

FOREST EDGE NEWS

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

May 2021

www.forestedgebenefice.co.uk

Issue 272

The Darling Buds Of May



In gardens, hedgerows and churchyards across the benefice it is very evident that we are in the season of blossom! The lovely cherries in St Peter's Wilcote, the forsythia in Holy Trinity Finstock and a beautiful exochorda in Ramsden help to transform the world at this time of year. They are also helping the world survive by feeding many pollen loving insects who go on to fertilise our fruit. Beauty is part of the cycle of life.



According to a YouGov poll commissioned by The National Trust last June, 38 per cent of adults said time spent in nature was the moment they looked forward to most each day during lockdown. A third of respondents said their interest in nature had increased.

Sunday April 24th was designated 'Blossom Watch Day' by The Trust and a website has been set up where we can explore and share this amazing season with others on line. <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/blossom-watch>

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"
Matthew 6 v.28-30

Forest Edge Benefice Church Services

May 2021

Sunday 2nd May

10:30am, Holy Communion, CW, Leafield

Sunday 9th May

10.30am, Holy Communion, CW, Ramsden

10.30am, Morning Light, non-Eucharistic Family Service, Leafield

Sunday 16th May

10.30am, Holy Communion, CW, Leafield

Sunday 23rd May

10.30am, Holy Communion, CW, Ramsden

10.30am, Morning Light, non-Eucharistic Family Service, Leafield

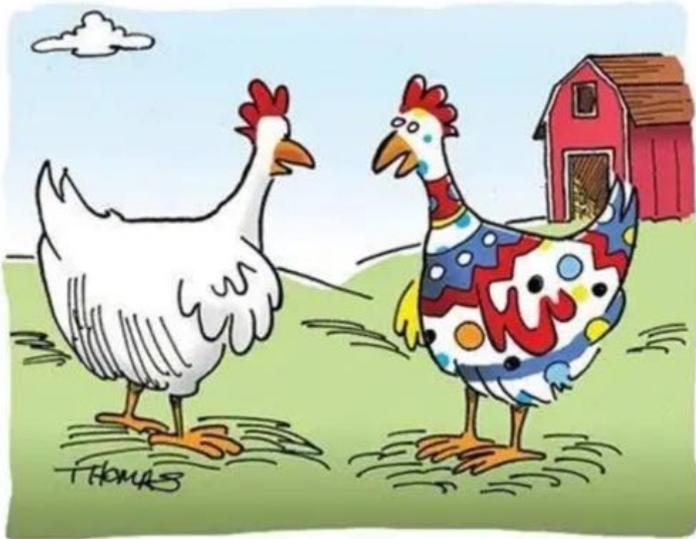
Sunday 30th May

10.30am, Holy Communion, CW, Leafield

Sunday 6th June

10.30am, Holy Communion, CW, Ramsden

10.30am, Morning Light, non-Eucharistic Family Service, Leafield



"I was an Easter egg."

Editor needed

I have enjoyed editing this newsletter for the past ten years but my last publication will be the July/August issue.

It would be a great disappointment to me and, I imagine, a number of others, if this were to be the last ever issue.

If you are interested in taking on the job, even for a short while, please contact me or the vicar.

Ed



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Ramsden Memorial Hall “Almost there”

Ramsden Memorial hall’s renovation is almost complete and the Hall Committee is now planning the re-opening in time for Ramsden’s first event of the year, ‘Gardens Open ‘ on Sunday 13th of June.

The hall’s closure since early 2020 was due to the pandemic and to the discovery that the entire roof had to have new oak beams throughout. Steve Maclellan was the project manager, dealing with many unforeseen problems after the original beams were discovered to be unsuitable and actually dangerous. The village raised over £30,000 in the 2019-2020 appeal, grants of £45,000 were awarded and West Oxfordshire District Council and the Secretary of State approved a 15 year loan to the Parish Council of £ 80,000 to fund the essential extra work. The newly decorated hall will be much improved visually with the new beams revealed and two stunning ironwork chandeliers included in the lighting design.

Andrew Byrne undertook detailed research into all village halls in the area to find how best to make the hall more attractive to future hirers. The solution is that Ramsden will now have one of the most attractive venues for wedding receptions, parties and theatrical events in West Oxfordshire. The renovation now includes new acoustic panels, better lighting and heating and new comfortable chairs.

