

# FOREST EDGE NEWS

THE PARISHES OF LEAFIELD WITH WYCHWOOD, FINSTOCK WITH FAWLER,  
RAMSDEN AND WILCOTE

March 2021

[www.forestedgebenefice.co.uk](http://www.forestedgebenefice.co.uk)

Issue 270

## *In Loving Memory*

*A look at Ramsden's burials*

It may not be Highgate or Pere Lachaise but Ramsden churchyard and cemetery also have many interesting stories to tell beyond the old and newer headstones. In total there are 860 people buried at both sites, 244 with headstones, 511 in unlocated graves, 71 in the cemetery and there are 19 servicemen of both wars buried overseas.

Clare Hutt, Ramsden's passionate taphophile\* is currently compiling a comprehensive and very detailed list of all the inhabitants buried in Ramsden, developing the only previous records of gravestone inscriptions compiled by the W.I. For the last four years, she has researched census details - birth, marriage and death records and investigated over 30 different sources of information to produce a fascinating and invaluable document for posterity. Her sources have ranged from Shipton under Wychwood church record since 1542, probate records, old newspapers in Oxfordshire from 1750 to 1999, church records for the school to old village newsletters, 'Pleas of the Forest', land surveys and Kelly's directories. It must be one of the most exhaustive investigations into any churchyard in the country with so much detail about deceased villagers.

Though she admits she might not have taken it on had she known how long it would take, she is delighted with the result and many of the interesting stories she has uncovered or been told by residents of Ramsden, Finstock and Leafield. All the local family names are there...the Holifields, Dores, Willoughbys and Millins. The records include many people who were born in the eighteenth century and chronicle a sad legion of children who died as babies or in their first decade.

But among the tragedies there are some comedies. One resident of Ramsden had her burial service at the church. The mourners were all gathered and the cortege arrived but there was a problem. The undertaker had to go back to Witney with the empty coffin to collect the body. Apparently the congregation waited patiently exchanging stories of the departed and the service turned into a jolly celebration of the lady's life.

The great and the good are in both burial places and it is so interesting to find out about the achievements of so many Ramsdonians with honours and medals. There is a Duke and a Duchess, Peers of the Realm and a Danish countess (born in Australia) who was an author and journalist.

*continued on page 3*

## Forest Edge Benefice Church Services

### March 2021

#### Sunday 7th March

10.30am, Holy Communion, CW,  
Leafield

#### Sunday 14th March

10.30am, Holy Communion, CW,  
Ramsden

#### Sunday 21st March

10.30am, Holy Communion, CW,  
Leafield

#### Sunday 28th March Palm Sunday

10.30am, Holy Communion, CW,  
Ramsden

#### Friday 2nd April Good Friday

12:00pm, Service at St Michael's  
Church, Leafield

2:00pm, Service at St James' Church,  
Ramsden

#### Sunday 4th April Easter Day

10:30am, Holy Communion, CW,  
Ramsden

10:30am, Holy Communion, CW,  
Leafield



## Problems With Local Roads

The FixMyStreet app and website allows residents to report potholes, damaged kerbing and drains which Oxfordshire County Council then repairs. You can even upload a photo.

You can also report graffiti, fly tipping, broken paving slabs, faulty street lights, blocked drains and damaged signs.

Go to: <https://www.fixmystreet.com//> or download the app.

## Flooding in St. Michaels Churchyard

St. Michael's churchyard has suffered terribly in the recent rains and there has been a lot of flooding at its eastern end, next to the new burial ground.

A good deal of work has taken place to alleviate the problem in the past but with winters, in recent years, being wetter due to global warming, the problem is as bad, or worse than it has ever been.

St. Michael's is now working with the Parish Council to see what we might do together, to find solutions to this sad state of affairs. It will take time but be assured we all take this extremely seriously and will do everything possible to improve the situation. *Simon Bentley*



The 'Here' in question (above) is Leaffield shop and items which are especially welcome include tinned stewed steak, tinned vegetables, rice pudding, Drinking Chocolate, small instant coffee, jam, long life fruit juice and gravy granules.

