hall	10:00
Sun 21	Carol Service/Nativity	Burmington Ch	15:00
	Carol Service	Barton on the Heath Ch	15:30
	Carol Service	Long Compton Ch	17:00
	Carol Service	Wolford Ch	18:30
	Charity Pub Quiz	Red Lion, Long Compton	19:30
Weds 24	Nativity	Cherington Ch	16:00
	Midnight Mass	Barcheston Ch	23:30
Thurs 25	HAPPY CHRISTMAS!		

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EDITORIAL



Welcome to our festive edition of The Link. If you haven't already had one too many mince pies and glasses of mulled wine, you will find a host of opportunities to top up on both among these pages. As always there is lots going on across our villages over the Christmas season; something for everyone and all generations to enjoy. I have the January copy of The Link still to prepare but then I fully intend to put my feet up and enjoy. One of my favourite things to do when I lived in London was to visit my parents at Christmas at our family home in Bourton on the Water. As soon as I hit the top of the hill at Burford and saw the twinkling lights below it filled me with warmth and cheer in a way all the London decorations never did. Nowhere does Christmas like the Cotswolds and I highly recommend a tour of the Cotswold village Christmas lights as part of your festive itinerary.

Thank you to all our village editors and distributors for your hard work on The Link over the course of the past year and to all our regular contributors who form the backbone of our little magazine. Finally, thank you to all our readers and subscribers, apologies for the occasional typos and I hope you will continue to support us next year!

Have a wonderful Christmas and New Year

Sara Billins

**Please note the copy deadline for January 2026:
December 8th**



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The LINK welcomes contributions for the front cover or elsewhere. Portrait orientation and good quality photographs or artwork preferred. Please send items to editor@swlink.org.uk




THE RED LION CHARITY PUB QUIZ SEASON 2025-26

What you need to know...

- Quiz starts at 7.30 (ish)
- Teams of up to 6 people (£2 per person entry fee)
- Each quiz supports a different charity - visit our website to find out which charities we are supporting this season: redlion-longcompton.co.uk/events-entertainment/pub-quiz/
- Book a table to guarantee seats for your team
- There is a raffle with great prizes at each quiz

   @redlionlongcomp

Quiz dates for your diary

- SUNDAY 7TH DECEMBER
- SUNDAY 21ST DECEMBER - CHRISTMAS QUIZ
- SUNDAY 4TH JANUARY - QUIZ OF THE YEAR
- SUNDAY 18TH JANUARY
- SUNDAY 1ST FEBRUARY
- SUNDAY 15TH FEBRUARY
- SUNDAY 1ST MARCH - LAST QUIZ OF THE SEASON



Happy Birthday!

December 2025



Rosabella Stock
Roxanne Stephens

Little Wolford
Long Compton

8
5

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Carers4Carers - your local support group for family carers.

We usually meet on the **fourth Friday** of the month (except December) from 10:30 to 12 noon at Kineton Village Hall. Loved ones are welcome too – they can join our Companionship Group

during the meeting.

Friday 12th December: Carers' Christmas Get-Together

The festive season isn't always easy — that's why our Christmas meeting is a gentle one. Join us for a relaxed meeting with refreshments, mince pies, and a few carols to lift the spirits. Whether you're feeling festive or not, you'll be warmly welcomed.

For further details or help with transport arrangements to/from our meetings, contact Gillian on 07947 893504/ kcarers4carers@gmail.com, or explore our website www.carers4carersonthefosse.org.uk

Lisa Barnett – Assistant Coordinator

**Even the word "dementia" can be daunting...
but we believe it's better to get the practical advice
and emotional support you need as a family carer**

Please visit one of our dementia friendly cafes locally

Tuesday from 10.30am - 12.30pm

Wednesday from 2pm - 4pm

Thursday from 10.30am - 12.30pm

Friday from 10am - 12 noon

1st Tuesday of each month
from 10.30am - 12.30pm



Shipston on Stour CV36 4QG

Wellesbourne Village Hall CV35 9NH

Moreton-in-Marsh GL56 0DS

Tysoe Village Hall CV35 0SE

Compton Verney House CV35 9HZ
(contact us for entrance tickets)

Google

talkdementia.uk

Advice and support for carers of loved ones
living with dementia in South Warwickshire

Contact Paul and Heather Dowler

Phone 01295 688376

Email talkdementia.uk@gmail.com



Shipston Link runs scheduled local bus services, Tuesday to Saturday, from surrounding villages into Shipston Town Square, via the Medical Centre, plus weekly shopping trips to Banbury, Moreton-in-Marsh, Chipping Norton and Stratford-upon-Avon.



Our friendly drivers can take you right to your destination; so relax and let us worry about the parking. Bus Passes are accepted on all our Services, with flat-fares for cash customers.

We also provide a very reasonably priced Private Hire service, seven days a week, using our comfortable 16-seater mini-buses.

For more information about our scheduled Services call the Travel Line on 0871 200 2233, or click www.shipstonlink.co.uk



SHIPSTON-ON-STOUR PROBUS CLUB

COMPANIONSHIP FOR RETIRED AND SEMI-RETIRED GENTLEMEN OF SHIPSTON AND THE VILLAGES



FRIENDSHIP | FUN | FASCINATING TALKS

MEETING FORTNIGHTLY ON FRIDAY MORNINGS
AT SHIPSTON SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB
21 LONDON ROAD, SHIPSTON-ON-STOUR CV356 4EP

ALL WELCOME!

WREATH EVENT
Sunday 7th December
LITTLE COMPTON VILLAGE HALL
1pm - 4pm
IN AID OF ST DENYS' CHURCH
We take the hard work out of wreath making!
Choose a prepared wreath and let us add the final touches from our beautiful selection of accessories or just come along and join us for some Christmassy refreshments and a sparkling Christmas raffle.
Customised wreaths on the day - £35
For further information contact:
beverleysavidge@gmail.com

Everyone is welcome!

CHRISTMAS CAMEO LUNCH CLUB
BURINGTON VILLAGE HALL
Tuesday 16th December
(Please note change of date from second to third Tuesday in month)
12 noon for 12.30 pm.
Come and join us for a traditional Christmas lunch with all the trimmings and carols.
All are welcome: most villages in the benefice are represented in the current membership. A special charge of £5 is made towards expenses for this month's lunch. All dietary needs can be met. Please bring your family, friends and children. Transport to and from the Village Hall can be provided.
Please book with Brenda Fitch Tel: 664313



Moreton-in-Marsh Country Market

For everything homemade, home grown, home cooked and hand crafted.
Thursdays, 10.00 am to 12.00 pm, WI Hall, New Road, Moreton in Marsh

Our last Christmas Market will be held on:

Thursday 18th December 2025

In addition to our normal produce, December is all about Christmas food, mince pies, Christmas cakes and puddings, sweets and food gifts.

PRE ORDER FOR CHRISTMAS – PICK UP AN ORDER FORM

And we have a great selection of unique Christmas craft items.

07346126269 / mimcountrymarket@gmail.com or find us on Facebook

Wishing all our customers a very Merry Christmas!



Shipston-on-Stour Area u3a A Friendly and Stimulating Local Community

Are you no longer working full time and wanting to do something new?

Join us at u3a on a fulfilling journey of learning, friendship, and fun, where individuals come together to explore new interests and share experiences.

We offer many different activities including **arts, nature, history, physical activities, music, languages, and social events**. Our welcoming community of over 350 members from all over the Shipston on Stour area encourages you to pursue lifelong learning and discover new hobbies while enjoying the company of like-minded people.

Why Join U3A?

Learn Something New: Explore and join any of our 39 interest groups.

Make Friends: Connect with others who share your interests and experiences. Rediscover the joy of learning.

Stay Active: Join our regular outings, workshops, walks and social events.

Flexible Participation: Choose the activities that suit your schedule and interests.

For more information and a full list of activities, please look at our website www.sosa.u3asite.uk
Come along to one of our monthly meetings which start at 2pm normally on the 4th Tuesday of every month at the Townsend Hall, Shipston, or contact Secretary, John Keayes, by e-mail secretary@sosau3acommittee.org to find out more

NICHOLAS COLLETT | GAVIN ROBERTSON



*With all my love
to my darling wife*

SC107
VANESSA
THE



Written & performed by Nicholas Collett | Directed by Gavin Robertson

**THE HALL, CHERINGTON STOURTON AND
SUTTON-UNDER-BRAILES (CV36 5HG)**

Thursday 15 January, 7:30pm

£15.00 (Standard) / £10.00 (Member in advance)

BOOK NOW: 7775 765572 or info@thehallevents.org.uk or the Chairman of the Feldon Valley Military & Naval History Society. For online tickets visit liveandlocal.org.uk or scan the QR code

Post Show Q&A included. Bar & refreshments open at 6:30pm & during interval.