The hall committee is very grateful to all contributors to the fund raising effort last year and to all concerned with the restoration of the hall. It will continue to be one of the central institutions in Ramsden for the next century and beyond.

In a little over six weeks we have gone from

This



to This



On the left you can see an artist’s impression of what the newly refurbished hall will look like.

Wit and Wisdom

“We always hold hands. If I let go, she shops.”
Henny Youngman

“An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind.” Mahatma Gandhi

“He who laughs at himself never runs out of things to laugh at.” Epictetus

“If you feel pain, you are alive. If you feel other people’s pain, you’re a human being.”
Leo Tolstoy

“You need power, only when you want to do something harmful. Otherwise Love is enough to get everything done.” Charlie Chaplin

“Every one says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive.”
C. S. Lewis

“The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best time is now.” Old Chinese proverb

“In a society that has you counting money, pounds, calories and steps, be a rebel and count your blessings instead.” Lisa Hackman

“Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.” Luke 6.v37

Seasonal Recipe

Rhubarb and ginger syllabub

It’s rhubarb season and this simple dessert is yummy for anyone with a sweet tooth!

Serves 4.

2 sticks rhubarb cut into 1 inch pieces

1 inch root ginger peeled and chopped

4 tbsp caster sugar

50ml (2fl oz) white wine

75g(3oz) mascarpone

250 ml (9fl oz) double cream

2 - 4 tbsp icing sugar

1 piece crystallised ginger finely chopped.

Put the rhubarb, root ginger and sugar in a saucepan with the wine. Simmer very gently for 4 or 5 minutes until the fruit is soft and then remove from heat and set aside.

Allow to cool. Put 2 tablespoons of the mixture in a separate bowl and mash with a fork. In another bowl whip the mascarpone, cream and icing sugar together. Then add the small quantity of mashed rhubarb and ginger.

Put the rest of the poached rhubarb into glasses or small bowls then spoon over the mascarpone mixture and sprinkle the crystallised ginger over the top.

Chill and serve.

Fund Raising, Leaffield Style

Not surprisingly Leaffield will not be holding a fete this summer. However the village has come up with a number of clever ways to raise funds.....

Decorated Wheelie Bin Competition!



Decorate your wheelie bin any way you like – £5 entry Fee
Proceeds go to Leaffield Church and the Football Club.
Sign up at Peapell Stores
Prizes for best adult and child entries will be judged on May 3rd, so be quick!



Name the Panda Competition!

Name the panda in the Village shop – 50p a go!
All proceeds go to the preschool and primary school

Raffle! Raffle! Raffle! Raffle!

£1 a strip in the Peapell Stores
Proceeds go to Leaffield Church and the Football Club. Lots of great prizes!



News from St Michael's Leaffield



'Morning Light'

St. Michael's, Leaffield is holding a non-Eucharistic 10.30 service on alternate Sundays, when the regular Communion service is held in Ramsden. 'Morning Light' is a family friendly service of about half an hour.

Easter

This Easter, we again covered our Easter cross with spring flowers and stood it outside our West door. Also, we were so pleased that our team of flower arrangers placed two beautiful flower displays in church for our Easter Service. The first flowers in St. Michael's Church for over a year. We had a beautiful Easter Day Service in church, led by Gail Ward, after which we gathered, socially distanced, in the churchyard and sang 'Lord of the Dance'.



At last the road is open!

Later than anticipated the repair work on the bridge between Witney and Charlbury is finally complete. This makes a huge difference to all local residents. Leaffield and Fawler will not have to suffer all that extra traffic and even the Woodpecker Shop in Finstock can get some of its favourite products more easily. Karen Williams writes:

"It means we get our freshly baked scones back!"



Ramsden Rose Competition

Saturday 12th June 2021

The Ramsden Rose Competition is back and will take place on Saturday 12th June 2021, the day before 'Gardens Open'.

A maximum of two roses per household may be submitted. They must be single roses or floribunda type i.e. a small spray on one stem, and they must have been grown within the Parish of Ramsden. The grower must also live within the Parish.

Details of where, when etc to follow in the Newsletter next month.