## The Wychwood Project and Finstock Churchyard

The Wychwood Project dry stone walling team, led by Roger Newman, has now largely finished rebuilding the eastern wall of the churchyard. This is a splendid effort given the disrupted year or so. There remains a stretch of wall about 13m long without toppers which will be completed when circumstances allow.

## Criminal Activity in Wilcote

These two young men were confronted over the weekend of 20th Feb at Wilcote after having smashed glass in a property there. They claimed to be residents of Wilcote. Their car was chased by local residents but got away. The Police have been informed.



## Skippet Lane Ramsden to be closed temporarily

Oxfordshire County Council have announced that under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, Section 14 (1), through traffic will be prohibited from using Skippet Lane from March 8th. This order is being introduced so that Thames Water can excavate the mains. Although the order will remain in force for a maximum of 18 months it is anticipated that the work will be completed by the end of March and so disruption should only last about three weeks. Signs will be displayed and the ban does not apply to emergency vehicles or to anyone whose property can only be reached by using the lane. Everyone else is advised to use Finstock High Street and the main B4022.



## NEW EDITOR NEEDED

I shall be stepping down from my role as Editor this summer when I will have been doing the job for 10 years.

If you are interested in taking up the position please contact me or the vicar. I shall be happy to discuss the work involved.

*John Hook*

## Spring Forward.Fall Back

British Summer Time begins at the end of this month. Don't forget to put your clocks forward an hour on the night of Saturday 27th March

## Police Warning to Dog Owners of Suspicious Activity

We have recently been made aware from concerned residents and other social media postings, that a number of properties in the Wychwoods area have seemingly been marked. The properties have been marked with differing coloured elastic bands, either around the gatepost or wheelie bins. It is believed the properties have been marked due to there being pedigree dogs at the locations.

Clearly this is of concern to all dog owners, and we ask that you all remain vigilant and where possible to report this either online via the Thames Valley Police website or on the 101 number.

General advice is to change your routine, go out walking at differing times, where appropriate make sure your dog is on a short lead. We would further advise that if your dog stays in the house, then move its location to a harder to reach area and less visible to the outside.

Lastly, do not post anything on social media with respect to your dog, or any potential litters. Darryn Moulding (Police, PCSO, West Oxfordshire LPA (bb))

*In Loving Memory* continued



The Family of the church founder, Rev Lowbridge-Baker has several graves in the churchyard and there are a few servicemen of both world wars who died in England. All the soldiers, sailors and airman who died in the wars and who are commemorated on the war memorials have been included in the listings.

But the records are mainly of the modest families who lived in Ramsden working as farmers, farm labourers, glovers, bakers, carters, publicans ( there were five pubs in Ramsden at one time). Intriguingly, there were several ‘hucksters’ ‘diers’ and other strange trades. The probate details of wills of most landowners are also included which provide a lot of detail about the properties and smallholdings of Ramsden.

Clare’s remarkable work is a truly fascinating history of the village since the church was built and the first burial was recorded in 1842. The Oxford family History Society are due to come this year to re-order the numbering of the churchyard graves and make a new map showing all known places of burial. They will also photograph all monuments.

The finished document will be available to family historians and researchers in the Memorial Hall archives and at the Oxfordshire History Centre in Cowley.

Congratulations are due to Clare Hutt for this extraordinary contribution to our village history. If anyone has interesting information or anecdotes about any of the departed, please send them to [clareh25@hotmail.com](mailto:clareh25@hotmail.com).

**Ian Thompson**

\* A taphophile is a person who is very interested in graveyards and cemeteries



## Possible New Transport Link for Witney

WE all know how congested the A40 can get and how long the journey to Oxford can take. However plans are afoot which could well change that. The Witney Oxford Transport Group is about to submit plans to the Government which call for the funding of a feasibility study to examine their plans for a Carterton-Witney-Eynsham-Oxford railway link.

If the proposal is accepted and the link built, journey times could be more than halved. It does not necessarily mean the rebuilding of the old railway line and other fast, sensible and sustainable solutions are being looked at.

The group is keen to hear from local people and if you would like to take part in a survey they are organising please visit [surveymonkey.com/r/WitneyOxfordTransportGroup](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WitneyOxfordTransportGroup). But be very quick and get your views recorded before March 5th.