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**LIVE
& LOCAL**



We desperately need donations!

We (SOS) are a voluntary group of local residents working together to try to stop speculative, large-scale developments that put profit before community.

What's Happening?

Shipston is under real threat. Developers have submitted proposals for over 1150 houses on the east, by Fell Mill Lane. With the sites in the west this would **increase the size of Shipston by 67%!**

Why We Need Your Help

Challenging major planning applications requires legal expertise, time, and funding. With your support we can fight back and make our voices heard.

Where Your Donation Goes

Every pound you give helps us to protect the Fell Mill open countryside:

- Hire expert planning consultants and legal advisors.
- Fund specialist reports on traffic, flooding and the environment.
- Community awareness campaigns: leaflets, banners, meetings.

How You Can Help

- ✓ Donate today - even £5 makes a difference.
- 🍷 Share this page with friends, family and neighbours.
- 👋 Get involved - join our meetings, help deliver leaflets, or volunteer your skills.

Our Fundraising Goal: £50,000
What we have raised so far: £20,318

(Any funds remaining after the campaign will be donated to Shipston Home Nursing)

To donate through **gofundme**

Scan me with your
phone camera!

Please go online and type in the link below:

 gofund.me/tall.bear.form



To donate directly:

Bank Name: HSBC

Account Name: SaveOurShipston


Sort Code: 40-18-57


Account Number: 60770736

Please visit our website, follow us on social media and join up to the mailing list and stay up to date about the latest planning news in Shipston.

We will let you know the moment the Fell Mill Lane application is submitted and how best to have your say!

 www.saveourshipston.org

 @SaveOurShipston

 @SaveOurShipston

 Say No to additional 3000+ houses

The Post Office van is in the car park by the village shop in Long Compton from 9.30 - 11.30 am Monday and Wednesday, and from 12.30 to 2.00 pm Tuesday and Thursday.

Shipston 'tip' is open - to book <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/recyclingshipston>.

Local Catholic Church Services

Chipping Norton

Holy Trinity, London Road. Saturday Vigil 6.00 pm. Sunday 11.00 am Tel: 01608 642703

Stow-on-the-Wold

Our Lady and St. Kenelm, 5 Back Walls. Saturday Vigil 6.00 pm. Sunday 9.15 am Tel: 01608 674354

Shipston and Brailes

Shipston, Our Lady and St. Michael, Darlingscote Road. Sunday 9.15 am.

Brailes, SS Peter and Paul, Friars Lane. Saturday Vigil 5.00 pm (for Shipston and Brailes Tel: 01608 685259)

Chipping Campden

St Catharine's Lower High St. Sunday masses: – Saturday Vigil 6.00 pm. Sunday 10.30 am Tel: 01386 84026

Local Quaker Meetings

Local Quaker Meetings for worship:

Broad Campden, Quaker Meeting House, GL556US - Sundays at 10.30 am.

Ettington, Quaker Meeting Hse, Old Halford Rd, CV377TH -Sundays at 11.00 am.

Sibford, Quaker Meeting House, Sibford Gower, OX155RX - Sundays at 10.30 am.

Shipston on Stour, in St Edmund's Church - last Thursdays (not Dec) at 2.30 pm

Local Congregational Services

Services at the Ebenezer Chapel, Long Compton as advertised

Chair Elizabeth Gilkes 07791 621778 Sec/Treasurer Sally Franklin

PARISH PEOPLE

Parochial Church Councils (PCCs)

	<i>Barcheston St Martin</i>	<i>Barton-on-the-Heath St Lawrence</i>
Churchwardens	David Hodges 07767840857	Walter Sawyer 684755
Secretary	Alice and Tom Murray 238755	Penny Mead 674595
Treasurer	David Cleave 666002	Kay Sonneborn
	<i>Burmington St Barnabas & St Nicholas</i>	<i>Cherington St John the Baptist</i>
Churchwardens	Michael Macdonald 662483	Roger Maycock 686404
Secretary	Graham French 239032	Paul Levitch 686353
Treasurer	John Boulter and Mary Scott (joint treasurer) 07968 450331	Sherry Gasson-Barker 686420
	<i>Long Compton St Peter and St Paul</i>	<i>Whichford St Michael</i>
Churchwardens	Jill Kirby 684923	Sophia Corlett 684369
Secretary	Zoë Wrigley 650404	Mandy James 684479
Treasurer	John Nye 684363	Jenny Scrivener
	<i>Wolford St Michael and All Angels</i>	
Churchwarden	John Wrench 674389	
Treasurer	Ann McKenna 674009	

Parish Council

Parish	Chair	Clerk
Barcheston	David Sutton	Lindsey Walker (663567)
Barton-on-the-Heath	James Coker (674601)	Julia Hicks
Burmington	Robert Hutchings (661496)	
Cherington	Philip Townsend (686529)	Sara Cole (686250)
Long Compton	Simon Bing (684827)	Sam Weller (684897)
Whichford	Ed Law	Nicky Aldenton
The Wolfords	Pippa Lines (01608 674035)	Elizabeth Gilkes (684336)

CHURCH NOTES

"Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely"



Those famous words were written by the historian Edward Acton and the truth of those words has certainly been confirmed in the last few years. A significant number of those who lead our most prominent institutions, including the church, have in their actions, shown us the corrupting nature of power.

But that raises a question. Why are we so outraged when those in positions of power abuse that power? Why do we expect those who lead us to put our needs first rather than their own? I want to suggest that it has something to do with the child whose birth we celebrate at Christmas. For it gives us a different story from the instinctive cynicism that many of us feel – leaders are there to serve those they lead.

Nowhere is this clearer than in one of the names that is given to Jesus in Chapter 1 of Matthew's Gospel

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

South Warwickshire Seven Churches
Giggle Tots
Long Compton Village Hall
Free on Thursday mornings
Term time only 10.00-11.30
Come and join us for fun,
friendship and playtime.
For all care givers with
children 0-4.
More information from
Kim Petty 07949949215



Serving our Communities

These may be familiar words, but when you understand them they are utterly revolutionary. In a world where power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely, here is someone who flips the script, who turns things upside down. For this child who seems so ordinary is none other than God himself – God with us.

The one who created all we see, the one who holds history in the palm of his hand – the one whose power is beyond our comprehension; he humbles himself and is born as a human baby. Not in a royal palace or a presidential mansion, but in a feeding trough to an ordinary family in a small town called Bethlehem.

With all the power of heaven at his command Jesus came not as a military conqueror, not as a domineering ruler – but as a child in humility, on a mission to serve his people. A mission that would one day see him die on a cross so that we might be forgiven.

He is the reason we cling on to this noble ideal – that service and leadership are intertwined – that leaders are meant to be humble and gentle not domineering and harsh. He is why when we hear of yet another leadership scandal, our hearts groan and we are outraged. We know it is not meant to be like this – because he has shown us a better way – a more beautiful way.

It is the central claim of the Christian faith that this child and the man he grew up to be is still alive today. A king who serves by dying, a king who calls each one of us to come under his just and gentle rule. A king who will never abuse his power, who will never put his own needs above ours, who is humble and gentle and offers us rest for our souls.

May you know the servant king this Christmastime.

Reverend Ben Dyson

Posada



The word posada comes from a Mexican word meaning ‘stay over for the night’. Would you like the Nativity story to come and shelter with you for one night?

You choose a date in December when you are free with your family to enjoy opening a gift box together, it contains locally hand-crafted nativity dolls to help you recreate the nativity

scene, then you can read the Christmas Promisestory book and open a door of the Christmas promise calendar together. The next day you wrap it all carefully back up and pass it on to the next family on the list

Please contact Kim Petty 07949949225/kimpetty@btinternet.com



CONNECT

Would you like to meet with other families in your community for an afternoon of friendship, fun, games and crafts and an opportunity to meet some of your local church family in a relaxed setting,

Come to Long Compton Village Hall
Every Second Sunday of the month 3-4pm

Refreshments provided

**Connect is being organised by the
South Warwickshire 7 group of churches.**

**For more details, please contact
Kim Petty, kimpetty@btinternet.com 07949949215**

Celebration of Light Party



On Sunday 2nd November we celebrated Jesus 'As the Light of the World'. Along with having lots of fun and crafts, we learnt a little more of how Jesus- 'God's very own son' came not to be served, but to serve, and how we should follow His example and carry His light of love and service into our communities.