British Legion's centenary Poppy May 2021



Mark 100 years of the Royal British Legion with this wonderful lapel pin, featuring a white enamel background with the iconic poppy shape and text that reads 'ROYAL BRITISH LEGION' and '100 YEARS'.

All profits benefit the considerable work of the Royal British Legion in supporting the Armed Forces community.

I am taking pre-orders for this label pin, suggested donation is £4.00. please contact me if you would like one reserved for you.

There are only a limited number being produced.

<simonsalomebentley@me.com>

HRH Prince Philip: for whom the bell tolled

On Saturday 10th April at 12 Midday, The Tenor Bell (given by Queen Victoria) at St. Michael's Church, Leaffield was tolled 99 times by Andrew Pickett, accompanied by the churchwarden Simon Salomé-Bentley, in memory of the Duke of Edinburgh, who died aged 99 on the 9th April. The bell was tolled again on the day of The Duke of Edinburgh's funeral, just before the service.



In Ramsden too the bell was tolled 99 times on Saturday 10th, the day after The Duke died. We are grateful to Roz Danks for this. A beautiful, patriotic wreath, made by Pauline Claridge and Shirley Crapper was hung on the church gate. Many thanks!



Improving local road safety

'Twenty is plenty' is the scheme to reduce speed in and around our villages and is running in Churchill, Leaffield, Fawler and The Bartons. Cllrs Liz Leffman and Andy Graham have been supporting residents for this to happen as it does make a difference. "If residents want signs we can supply these but please let us know in advance and we will get them to you," says Cllr Graham

New Bishop Consecrated

The official ceremony to welcome the Venerable Gavin Collins as Bishop of Dorchester has been beset by problems.

It was clear, following his appointment last November, that the traditional format would not be possible due to the pandemic. However a special service was arranged, and indeed took place, in Lambeth Palace. Even this was not without its problems though as it was impossible to 'stream' the service during the period of national mourning for HRH the Duke of Edinburgh. Gavin's family and the Bishop of Oxford were able to attend.

"Although COVID restrictions meant this was very different from the large-scale celebration in St Paul's Cathedral that was originally envisaged, having a much smaller service in the Chapel at Lambeth made it a more intimate and reflective occasion," says Bishop Gavin. "It was a deeply impactful moment as I prepare to take on my new ministry as a bishop."

The new Bishop and some of his family in the grounds of Lambeth Palace.



Ramsden Gardens Open Can you help?

Organiser Helen Pennant-Rea writes: "Please bake cakes for the Tea Stall. For the Local Produce Stall please bake bread, donate homemade jams, chutneys, elderflower cordial, plant and vegetable seeds and cut flowers and allotment holders and growers might have cauliflowers, radishes, lettuces, rhubarb or cabbage ready to donate by then.

For the Plant Stall please donate Plants and seedlings.

Collection points to be announced later. And 6 weeks left to plan your house front decorations (floral, flags or festive) and colourful window boxes, planters, gates and railings. Your efforts all help to give a friendly welcome to our visitors.

Contact opengardens@ramsdenvillage.co.uk with inquiries or offers of volunteer help before or on the day."

Local Elections May 6th

On Thursday May 6th we have the opportunity to exercise our democratic right and elect councillors for both the County Council and West Oxford District Council.

Last year the coronavirus put paid to local elections and so this year's poll is a particularly important event.

The present make up of Oxfordshire County Council is: Conservative 27, Labour 13, Liberal Democrat 13, Green 1 and Independent 9.

WODC is made up of 29 Conservatives, 9 Liberal Democrats, 8 Labour councillors, 2 Independent councillors and there is one vacancy.

For the first time in **Ramsden** due to the refurbishment of The Memorial Hall, polling will take place in St James' church

If you live in **Leaffield** your polling station is The Village Hall. In **Finstock** and **Fawler** it is Finstock Village Hall and if you live in **Wilcote** you can vote in North Leigh Memorial Hall



Sustainable Leaffield



Sustainable Leaffield is in the process of planning a mixed Community Orchard and wildflower area at Leaffield Recreation Ground to bring back a tiny bit of our 92% lost English meadowlands, and to increase local delicious and fresh fruit supply. If successful, planting will start this Autumn, 2021. There will be a Seed Swap, too, in the Telephone Box when that is in place. For further information about how to get involved with our projects, or with suggestions of your own, please email:

sustainable.leaffield@gmail.com

The Vicar writes.....