## Public Spiritedness Finstock-Style

Dog mess has been a concern to many in Finstock for quite some time but recently a local resident has done something about it. Obviously possessing a good sense of public responsibility an anonymous villager has installed a free poo bag collection point. Cleverly made out of an old plastic bottle and prominently displayed on a popular walking route it should help solve this unpleasant and dangerous problem. Congratulations and thanks to whoever is responsible. Let’s hope dog-walkers take advantage of this generous gesture!



## Well Done Leaffield Great Response to HGV Problem

Thank you to all those who sent emails, handwritten letters and filled in the consultation regarding the HGV Ban in Burford. It certainly made the County Council sit up and take notice! At the Parish Council meeting last week, Liam Walker, our OCC councillor, said he had had over 200 emails, many of those from Leaffield, so we hit and went over our target of 50! It has been great to see our Leaffield Community coming together. The consultation is now closed. Due to our loud voices, the OCC monitored the traffic last week in many of the small villages in the area, Leaffield being one of them, which was not on the original plan. You may also have noticed that Leaffield was also featured in BBC South – Oxford News on Friday 5th Feb. There is still a long way to go, the final decision will not be made until February 2022. The traffic will be monitored again in August and then again in Feb 2022. Work will not stop here; we are now working with seven other communities in the area who are also being affected.

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## New Archbishop Causing Waves

The Archbishop of York is the second most senior member of the Church Of England's clergy. Perhaps it is no wonder therefore that he is often a somewhat outspoken, even controversial, figure, slightly freer to speak his mind than his boss in Canterbury. You may remember the last one, John Sentamu who often attracted attention by his contributions to public debate on matters of same sex marriage (against, although Civil Partnerships were OK) multiculturalism (wary about) and cohabitation before marriage (in favour). He was the most senior member of the English church of African descent and was stopped and questioned by the police eight times in as many years. He retired last year but will no doubt remain active in public life as he is now a member of The House of Lords

His replacement as Archbishop is Stephen Cottrell who was enthroned last October. According to a recent article in The Observer, it looks as though he will be every bit as outspoken as his predecessor. At the end of February he published his latest book entitled *Dear England: Finding Hope, Taking Heart and Changing the World*. He says the book was not written for Christians but "for people who care about the world we live in." However he acknowledges that "some of the more conservative Christians will be critical of some of the things in it."

He is concerned that we have learned to live with things in society which we know to be wrong and yet prefer to just accept them, rather than work for justice and seek hope.

"We constantly need to reset our compass, which isn't quite the same thing as losing it," he said. "For example, Is there anybody who doesn't think it's a scandal that there are so many homeless people on our streets? But we've learned to live with it."

Cottrell grew up in a family that did not attend church, "in a world that vaguely thought science had disproved all that, that the human race had come of age, we've left all that behind. And then I found myself taking a direction I didn't expect." He prefers to be known as Stephen by his colleagues, rather than by the customary honorific "Your Grace", he said. "I want to inhabit the role a bit differently."

Meanwhile reading the more conservative press might well leave you questioning whether the established church has a future at all. The Daily Telegraph recently published a leaked internal document which warns that 20 per cent of regular worshippers may never return after the pandemic. It calls into question "the

sustainability of many local churches and the continued financial subsidy given to 5,000 loss-making parishes out of a total of 12,000." It makes for grim reading, even suggesting that 10 to 20 per cent of paid clergy may have to be cut. But at least the church is in the news and many are looking for what Cottrell calls a 'Jesus-shaped church'.

As Oscar Wilde once wrote, "There is only one thing worse than being talked about and that is not being talked about." **Ed**



## Gardening tips which don't work or have the moles got smarter?

Several years ago I was advised by an old gardening friend that if you have a problem with moles in your garden there is a reliable and humane way of dealing with them: stick plastic windmills in the ground. Apparently the vibrations caused by the wind travel down the stick. The moles get scared off! On two previous occasions the method has worked well for me and last year they disappeared from two other areas of the garden in no time.