Kim Petty (Family Outreach Worker)

SOUTH WARWICKSHIRE CHURCHES – SW 7 - Seven Parishes ~ One Church

December 2025 CHURCH SERVICES							
SW 7 Sunday Worship	St Martin Barcheston	St Lawrence Barton	St Barnabas & St Nicholas Burmington	St John the Baptist Cherington	St Peter & St Paul Long Compton	St Michael Whitchford	St Michael & All Angels Wolford
7th December 2 nd of Advent					4:00pm GAP Informal Service (BD)	9:00am BCP Holy Communion (BD)	10:30am CW Holy Communion (BD) Village Hall Service
14 th December 3 rd of Advent	10:30am Carol service (BD)			5pm Carol Service (BD)	3pm Connect in the Village Hall (KP/BD)		
21 st December 4 th of Advent		3:30pm Carol Service (BD)	2:00pm Carol Service (AW)		5:00pm Carol Service (BD)		6:30pm Carol Service (BD)
24 th December Christmas Eve	11:30pm BCP Midnight Communion (BD)			4:00pm Nativity Service (BD)		6:00pm 9 Lesson and Carols (BD)	
25 th December Christmas Day			8:30am BCP Christmas Holy Communion (BD)	9:45am CW Christmas Holy Communion (BD)	11:00am All Age Christmas Holy Communion (BD)		
28 th December 1 st of Christmas		10:30am CW Holy Communion (TBC)					

South Warwickshire Benefice

Reverend Ben Dyson Tel: 01608 628229 email: vicarsw7@gmail.com (off duty Friday)
 Benefice Administrator: Liz Clarke Tel: 07422586885 email: officesw7@gmail.com
www.southwarwickshirechurches.co.uk facebook.com/sw7churches

BD = Ben Dyson/LM = Liz Maycock/AW = Anthony Welsh/HP = Heather Peckur/AD = Andrew Dow/RS = Richard Smith/RS+Richard Stevens/ACED = Archdeacon Barry Dugmore
 BCP = Prayer Book/CW = Common Worship/GAP = Informal Service

It's the third of November and the weather has been very kind to us. I had a look round all the crops bathed in sunshine on Sunday afternoon.

I'm pleased to say the beans I drilled are all up and looking well. As far as I can see, all the tramlines are in the right order. All the wheat is in full drill and looking OK. It's all grown away from any slug damage, etc. It's so much different from the previous two years. They were days of endless rain and wet, and crops drilled in difficult ground conditions, or not; in some cases, not drilled at all. The mustard Dan planted with our own harvested seed is really green and now close to knee-high. I guess there was some unused nitrogen left from the previous crop of barley that the crop didn't use, due to the long summer drought.



It's now common practice to use green 'cover crops', often of mustard. The theory is they use up any nitrogen left from the previous crop, store it till they are destroyed and when they decay, release the nitrogen back into the soil for the next crop to use.

The clover crops we use until the scheme finishes fix nitrogen left from the air and store it in a form of nodules on their roots. In the case of crimson, or red clover, have very deep roots that bring plant food in the form of 'P' (Phosphorus) and 'K' (Potassium), that is released when the crop is destroyed with Glyphosate, or in our case, ploughed in. The

nutrients then become available for the next crop.

I hear rumours of new schemes coming out in the future. I really hope this is the case; I think it is good for farming and wildlife in general.

Last week, it was school half term and we had our grandchildren Ben and Ray to look after while Caroline was at work at the pottery in Whichford. We went to Wyatts for coffee and cake, etc. While there, Anthony Wyatt, who farms organically, was making a super job of ploughing up a grass ley beside the top road. He buried all the turf in the furrow, with none showing. He drilled it in a perfect seed bed. It shows what was once a true skill and part of normal farming

life. Today, Dan went off to start ploughing 30-odd acres of barley stubble down at the mill. It is easier with modern ploughs to bury all the stubble and weeds left from the previous crop, that have appeared since harvest.



We do all sorts here, some Min Till, some direct drilling, and anything that's going to be sown in the spring, we plough. It worked to our advantage last year and I see no reason to change. One big advantage is that the furrows weather over the winter and freeze giving a lovely frost mould. Also, the furrows are exposed to the drying winds in spring and lets us work the ground often earlier. It showed last year; lots of local farmers had to wait till later in the spring for the soil to dry enough to work and it was often still wet underneath. The result was when the drought set in, it set like concrete and some pretty dire crops followed.

I think a good crop must store more carbon than a bad one; and I still believe if it isn't broken, don't mend it.

Once, the future never worried me, but the outlook for farming at the moment does give me cause for concern. Not so much for me, but for those taking over. The only good thing you can say is that everything has gone in well and looks well. It's got the best start it could ever have.

Our editors are taking their usual December break but will be back in the garden in January!



Long Compton Garden Club

At our first meeting of the new season Avril Hughes gave us an informative and inspiring talk about *Salvias*. She began by demonstrating their geographic range; she explained that there are about 900 species of *Salvia* and several thousand cultivars. Because of their wide distribution they have amazing diversity, many are small shrubs, but others are herbaceous perennials and in this country some are grown as annuals or tender perennials. Their hardiness in Britain is variable so it is important to understand their requirements. Many of the forms that we grow here are from North America, Mexico, South America and the Mediterranean. If we know which part of the world our plant comes from we can have a better idea of how to grow them successfully in our own gardens, they are mostly drought tolerant, although some like the beautiful and floriferous *Salvia uliginosa*, with its lovely pale blue flowers, prefers wetter conditions. Part of what make *Salvias* great garden plants is that they repeat flower from spring until the first frosts, providing wonderful colour over a very long period. Bees, moths and other



insects are attracted to them to collect their endless supply of pollen adding to the diversity within our gardens. She showed us a range of plants that she grows in her own garden in Islip. Avril clearly demonstrated the very broad flower colour range available, and showed us some plants that will only grow to 20cm tall while others can reach over 2 metres tall depending on species, proving that there is probably at least one *Salvia* we can all grow in our own gardens. Avril highlighted *Salvia dombeyi* (left) a very exotic looking plant with pendent long red flowers. It is native to Bolivia and is pollinated by humming birds, obviously there aren't too many of those in Long

Compton and so the bees have learned to pierce a hole in the back of the flower to reach the nectar that way. We were told that the beautiful and unusual *Salvia discolor* is native to Peru. It has lovely silver foliage and deep indigo flowers that almost look black from a distance, it is liked by the native Indians and is said to be hallucinogenic.

A very alluring plant for anyone who has fallen in love with *Salvia*.

Avril then ended her talk with a demonstration of how to propagate many of the plants that she grows at home using simple techniques that most of could achieve in our own homes and gardens.

Walter Sawyer

NATURE NOTES

Editor: David Sewell

December already – doesn't a year fly by! Increased rainfall has created the most exciting change of the autumn – once again being able to see which direction the river Stour actually flows. The water level has been so low for so long that it really was impossible to tell in places.

Dwelling on this for a moment it reminds me of the staggering fact that the mightiest river on earth, the Amazon, once flowed in the opposite direction - from east to west - and discharging into the Pacific rather than the Atlantic. This happened a few million years ago and was brought about by some nifty Andean tectonic plate shifting. Basically, a few new mountains formed in the rivers path creating the 'Purus Arch' and dammed it. For a while the water actually ran in both directions until finally, after a few more million years of geological shenanigans, the vast Amazon basin filled up and the river settled on flowing from east to west.

I digress, my days of paddling dugout canoes up the Amazon are over...at least for now. In the meantime, as usual, I've been plodding the fields and woodlands locally and watching the winter wildlife starting to come to life. My main interest has actually surprised me – deer. Up until now I haven't taken much notice of them but after a chance encounter with a herd of 35 plus fallow deer on the northern ridge of our valley a few weeks ago I was inspired to take a trip back to my childhood stomping grounds of Bradgate Park in Leicestershire, to witness the rutting season.