Eric Simmons, who died in January this year, was a monk belonging to the Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield in Yorkshire. He had a reputation for being an accomplished preacher. Many people would comment how, years after they had heard Eric preach, his sermons would still resonate. Like many great preachers, Eric had the knack of talking about the great truths of the Christian faith in ways that touched people deeply. He was described as one of the most wise, holy and witty men anyone could wish to meet.

Several years ago, one Advent, in the run up to Christmas, Eric preached a sermon illustrating the Christian virtues of simplicity and humility. His sermon contained a description of the church built on the site of the Nativity in Bethlehem, as follows:

“When, in the fourth century the Emperor Constantine built his church in Bethlehem on the site of the Lord’s Nativity, he had it constructed so that the only entrance was through a low, narrow doorway. No doubt his intention was to make it difficult for marauders to gain access and carry off the treasures and precious things which the church contained. But whatever his conscious intention may have been, that low doorway signifies something more profound. It tells us that anyone can come to that place where Mary’s Son is born, and that no one is excluded or turned away. What is required is that we should be willing to dump all the unnecessary baggage and paraphernalia with which we clutter and encumber ourselves, and leave it all outside, and stoop our heads and bow our hearts and

bend low. Only then shall we see and know.

The simplicity of God, and the humility of God, require of us nothing more than that. It is enough. It is everything.”

Immediately after Easter Day, the Bible readings, prescribed by the Church for Morning and Evening Prayer, follow the story of Moses who leads the Israelites out of slavery to freedom in the Promised Land. Before they arrive at the Promised Land, Moses leads the people through the desert of Sinai where they learn the ways of God and are given the Ten Commandments. Early Christians saw Moses as the model of human virtue and describe his journey, with his fellow Israelites, as “an ascent into the luminous darkness of God.”

C. S. Lewis, in his book “Miracles”, advocates this way of thinking about God in order to cleanse our minds of misconceptions. He goes on to say we must then refill our minds with the truth about God, untainted by mythology, bad analogies or false mind-pictures. Eric Simmons illustrates this approach in his sermons (and in his way of life) when commending the need to let go of the baggage that holds us back from journeying towards the Promised Land, conveyed within the Gospels of Christ. For Eric, there is a strange paradox within the Christian faith that claims we can only know more about God when we are prepared to let go of what we believe is important and a source of immediate pleasure within our lives.

During the time we have been in lockdown, most people have had much less social contact. It has sometimes been described as a traumatic and even a detestable experience. Whilst I didn’t know Eric Simmons, I have known other monks and nuns who live very similar lives. They clearly derive a huge amount of satisfaction from their monastic lives and could equally be described as some of the most wise, holy and witty men and women anyone could wish to meet. Yet they also describe the desolation of having to let go of those things most of us hold onto very tightly. In that sense, they are no different to anyone else.

As we move into a new way of living, approaching something like the lives we previously enjoyed, we might decide to do without some of the things previously thought essential for a happy life and be rewarded with a closer relationship with God.

With every blessing

Paul

Rev’d Paul Mansell

Vicar, Forest Edge Benefice

IN OUR FOUR PARISHES

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From the registers FUNERALS

Charles Evelyn Cecil
23rd March 2021
St Michael’s, Leafield

Mary Irene Adams
9th April 2021
St Michael’s, Leafield

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CROSSWORD CORNER

The winners of last month's competition were the Aylmer family from Ramsden. Congratulations and a book token go to them.

The answers were: **Across** 1. Canaletto 10. Wardrobe 11. A Harpy 12. Trigonometry 14. Euro 15. Abridged 18. Helsinki 19. Nick 21. Overcrowding 24. Craven 25. In a dream 26. Heals 27. Self doubt **Down** 2. Ajax 3, Auditions 4. Exotic 5. The Woman In White 7. Spade 8. Experience 9. Favours 13. Jules Verne 16. Den 17. Snoring 20. Pilaff 22. Rival 22A. Garbo 23. Lamb

Good luck with this one! Last month I only received 6 responses so your chances of winning that book token are quite high!