However, as you will see, the trick did not work this time! I suspect that Ramsden moles at least have got wise to this ruse and no longer care. Has anyone else ever tried this method of pest control? **Ed**



## In Search of Historic Photos of Leafield

Have you been clearing and tidying during lockdown?

Have you come across any interesting old photos showing Leafield village and its environs?

If so, consider lending them for scanning and then use in a leaflet and/or booklet on Leafield history. Contact Michael Triff on 01993 878035 or email [mbtriff@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mbtriff@yahoo.co.uk).



## Seasonal Recipe: Wild garlic

Wild garlic is plentiful around here and comes into season in late March/early April. For a wild garlic pesto that's the very essence of spring, simply blitz wild garlic with olive oil and stir in a heap of finely grated parmesan, then drizzle it on everything.



## The Vicar writes



Is the end in sight? With the Prime Minister announcing the Government's plan to move us into a different way of living, we can look forward to some changes very soon. On a lovely spring day, it is almost as if the changes have already happened and we are enjoying a carefree summer. But the reality is somewhat different. The first change, on the 8<sup>th</sup> March, will mainly affect children returning to school. While the change that permits one nominated person to visit a relative or friend in a care home will offer real joy for those affected, the other changes are relatively minor in nature. The message "stay at home" will essentially remain in place until the end of March at the earliest.

Since the beginning of the latest development within this pandemic, often known as Lockdown 3, there has been one notable change to similar events we have endured over the last twelve months. From the beginning of January, churches have been permitted to stay open when nearly all other institutions have been forced to close. Throughout the history of the Church of England, there has never been another time when churches have been forced to close. While Christians will argue strongly that we are far more than our buildings, many within our communities will lament the closing of their local church.

While all our churches, in Lockdowns 1 and 2, were prevented from opening by law, some churches have been closed for much longer. The government, along with the National Church, has placed the onus squarely in the hands of local Church Councils to take responsibility for implementing the measures required

to ensure people remain as safe as possible while attending church. Within this benefice it has been possible to implement these measures in two of our churches. St Michael's Church in Leafield and St James' Church in Ramsden have both been open at various times over the last twelve months. Holy Trinity Church in Finstock and St Peter's Church in Wilcote have remained closed because they are simply too small to implement the measures and keep everyone as safe as possible.

Just over one hundred years ago, in 1919, Parliament debated the National Assembly of the Church of England (Powers) Bill. Speaking in support of the Bill in the House of Lords, Lord Parmoor said, "If this Bill is passed, for the first time the laity of the Church will have a recognised and substantive position in the corporate expression of church life". The Bill was passed and many of parliament's powers were devolved to the Church Assembly – which has since become General Synod. As a result of this new system of governance, the laity are now included at every level of the Church. People from all walks of life and background have become members of the House of Laity of the Church Assembly, local Church Councils and the other tiers of Church governance.

Over the last twelve months, each Church Council within this benefice, has worked together to make the difficult decisions regarding changes to church life as a result of this pandemic. We haven't always agreed but each time have come to a decision, supported by the majority, that all members have accepted. Although differences have emerged in terms of how local churches have decided to proceed, we have continued to work together through these challenging times in mutual support and commitment to our shared hope, revealed to us in Christ. We look forward to all the churches being open soon.

With every blessing,

Paul

Rev'd Paul Mansell

Vicar, Forest Edge Benefice

## IN OUR FOUR PARISHES

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## From the registers

### FUNERAL

Myra King  
24th January 2021

St Michael's, Leafield

You were a man of suffering  
acquainted with grief,  
loved and despised in equal measure.  
You understand humanity,  
know our failings,  
love us despite the people that we are.  
When we, like Peter, deny you  
by word or action,  
forgive us.  
When we, like Judas, are tempted  
to follow a different path,  
forgive us.  
When we, like those in the crowd  
allow you to be crucified,  
forgive us.  
Bring us to the foot of the Cross  
to stand next to the one who,  
looking into your eyes declared  
'Surely this is the Son of God'

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## Wit and Wisdom

“A smart person knows what to say. A wise person knows whether to say it or not.” Dali Lama

“Tact is the ability to tell someone to go to Hell in such a way that they look forward to the trip,” Winston Churchill

“Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere.” Albert Einstein

“Some cause happiness wherever they go; others whenever they go.” Oscar Wilde

“We cannot direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails.” Dolly Parton

“The true believer is not someone who disengages from this world in order to focus on heaven, but rather the one who tries to make this world more like heaven.” Alister E. McGrath

“But he, that dares not grasp the thorn, should never crave the rose.” Anne Bronte

“You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.” 1 John 4:4

## Exploration and Meditation in Leaffield Churchyard

Welcome to YOUR churchyard

This space belongs to you. It belongs to all of us. Spend as much time here as you like. Please respect the plants and animals that make this space their home.

The All-Age Lent Trail is here for you to follow. There are 6 special places to pray in the churchyard during this time. Please use your churchyard for prayer or quiet reflection.

We would like to thank Leaffield resident and artist, Stanley Williams, aged 4½ for his beautiful contributions to the Lent Trail.



## DO YOU WANT TO FAST THIS LENT?

In the words of Pope Francis

Fast from hurting words and say kind words.

Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.

Fast from anger and be filled with patience.

Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.

Fast from worries and have trust in God.

Fast from complaints; contemplate simplicity.

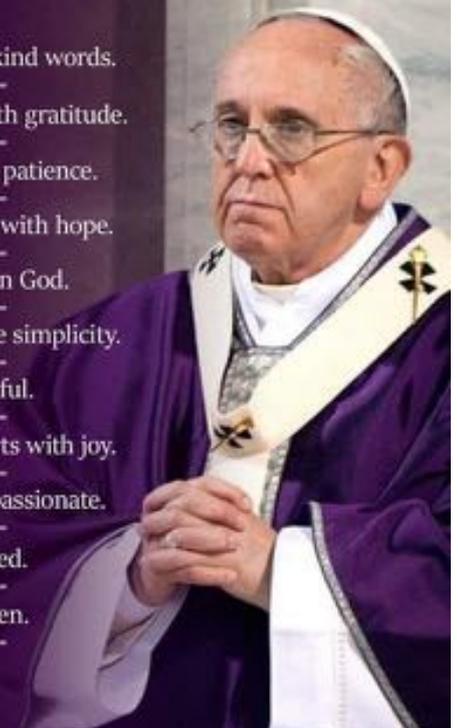
Fast from pressures and be prayerful.

Fast from bitterness; fill your hearts with joy.

Fast from selfishness and be compassionate.

Fast from grudges and be reconciled.

Fast from words; be silent and listen.



## CROSSWORD CORNER

The winner of last month's book token was Rod Ireland from Finstock. Congratulations to him and to everyone who completed the puzzle. The answers were: ACROSS:

1. Skinny Dip 5. Urals  
 8. Effaced 10. Refrain 11. Housekeepers  
 14. Nods  
 15. Jeremiah 16. Errant 18. Ithaki 19. The Mirabelle 23. Earnest 24. Wye 25. Neice  
 26. Hay 27. Audit DOWN: 1. Stephen Fry  
 2. Influences 3. Dodge 4. Pork Pie  
 5. Unforgettable 6. Aran 7. Sons 9. Cheddar Cheese 12. Disallowed 13. Chris Evert 15. No Match 20. Ratty 21. Mean 22. Urge