If you haven't been to Bradgate Park, then you really should pop it onto your list of things to do. Bradgate Park was home to the Grey family, whose most infamous member was the hapless 17-year-old Lady Jane who was Queen for 9

days before Mary Tudor had her head separated from body. The beautiful park extends over 850 acres of rolling bracken-infested ancient parkland studded with gnarled old beam oaks of seemingly impossible girth. Some of these trees are well over 500 years old which means they will have already been well established year old when poor Jane was strolling the grounds; and she was born in 1537.

History apart (although it's impossible not to ponder on the past in this incredible place) my focus was on looking for the large fallow and red deer population that roam the grounds. The river Lin wends its way through the park, carving it up so that about a quarter of the land is out of bounds to the public. It's here that the deer can retreat to if they're fed up with humans, but at this time of year they are far more interested in procreation!



Rutting red deer are quite magnificent. The huge testosterone-charged stags go to extraordinary lengths to make sure they are the ones to impregnate their harem of hinds. This includes developing thick shaggy necks to amplify their roaring, growing a deadly pair of antlers that they often enhance by hanging bracken and other vegetation from, and rolling around in muddy, urine soaked 'wallows' to enhance their already irresistible credentials. And occasionally the huge stags fight, clashing antlers trying to push each other backwards in a show of strength. On a good day it's an amazing sight!

Deer aside, Bradgate is worth a look at any time of the year, so try it and let me know what you think!

Anyway, that wraps up 2026. Can I just say a huge thankyou to everyone who has very kindly said they've enjoyed reading the nature notes over the year, and finally to wish all Link readers a happy and peaceful Christmas.

David Sewell

After the driest of summers, and before thoughts turn to the vexed question of how to find a non-muddy (or not too muddy) walk, I thought I might encourage



others to try some of our favourite walks. We have now enjoyed more than 4 years of monthly outings with the group and many more on our own. As we begin to repeat, a number clearly bear repetition.

I shall list but three; all are within a 20-minute drive, all are under 8 km (5 miles) in length and none are especially arduous or difficult to follow. All have the added advantage of a garden or stately home en route allowing (if the weather holds) a 2-3 hour walk to become a full day.

Blockley to Batsford circular – Park near the village shop (which features an excellent café), admire the church (which features in the *Father Brown* TV series) and head off towards Batsford Park (formerly the Mitfords' family home) with the adjacent deer park (and arboretum). The walk is just over 7 km long using mainly field paths and tracks. There are a number of pubs in Blockley.

<https://www.ratedtrips.com/walking/blockley-and-batsford-arboretum>

Snowhill circular – Again just under 7 km, starting from the village car park and featuring the most stunning views of the surrounding countryside, as well as the National Trust owned Snowhill Manor and Broadway tower in the distance. The Snowhill Arms has proved a good luncheon stop.

<https://www.walkingbritain.co.uk/walk-2094>

Adelstrop to Chastleton circular – The village hall car park is the starting point for this 6 km walk (which the group repeated last month). Adelstrop is yet another pretty village and Chastleton House another National Trust property (closed over winter months). The walk is perhaps best saved for the Spring when the middle section is ablaze with wildflowers. There is no nearby pub but the King's Head at Bledington has proved very popular.

<https://www.walkingbritain.co.uk/walk-2186>

My list could have been much longer and in the next Notes I shall try to compile a list for winter walking, but I'd be delighted to receive suggestions from readers and /or to welcome new faces on our monthly get together

Stuart Brown scbqc1@gmail.com

SCHOOL NOTES

Acorns Primary School

Welcome to our latest update on all the brilliant things happening at Acorns Primary! We've had a packed few weeks filled with sporting triumphs, incredible generosity, and important learning.

Tournament Triumph: Y3/4 Football Stars!

What a success story! Our fantastic Year 3 and 4 football team absolutely smashed the recent Cluster Football Tournament—and we are thrilled to announce they were the overall winners! The children showed incredible teamwork, determination, and brilliant sportsmanship throughout the entire event. They truly represented our school with pride. A huge round of applause must go to the team for their fabulous efforts! We also want to give a massive thank you to Mrs Jones for accompanying the team and providing fantastic support and coaching on the day. And of course, a huge thank you to all the parents and carers who cheered them on—your support makes a huge difference!

The sporting excitement continued most recently on November 13th when a dedicated group of our pupils travelled to Kineton Primary to take part in a cross-country run. We had an amazing turnout, with lots of children from Years 3 to 6 volunteering to participate. They all ran excellently and put in so much effort on the course. We are especially proud to celebrate that one of our Year 5 pupils won the girls' Y5 race! Congratulations to all the children who took part; your enthusiasm and effort were outstanding!

Giving Back to Our Community

Our school community has been incredibly generous this month, supporting two very worthy causes. Our diligent Year 6 pupil leaders took on the vital responsibility of selling poppy merchandise for The Royal British Legion. It was wonderful to see the respect and dedication our children showed for this important cause. Also, the School Council chose to mark the 25th anniversary of Children in Need with a non-uniform day! The whole school enjoyed swapping their uniforms for their favourite comfy clothes while raising money for the charity. We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all our families for your generous donations to both The Royal British Legion and Children in Need. Your support makes a real difference!

Speaking Out: Anti-Bullying Week

The week of November 10th was Anti-Bullying Week, and we followed the inspiring national theme of "Power for Good." We kicked off the week with a whole-school assembly that explored what bullying is (and what it isn't) and clarified who the children can talk to if they ever need support. The core message was encouraging children to use their "voice"—speaking out to trusted adults when they see or experience unkindness. Throughout the week, classes delved deeper into the topic, using scenarios and activities to explore strategies for being kind, being an upstander, and truly living our school values. The children thoroughly enjoyed celebrating what makes them unique by participating in the fun "odd socks" initiative—a brilliant visual reminder that we celebrate being different!

A Huge Thanks to Our Wonderful PTA!



Before the half-term break, our incredible PTA created an absolutely stunning pumpkin display! They provided every child with a pumpkin to carve and decorate at home, and the resulting display along the main road through Long Compton was truly fabulous. We received so many positive comments from villagers and even some kind donations towards PTA funds—thank you! Not stopping there, the PTA, in conjunction with the Long Compton Sports Club, put on a spectacular bonfire and fireworks display! Over 500 people from the village and surrounding areas attended, and the feedback has been extremely positive. Thank you, PTA, for your amazing dedication and commitment to both school and village life. We are lucky to have you!

Looking Ahead: Reception Applications and Christmas Cheer!

We've had a very successful series of Opening Mornings throughout November for prospective parents of children starting Reception in September 2026. If you know anyone who missed them, please remind them that applications can be made through the three local County Councils, with the deadline being the end of January 2026.

Now, we are starting to get very excited for Christmas! The sound of children busy learning songs and parts for our upcoming plays and carol services is filling the corridors. Watch this space for more details on our festive events soon!

Stay Connected

Remember we have a new website: www.acornsprimary.co.uk and also Instagram: [@acornsprimaryschool](https://www.instagram.com/acornsprimaryschool) where you can keep up to date with Acorn's life.

Hannah Young

Brailes School - Grow Together and Shine Bright!

Learning has been brought to life this term for Owls Class Year 3/4 at Brailes School during the 'Through the Ages' topic. During a virtual visit with The British Museum, the class explored artefacts in the museum's prehistory collection and learnt how archaeologists identify objects from different time periods. They also examined how prehistoric people lived and what materials they used by exploring digital reconstructions and replica objects. During the Stone Age Art



Workshop led by Cotswold Art Through Schools (CATS) two artists from CATS taught them how to use charcoal to sketch animals. Then they experimented with making paint from natural materials such as berries, grass, fruits and slate. It was magnificently messy and wonderfully creative.

Art and History learning continued outside with Stone Age inspired Forest School sessions with children gathering resources, building shelters,

crafting and using tools, using natural resources to make paint for drawing and painting, carving jewellery, and using flint and steel to spark a fire. Impressive resourcefulness, collaboration and curiosity was shown from the class. Owls class visit to the Rollright Stones was a wet, windy, wonderful magical experience where the class explored myths and legends about the Rollright Stones in outdoor drama set against the stunning rolling landscape.

Across the school, the light from members of our school and wider community continues to shine brightly: from the pupil lead Eco Council, the service and compassion of Y5/6 children nurturing younger children in the hall at lunchtime, collaboration and partnerships with school and families and the support of our local community. We are particularly thankful for the generosity of Steve Bryan for his time and expertise with the refurbishment of the staff school bathroom, for FOBS for their continued support fundraising for the school and the Brailes Free School Foundation who are fully funding the Year 5/6 visit to Coventry Cathedral.



This term, the school has been proud to be recognised as a Sports Gold Award school for our commitment to curriculum sport and enrichment opportunities during 2024-25. Our Y3/4 football team started off the cluster tournaments for this school year, showing great determination, courage and commitment in the first cluster sports events, we celebrate Brailes' fabulous cross country runner's success at a recent race against other

local schools at Kineton, are looking forward to an end of term Santa run and lots of school and competitive sports events later in the school year.

We are delighted to be re-establishing the primary partnership work with Shipston High who will be hosting some of the primary cluster sporting events this year along with wider curriculum enrichment collaborative learning

opportunities. This term we were pleased to welcome Mrs Allsworth and pupil leaders from Shipston High School to Brailes who lead a super debating and oracy workshop with Brailes Year 5/6. It was a valuable learning and enrichment opportunity for the pupils at both schools.

Applying for a Nursery and Reception at Brailes

The application process for Reception 2026 places opened on 1st November 2025 and the closing date is 15th January 2026. Our admission criteria are on the school website and we are able to take children from neighbouring counties such as Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire, in addition to Warwickshire. Places in Brailes School Nursery are made through an application form directly to the school office. Applications for places for Reception and all other year groups need to be made through Warwickshire Admissions. Please do contact the school to arrange a visit. We would love to meet with you and welcome you to our wonderful school 'Let your Light Shine.'

T: 01608 685253 E: admin3014@we-learn.com www.brailescofeprimary.org.uk

Heather Childs



The LINK is your local monthly Community Magazine.

It has a circulation of 700 across the South Warwickshire Seven Benefice covering the villages of Barcheston, Barton, Burmington, Cherington, Long Compton, Whichford and The Wolfords.

We're always pleased to welcome new subscribers. At just £12.00 for a calendar year subscription, this represents excellent value and is a great way to stay connected with the news of events and stories in your local community.

We're keen to expand our circulation, so sign up and we'll add you to our readership and deliver to your door each month. Just contact our Subscriptions Manager David Cleave subs@outlook.com

VILLAGE NEWS

Barcheston with Willington

ST. MARTIN'S BARCHESTON

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

CAROL SERVICE

Sunday 14th - 10:30am

You are warmly invited to an evening of traditional carols and Christmas music, beautifully performed by our village choir. Everyone is welcome to attend!

HOLY COMMUNION BY CANDLELIGHT

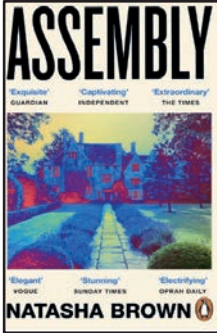
Christmas Eve, Wednesday 24th - 11:30pm

Join us for a special candlelit service in our beautiful church as we welcome Christmas together.

This will be the only midnight communion in the benefice, so brave the cold and darkness to share in this moving and atmospheric celebration.



Book Club



We enjoyed meeting to talk about *Assembly* by Natasha Brown.

This award-winning and innovative short first novel has as its protagonist a successful young black banker, who has painstakingly climbed the corporate ladder and now has her own property in London, together with ample savings. She also has a white public-school educated boyfriend. However, she still feels excluded.

The author excels at noticing the subtle nuances of prejudice in the English people she meets at this level and a medical diagnosis finally convinces her to let go of all she has achieved.

Most in the group found the book well-written, but it aroused mixed feelings as to whether the main character was representative of a type or massively spoilt and whining. All in all, a lot to discuss in a book with only 100 pages.

Meanwhile, happy reading!

Gillian Cathie

St Lawrence Church

Christmas is just round the corner and already St Lawrence, Barton on the Heath, is looking forward to the church being filled with Christmas cheer and the singing of Carols with gusto!

Last year there were some talented younger voices who joined in with descants, so this year we are hoping to encourage this young talent to come once again.

In 2025 the Parochial Church Council has been strengthened with a new Treasurer and Secretary. Once again, the Barton Fete Committee most generously supported the Church financially and there are now a healthy number of villagers on the church electoral roll. We are also most grateful to The LINK for their generous donation of £500 to each of the parish churches in SW7 including St Lawrence.

In 2026 there are plans afoot to bring more life into the church with various activities, so watch this space for more news! **Kay Sonneborn and Penny Mead**



St Lawrence Church, Barton-on-the-Heath

Christmas

CAROL SERVICE

.....

Sunday 21st December
3:30pm

.....

EVERYONE WARMLY WELCOME,
YOUNG AND OLD.
DO STAY AFTERWARDS FOR LIGHT BITES
AND A CELEBRATORY DRINK!





Christmas Meditation and Reflection Evening



Thursday 18 December from 8:00 – 9:00pm (coffee from 7.30pm)

In the Barn, at The House of Bread. No booking required

An invitation to a special evening that we host every year at The House of Bread. Join us for a time of reflection and stillness in the midst of the busy Christmas season. The barn will be candle lit, and you are invited to simply sit awhile, as we listen to music, scriptures and reflections.

The House of Bread The Mill. Burmington, Shipston-on-Stour, CV36 5AF

Remembrance Day Service for Willington, Barcheston and Burmington



At a Remembrance Day service for Willington, Barcheston and Burmington held at Burmington church, Dennis Cummings (pictured right) read the names of the war dead from the three villages.

The service was led by Richard Stevens (also pictured), and a thought-provoking sermon was given by Liz Maycock.



St Barnabas & St Nicholas Church

Burmington



Family Nativity Carol Service

Carols by Candlelight

Sunday-21st December

3:00 pm

Followed by refreshments: mulled wine and mince pies

VILLAGE NEWS

Cherington with Stourton

Editor: Christine Dudfield



Christmas Coffee Shop

Saturday 13th December

10:30am-12 noon

The Hall, Stourton CV36 5HG

Mince pies, sausage rolls , coffee, tea, and hot chocolate

Eat in or takeaway

There will be a raffle in aid of Playing Field Funds and also a mini – market for those last-minute Christmas gifts.

We are always looking for people to help out if you want to get involved, please contact me on 07866 127409.

Christine Dudfield

Village Lottery November Draw

1st Annie Newman 2nd Susie Dockar- Drysdale 3rd Helen Beaumont

Congratulations to our winners and thank you for your continued support. For more information on joining, please contact me on 07984 003675 or aap.kingston@gmail.com

Averell Kingston

Christmas Greetings in support of St John the Baptist Church

We are in the process of collecting donations and would be grateful if we could have all contributions by the end of this month. You can do so by contacting Pam on 07989644614, Sherry on 686420 or Sarah on 686303. Thank you to all who have already donated.

On behalf of the PCC.

Pam Brookes and Sherry Barker

Remembrance Day Service

Following a well-attended service at St John the Baptist Church, Cherington, a generous collection of £291.90 has now been forwarded to The British Legion. Many thanks, Liz



Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership – Feel Good Friday Social Afternoons

The last Social Afternoon of the year is Friday 12th December 2:00pm to 4:00pm at The Hall, when we'll be hosting a small Christmas party.

Thank you for all those who have attended the 2025 Social Afternoons and Bingos, have a lovely festive time.

Dates for your 2026 diary are Fridays 9th and 23rd January.

Do you love repairing things, helping others or just being part of a friendly community? If so, Shipston on Stour Repair Café is looking for volunteers, please see the advert for all details.

Vanessa Compton 01608 663320

The poster is for the Shipston Repair Café and features a central red cloud shape containing the text 'SHIPSTON REPAIR CAFÉ! VOLUNTEERS WANTED'. To the right, a yellow starburst contains the text: 'Whether you're handy with a needle, a screwdriver, or just have a passion for sustainability, there's a place for you at the Repair Café!'. Below this, a circular image shows various tools like wrenches and screwdrivers on a yellow background. On the left, a yellow circle lists the types of volunteers needed: 'Tinkerers & Fixers: electronics, bikes, furniture', 'Sewers & Stitchers: clothing, textiles', 'Greeters & Organizers: welcoming guests, managing flow', and 'Tea & Biscuit Champions: because every repair needs a cuppa!'. At the bottom left, a red starburst icon is present. At the bottom center, a white box with a red border contains the contact information: 'For more details, contact rowena@shwp.org.uk'. At the bottom right, a red rounded rectangle contains the text 'What do you need to know?' followed by two bullet points: 'The café will be based at Ellen Badger Hospital, CV36 4AX' and 'You'll be needed every 2nd Saturday of the month between 10am and 2pm.' Logos for NHS South Warwickshire University NHS Foundation Trust and SHWP are in the top right corner.