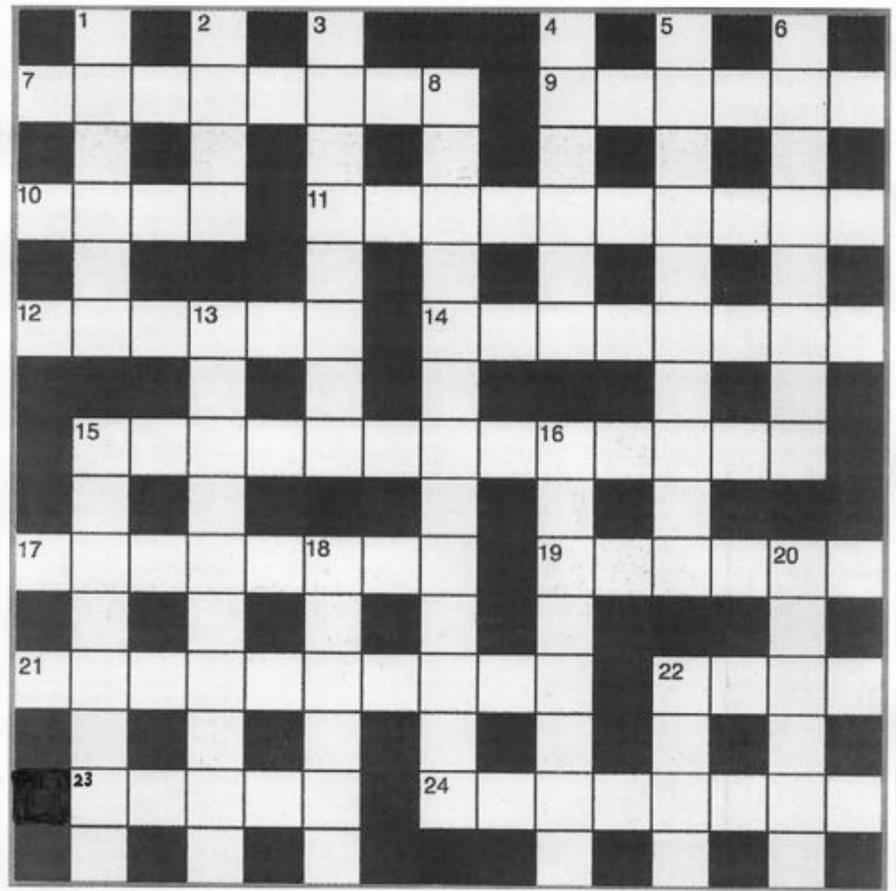
Good luck with this one! As usual answers to me, by 20th March please - The Old Vicarage, Wilcote Lane, Ramsden, OX7 3BA or [johnianrupert@hotmail.com](mailto:johnianrupert@hotmail.com)

### Clues Across

7. Archbishop of Canterbury 1070 - 1089 (8)  
 9. Midwestern Native American tribe (6)  
 10. Daughter of Zeus and Queen of the underworld appeared in Downton (4)  
 11. 'Light blue..... and stand well back' (10)  
 12. Tam has a respiratory disorder (6)  
 14. They fought at the Battle of Thermopylae (8)  
 15. Shady cupboard in Parliament (6.7.)  
 17. Smart block of flats and Performing Arts Centre in London EC2 (8)  
 19. Married men have all been this once (6)  
 21. A pointless exercise to flog this (1.4.5.)  
 22. This girl was told to kiss me in a musical (4)  
 23. Jewish name of the meal which starts Passover sounds like tree of Lebanon (5)  
 24. Protestant church and state religion of Norway (8)

### Clues Down

1. They sound like rulers of Egypt, these North Atlantic Islands (6)  
 2. King of Mercia, famous for his dyke (4)  
 3. Capital of Chile (8)  
 4. Led the Israelites after the death of Moses (6)  
 5. This large city in Texas was the site of the Alamo (3.7)



6. Mad girl, ingredient of Praline or Frangelico liqueur (8)  
 8. This makes your car travel at a constant speed.....and keeps Tom in order! (6.7)  
 13. Leading teacher leads groups of directors in beds perhaps (10)  
 15. To hit someone and hurry away is careless and haphazard (8)  
 16. French bread, a real gem (8)  
 18. A companion or follower, possibly in a band of warriors (6)  
 20. Shared, like Dickens's friend (6)  
 22. Retain part of a castle (4)

It was Palm Sunday but because of a sore throat, 5-year-old Johnny stayed home from church with a sitter. When the family returned home, they were carrying several palm fronds. Johnny asked them what they were for.

"People held them over Jesus' head as he walked by," his father told him.

"Wouldn't you know it," Johnny fumed, "the one Sunday I don't go and he shows up."



"So you're little Bobbie; well, Rex here has been going on and on about you for the last 50 years."

I just read a book on marriage that says treat your wife like you treated her on the first date.

So after dinner tonight I'm dropping her off at her parents' house.