SHIPSTON REPAIR CAFÉ! VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Whether you're handy with a needle, a screwdriver, or just have a passion for sustainability, there's a place for you at the Repair Café!

We need:

- **Tinkerers & Fixers:** electronics, bikes, furniture
- **Sewers & Stitchers:** clothing, textiles
- **Greeters & Organizers:** welcoming guests, managing flow
- **Tea & Biscuit Champions:** because every repair needs a cuppa!

For more details, contact rowena@shwp.org.uk

What do you need to know?

- The café will be based at Ellen Badger Hospital, CV36 4AX
- You'll be needed every 2nd Saturday of the month between 10am and 2pm.

Cherington Nativity 24 December at 4:00pm

Please come and enjoy this most special of services

I have not, as yet, put our cast together, but I hope to do that in the next couple of weeks. If you haven't had a call from me, and have children who would like to join in, please let me know.

All the children of our villages are invited to come and join in, as well as any children staying with family or friends for Christmas.

I have a good array of nativity costumes for anyone without one. The service, which will be led by Ben, begins at 4:00pm.

For parents of those children wishing to take part, would you please come to the church a bit earlier, so we can gather in time to start.

Sarah Scotter 07984 892431.

The Last Farmers Market of 2025

Join us on Thursday 4 December, 6:00pm-8:00pm at the Hall.

Fresh veg, cheese, preserves, meat, eggs, pies and sausage rolls, teas, chocolate plus ceramics, Neals Yard, cards and gifts and Christmas wreaths. The splendid Catchy Fish will be serving their fish and chip suppers and the bar will be open. It is a great community social get together and the best local shopping opportunity.

The markets which run from April to December are completing their 8th successful year! Thank you so much to our lovely stallholders and customers supporting local produce and people. Huge thanks are also due to the team who manage the admin, the media, put out signage, stock the bar, operate the bar, set up and help clear up at the end!

2026 will need a change in order for the market to continue - either in its current or a new format. New folk are needed particularly to help on the day of the market with tasks such as setting up, running the bar and clearing away at the end. Similarly needed are volunteers to put out and retrieve signs around the locality. Anyone who can help in a small way or who would like a chance to run or recreate this valuable and beneficial project is welcome to drop an email to info@thehallevents.org.uk or to anniethepatch@yahoo.co.uk.



Alan Holmes MBE

27th February 1940 - 3rd October 2025

Obituary

Dad was born in Bryn Teg near Wrexham on 27 February 1940 and was always proud of his Welsh heritage. His father was a miner in the local pit, as was his father before him, but at age 17 Dad decided to try his luck in London, where he took and passed the Civil Service exam. He and Mum met while at work in Whitehall and the rest as they say is history.

He took Mum when they were both very young to Kabul, Afghanistan; he started his career at one end of the Kyber Pass and ended it 35 years later at the other end in New Delhi, India. In between they lived and worked in Paris - Moscow - Geneva - Beirut -

Tripoli - Jeddah - Tunis and Durban. They made many lifelong friends along the way, too numerous to mention and some of them are here today.

Dad enjoyed his life travelling and living overseas and there were many good times, receiving his MBE from the Queen at Buckingham Palace and meeting the Queen again in New Delhi. Attending the wedding of the Zulu King in South Africa with row upon row of Zulu warriors brandishing their spears; laying a wreath to the fallen soldiers of the battle of Isandlawana at Rorkes Drift; getting up at dawn to see the sunrise on Everest; visiting the Taj Mahal as dawn broke and seeing it bathed in pink; cross country skiing in Switzerland in complete silence surrounded by snow covered trees; driving across Rajasthan looking for antiques; riding on camels and elephants, to name but a few. What amazing memories.

There were scary moments too. Once, Mum and Dad packed up the car in the UK and very adventurously drove out to their posting in Tripoli, Libya which was not without its hairy moments along the way, including locals trying to break into the car while they were actually sitting in it! Much shouting ensued while Mum and Dad made their getaway.

Others include catching intruders in their apartment in Moscow, being followed everywhere and spied upon; arriving in Beirut harbour and being offloaded while the port was being bombed; sleeping in corridors in order to dodge stray bullets and having automatic rifles put through the windows of their car one night. Dad had at this point learned enough Arabic to joke with the gunmen and almost certainly saved their lives. In Durban he was often found in the townships

sorting out aid, always under armed guard and often not able to make the return journey until it was confirmed safe to do so.

Dad's sense of humour was evident when expelled from Moscow and on arrival at Heathrow he was met by Patti and told not to speak to all the waiting journalists. When fed up with all the microphones being pushed in his face and asked for a comment he said, "*when the other 99 people are away, I am the deputy Ambassador*". Next day The Telegraph misquoted him saying "*Expelled Deputy Ambassador Alan Holmes arrives back at Heathrow*" - that raised a few eyebrows and caused much hilarity with his colleagues and friends on his rapid promotion. We still have the newspaper cutting today.

Mum and Dad settled in this part of the Cotswolds for the last 25 years. 10 years spent in Armscote, running a very successful award-winning B&B and the last 15 years here in Stourton where they were warmly welcomed and quickly became part of the village. Dad was the village Editor of The Link for a few years and then the distribution manager. Dad joined the allotment group and having never done anything like that before, surprised us all by growing so much food that they couldn't give it away fast enough.

He enjoyed golf and was a member at Feldon Valley for 25 years. He described his golf as "*being an endless series of tragedies obscured by the occasional flash of brilliance*". His name engraved on a number of plaques at the Clubhouse are testament to those occasional flashes.

During the last year, Mum and Dad celebrated with all the family, their 60th wedding anniversary, Dad's 85th birthday and the arrival of their great grandson Flynn, whom unfortunately he did not get to see. Dad was very proud of all his grandchildren and their many achievements.

We now go forward and whatever direction we find ourselves taking, we will each keep loving memories of Dad with us and will never forget him, his never-failing humour and ability not to take life too seriously.

Michael Holmes

I would like to thank everyone in Cherington, Stourton and the surrounding villages who supported me during the months that Alan was unwell and for the overwhelming number of people who attended his funeral. Now that Alan has passed away, it is making a very dark time a little easier to bear and I am very grateful for your continued friendship and concern.

Trish Holmes

The Hall, Cherington, Stourton & Sutton-under-Brailes

Thank you so much to everyone who has attended, or helped out with, anything at The Hall this year! The Hall is here to provide an inclusive, welcoming, high quality and social space for our parish, the wider local area and local businesses and organisations. We hope that more and more people will continue to attend events, book the Hall, organise new activities, volunteer occasionally, or even just tell acquaintances what a great Hall their village has!

There is certainly an opportunity for more fundraising events, community socials, and new village groups or clubs to make use of The Hall. We have ideas but need the people (and more ideas very welcome too!) - so do get in touch, and of course we are always delighted if anyone would like to help out with existing activities, e.g. Theatre Nights, Coffee Shop, Farmer's Market...

*A Mini-Christmas-Market will be running alongside the
monthly Coffee Shop on Saturday 13th December,
10:30am-12noon!*

*Coffee Shop will have some festive treats on offer as well as
the usual freshly ground coffee. Pop along and tick off some
Christmas shopping from the lovely gifts & crafts & decs on
the stalls!*

** If you're quick you might grab a place at a Christmas wreath-making workshops with Elaine's Bespoke Flowers, 30th Nov and 3rd, 4th (Farmer's Market evening), 5th Dec. Tel: 07790 823075**

THE HALL THEATRE NIGHTS

We have so enjoyed the 4 plays that we hosted in 2025 – hope you did too! Thank you to everyone who supported us in this new venture, and thanks to Giles and Mark, the incredible actors/producers/writers, who create the magic, grace the stage and entertain us!

The Hall Theatre Nights are continuing – tickets are now on sale for the next play:

Mettle 7:30pm on Thursday 15th January 2026

Via the Live and Local programme, we welcome Nicholas Collett – actor and writer with *Mettle*, his gripping, and very personal, play based on his father's experiences in WWII. It is a celebration of a man and his wartime service onboard HMS Vanessa. Moving and often humorous, the play spans from 1930s Sheffield through the outbreak of war, devastating U-Boat attacks and treacherous weather, to the relative calm of West Africa and even a Glenn Miller concert! Nicholas is kindly holding a Q & A Session at the end of the play. This will be a great evening.

The Hall and The Feldon Valley Military and Naval History Society are running this Theatre Night jointly. FVM&NHS Members reduced rate £10/ticket (limited). Standard price £15/ticket.

Doors open 6:30pm for The Hall Bar and refreshments.

Performance starts 7:30pm. Interval of c. 25 mins. Approx finish 9:15-9:30pm.

Tickets from Erry at info@thehallevents.org.uk / 07775 765572 (also available at the Farmer's Market and at the Coffee Shop), or Peter Stoddart for FVM&NHS Members and online: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/thehall-cherington-stourton-sutton/t-rzlpdae>

COMING SOON IN 2026 – new Theatre Nights to put in your diaries

Victor and Albert: Purveyors of fine musical comedy
7:30pm on Sunday 15th March.

We are very lucky to have lined up a brilliant evening of variety, comedy, music and a smattering of local references if we're lucky, from identical twins Professor Victor and Doctor Albert. A 2-Man Variety Show brought kicking and screaming into the 21st Century!

A perfect treat for your Mum on Mother's Day – maybe a lunch at The Cherington or The Distillery, followed by an evening at your most local theatre!

Further ahead, on **Sunday 10th May** we have a spellbinding treat for younger members of our community when **Wood Owl and the Box of Wonders** flies into The Hall at 2:00pm!

What happens when a little wooden owl dreams of soaring into the night sky? Join Hoglets Theatre for a magical tale that will lift your heart and spark your imagination – an adventure for the whole family, blending beautiful handmade puppets, original songs and a story that speaks to every generation.

Contact Erry at The Hall for all info & tickets: info@thehallevents.org.uk / 07775 765572



The Hall Dates for your diary:

4th December: North Cotswold Farmer's Market, 6:00-8:00pm

12th December: Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership Feelgood Friday, Christmas Tea

13th December: Hall Coffee Shop, 10:30am-12noon, mince pies and mini-market!

17th December: Feldon Valley Military & Naval History Society meeting, 7:30pm

10th January: Hall Coffee Shop, 10:30am-12noon

15th January: The Hall Theatre – *Mettle*, 7:30pm – tickets from Erry at The Hall, online, or via The Feldon Valley Military and Naval History Society

***Feldon Valley Military and
Naval
History Society***

the next meeting will be at
The Hall, Pinfold Lane Stourton,
CV36 5HG

on Wednesday, **17th December 2025**
at **8.00 pm** for a talk by Sarah Gray:

Jane Austen and the Napoleonic Wars

**Austen – an astute political war writer
or just a romantic?**

*contact: Peter Stoddart
at: petercstoddart@gmail.com*

As the year draws to a close, we just wanted to say a huge thank you to everyone who has come to our events in 2025. Without you we would not have had the fun, laughter and success that we have enjoyed this year.

We are getting ready for the Christmas tea party now and our band of volunteers are busy making cakes, buying ingredients for mulled wine and decorations for the hall ready to welcome you on 6th December. We have a wonderful spread of food lined up thanks to the efforts of Pat Miller and her helpers, and some great entertainment planned.

Watch this space! Tickets are selling out fast so please reserve your place by contacting Karen at lcvillagehall@yahoo.co.uk or see the adverts for details. Remember that our Christmas tea party replaces the usual Social Saturday.

Plans are already in place for an exciting New Year at the Village Hall and the Hall will be 70 years old next year. Of course, we need to celebrate and will be having a special event as well as all your favourites such as Quiz Night, Race Night and Social Saturday. All that remains is for us to wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year!

Long Compton Village Hall Committee



Join us for festivities at our **Christmas Tea Party**

3pm - 5.30pm, Saturday 6th December
Long Compton Village Hall

*Sandwiches, cake, scones and mulled wine
Carols and entertainment*

Christmas raffle

*Tickets £12—Hurry as places are limited
To book email lcvillagehall@yahoo.co.uk*



Compton District History Society

Sean Callery gave an interesting talk on Wednesday 12 November which was mainly based on memorials in churches and churchyards in the Cotswolds. He related a number of good stories which were always backed up by fine illustrations. There was some audience participation during his talk which he welcomed. His advice was always to have a look in the local church. There will probably be something unusual in it.

There was one sad piece of news announced. A long-standing member, Mark Taylor, whose family had lived in Long Compton, had died recently.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 10 December, when Tim Healey and the Oxford Waits will be present. This will be a reconstruction of the Waits bands of Elizabethan and Stuart England which performed in their towns. Tim and his partners will play the instruments and melodies of the time and sing some of typical songs, dressed as they would have been in the past.

There are special arrangements for this meeting. Members of the society will make their normal payment, but visitors will be charged £5.00 each. Everyone intending to attend should telephone 01608 684771 before 3 December to reserve a seat.

After this meeting there will be a break until 11 March 2026 when there will be a talk about the Mitford Sisters given by Gillian Cane. Shaun Todd had informed the society that he would no longer be giving talks. A change in the programme was needed.

Christopher Fance

100 Club

The November Draw was done at the Village Hall Social Saturday on 8 November, and the winners were:

1st Madelaine and Russell Taylor

2nd Lucy Gofton

3rd Mr and Mrs Harris

4th N Gardner

The next Draw will be held at the Christmas Party in the Village Hall on Saturday 6 December. This will be a Double Draw to make 12 for the year.

Chris Galloway 684234



Long Compton Congregational Chapel

Works have continued at the Chapel and we look forward to sharing our new bright yellow floor in Arden Room once completed – hopefully a flood resistant surface. New flood boards are in place and as I write possibly about to be tested by Storm Claudia.

Early December is busy for the Chapel with Willow Weaving Workshop on the 8th and our Christmas Bazaar on the 14th when we have a good range of stalls booked in – candles, jewellery, flowers, crafts, sweets, etc. If your shopping is already done, then just pop in for a warming beverage and festive eats.

As whist would be on the 27th of December, we have assumed low attendance and the next scheduled evening is Saturday 24th January 2026. However, we may do a pop-up daytime session if there is enough interest.

Thanks to all those who drop off aluminium drinks cans to the tubs in the carpark. They help raise funds for Katherine House Hospice. It is very helpful if these are bagged and ideally squashed.

Our monthly worship gathering should be 18th December, but we will confirm this once know date of Church Carol Service to avoid a clash. If at any time you would like to access the Chapel for private prayer or hire it for an event do get in touch. It is a community space that members wish to be well used.

Sally Franklin (07870545431) and Elizabeth Gilkes (07791 621778)



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Christmas



Bazaar

Sunday

14 DECEMBER

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10am—4pm

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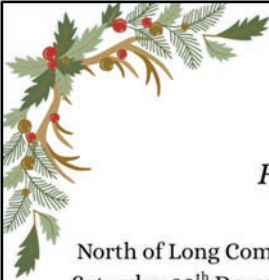


Christmas Carol Service

Sunday 21st December at 5:00pm

led by Rev Ben Dyson

Festive lessons and carols
Mulled wine and mince pies
All welcome



Carol Singing



From 18:00 - 20:00 each evening

North of Long Compton
Saturday 20th December

Central Long Compton
Sunday 21st December

South of Long Compton
Monday 22nd December

All proceeds will be donated to:



Kate's
Home Nursing

Our village Carol Singing last year raised over
£400 for this very worthwhile local charity.
Thank you



Curious Discovery in a Linen Cupboard

Recently my daughter was sorting out my linen cupboard and threw out some worn out sheets. As I was bagging them up for the bin, I noticed that two of them had a name embroidered on the top seam: R.H. Tautz. This suggested that the sheets were very old: even eighty years ago when I was at school our kit was labelled with sewn on name tapes, so these sheets must be older than that. My curiosity was aroused.



I had a Victorian great aunt called Rosser Tautz, so I assumed that these sheets were hers, handed down over the years to finish up finally in my linen cupboard. But when I checked our family tree, I discovered that R.H. Tautz was not her but her

husband, my great uncle Reggie. I knew nothing of Uncle Reggie except that he had died in Brazil, but as Tautz is an uncommon name I thought I might find out something more about him on Google, and so I did.

Reggie Tautz, a Londoner, had joined the Artists' Rifles at the outbreak of the First World War. He served in France and Belgium, rising to the rank of Captain, and had won the Military Cross. From the Roll of Honour of the Artists' Rifles I was able to download the actual citation for his award: 2nd Lt R.H. Tautz. Near NIELTZE 19/20 May 1917. For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when in command of a raiding party. Finding a gap, previously cut, had been repaired, he cut his way through under fire and cleared 70 yards of enemy trench, displaying the greatest determination and courage.

I had never heard any mention in the family of Uncle Reggie's MC, so perhaps he never spoke of it.

For family historians the internet is a wonderful resource.

Trevor Hobday

Long Compton Community Coffee Mornings

Join us for Community Coffee

During winter months the Long Compton Church Community Coffee Mornings will be held in private homes on the first Wednesday of each month.

All are very welcome – young, cold, families, dog walkers and newcomers to the Village



The Reading Room Draw

The Reading Room draw winner for November is Miranda Swan.

Jenny Scrivener

Whichford & Ascott Christmas Gift Fair, Saturday 8 November

Vernon House Farm in Ascott was this year's venue for shoppers coming to look for unusual gifts, treats for themselves or home accessories.

Visitors were offered a wide range of products from Christmas cakes, French scented soaps and room fragrances, tableware, homemade jams, jellies and chutneys, jewellery, scented candles, cushions, baskets of hyacinth bulbs and silk flower arrangements. Lovely fashion items ranged from those made in the Cotswolds to those sourced from India and Morocco. Hiking maps, floral shirts and cricket themed items provided present ideas for men.



Paintings and original artwork on display by Annabel Playfair and George Rigby were available to purchase.

Shoppers were refreshed with coffee and a delicious homemade mince pie or a glass of champagne provided by Sheldon's Wine Cellars.

Enormous thanks to all who supported the event by coming to buy gifts, our volunteers who helped in so many ways to make the event such a success, and to those who kindly donated prizes for the very popular tombola.

The event was most generously hosted by Bertie and Annabel Hicks, and we are indebted to them for loaning us their lovely home, which made this fundraiser in support of St Michael's Church possible.

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year
The Friends of St Michael's Church Fundraising Committee

WASP October Bat Talk Report

At the end of October The WASP Collective hosted a fascinating bat talk presented by Victoria Oxley of The Warwickshire Bat Group. Victoria is an ecologist and member of a small group of volunteers and experts within Warwickshire who monitor, protect and care for these mysterious mammals.

Despite an unfortunate rumour that bats are unpleasant and undesirable creatures that get stuck in your hair, a good crowd gathered in the toasty Kiln Shed, from as far afield as Banbury and Milcombe, to hear these myths passionately dispelled. Bats, it turns out, are far from the stereotypes portrayed, and some say, including Victoria herself, that they are 'cute' and uniquely wonderful. They might not have the popular appeal of birds, bees and butterflies, but they make up for it in their unique characteristics and adorable behaviour. And as Victoria says, 'Bats are not creepy, they are lovely'. All UK bat species and their roosts are protected meaning it is illegal to disturb or destroy a roost or harm bats.

We watched a film of members from Warwickshire Bat Group inspecting and cleaning some of the 70 roosting boxes erected high up on trees in and around Whichford Wood. We also learnt that it is home to one of the UK's rarest mammals, the barbastelle, and the rare Lesser Horseshoe. Both are extremely sensitive to light pollution and disturbance and are dependent on the hedgerows and bodies of water for their diet of night-flying insects. All UK bats eat only insects. Moths and other insects pollinate the hedgerow flowers and are a constant food source from dusk till dawn for the hungry bats.



Bats are not blind as commonly assumed and use echo location to efficiently catch and consume up to 3000 insects per night and to navigate their environment. Bats are the smallest mammals in the UK giving birth to only one pup a year. After mating in the autumn, the female bats have the ability to control their own pregnancy, called delayed fertilisation, and will only produce a pup if conditions are just right. If it's a bad year for insects there may not be any baby bats. The females gather in maternity roosts where they give birth together and are devoted mothers.

Of the 18 bats resident in the British Isles, 14 have been recorded in Warwickshire: the Bechstein's bat, Brandt's bat, Brown Long-eared, also Common, Soprano and Nathusius's pipistrelles, Daubenton's bat, Noctule, Serotine, Natterer's bat, Whiskered bat and Leisler's bat. Wonderful names. They are not 'mice with wings' and unlike mice they have a lifespan of between 20 and thirty years, the oldest bat recorded being an incredible 45 years.

Victoria then explained what we can all do to help protect these precious creatures into the future. These measures include planting to attract nocturnal insects, creating wildlife ponds, reducing light pollution and avoiding the use of pesticides. You could also put up a bat box and keep cats indoors for an hour after sunset when the bats are out feeding.

If anyone is interested in joining WASP members and Victoria in the spring for a bat detecting walk around Whichford, watch this space.

If you find an injured or grounded bat, do contact the National Bat Helpline on 0345 1300 228.

Finally, our thanks to Victoria, Whichford Pottery for hosting us, and all the kind people who donated on the night. Victoria kindly passed on her fee to Warwickshire Bat Group who will use it on the purchase of some new bat boxes to replace old, damaged ones in Whichford Wood, and the balance of funds raised will enable us to put on more events and to support village wildlife projects.

The next event is a talk on butterfly conservation on Thursday 4 December at 7:00pm. The talk will be at the Kiln Shed, and everyone is welcome. Refreshments will be available. The talk is free to all, but donations will be gratefully accepted, with a suggestion of £5.

The Wasp Collective

The WASP Collective presents

BUTTERFLY



A talk with Mike Slater

Chair of Butterfly Conservation,
Warwickshire about the organisation's
work. Mike has over 40 years experience
advising farmers and individuals on
creating wildlife-friendly spaces.

THURSDAY 4th December
7pm **The Kiln Shed**
Whichford Pottery

Suggested £5 donation
including refreshments



The Wolfords Village Hall One Hundred Club

November 2025 Winners

The November winners were as follows;

1st Christopher Wolverson 2nd Jane Revere 3rd Haydn Jones

Many congratulations to the above. Please let me know if you would like to have more shares as the club is still short of 100 shares. Of course, multiple shares do increase the chance of winning! All proceeds go to help with the upkeep of the village hall.

James van Helden

Wolford stargazing 15 November



Sadly, the weather gods were not kind and it was too cloudy to do any nocturnal star gazing which was a shame as Robin Smitten of Chipping Norton

Astronomy Group had five fellow astronomers available to bring their telescopes along. Instead, he delivered a fascinating talk on what

we can hope to see in the night sky and recommended downloading the Stellarium free app for guidance on what can be seen.

Hopefully, we will have a clear night for our next stargazing evening so that those attending will be able to view stars through powerful telescopes with Robin again on hand to advise.

The evenings are held to support the Wolfords Parish Council Dark Sky Policy which can be viewed on the Parish Council website

Elizabeth Gilkes



St Michael & All Angels Carol Service

Nine Lessons & Carols by candlelight

Sunday 21st December 6:30pm

Come and join us for our carol service with traditional carols sung by candlelight.

Followed by mince pies and mulled wine

Everyone welcome.

Christmas Stall at The Chapel Long Compton

We are having a stall at the Christmas Fair being held by the Chapel in Long Compton on Sunday December 14th, 2025, which runs from 10am to 4pm. The theme for our stall is Winter Warmers and we are looking for donations that could be given as gifts which will create a cosy feel this winter. Socks, scarfs, gloves, candles, bubble bath all welcome. These can be dropped off into the back of the church please.

Thank you for your help

St Micheal and All Angels PCC

Coffee, Cake and Chat at Wolford Church



Tuesday 2 December 10.30-12.00

Come and join us for a chat over coffee (or tea)

and cake at St Michaels Church

Come and meet new friends (or old ones!)

Share your interests and just chat

Everyone welcome

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To donate please scan the QR code below.



The Wolfords Village Hall presents

CHRISTMAS MOVIE NIGHT



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Saturday, 13/12/2025
Doors open from 18:30



Wolfords Village Hall
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If required contact Village Hall Committee for help with tickets



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Opening Times: Monday to Sunday 10am to 4pm
Whichford Pottery, Whichford, Nr. Shipston-on-Stour, Warks, CV36 5PG