DEADLINE for this and any other contributions is 20th May. *Ed*

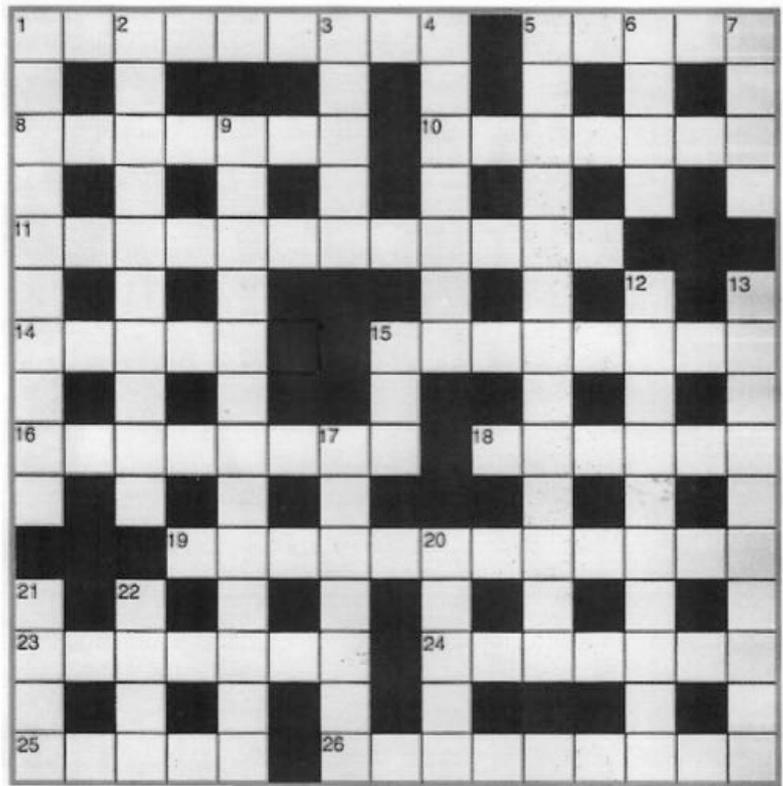
The Old Vicarage, Wilcote Lane, Ramsden, OX7 3BA or johnianrupert@hotmail.com

ACROSS

1. Many of Jesus' disciples were this (9)
5. Jericho's came tumbling down (5)
8. Unpaid, unskilled and such dramatics!(7)
10. Beatrix Potter's came from Gloucester but many of the best worked in Saville Row (7)
11. Sugars, starches and fibres found in much of our food and often avoided by dieters (12)
14. Sounds like it might play music but it's very run down and tatty (5)
15. Local Palace and World Heritage Site (8)
16. Legendary island which Plato believed had been swallowed by an earthquake. (Also the editor's favourite poem by W.H.Auden!) (8)
18. The Duke in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night (6)
19. "Co-drive or cut" sounds rather unreasonable. You could be on your way to this! (7.5.)
23. Italian engineer who in 1901 transmitted radio signals across the Atlantic Ocean (1874-1937) (7)
24. Forgo or refrain from, as with alcohol. Starts like the alphabet and ends with a nasty mark (7)
25. Mournful poem. Thomas Gray set one in a country churchyard (5)
26. If you are this you will not have appreciated 15 Down! (9)

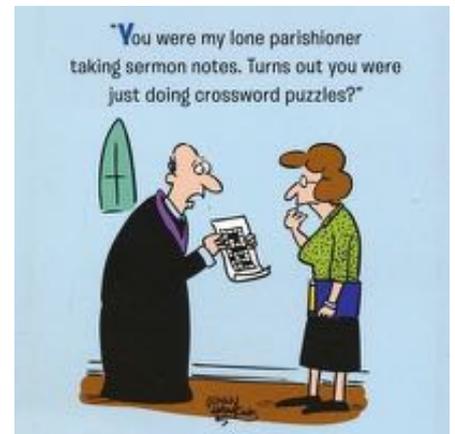
DOWN

1. Friar in a grey habit is probably this (10)
2. The Apple and Pear and England's smallest city look down from upper floors (10)



3. Tipsy, like Franz Lehar's widow. (5)
4. Unspoilt, like the History Museum. (7)
5. Minutes of a meeting could be described as this (7. 6.)
6. According to a best selling pop song 'The sleeps tonight' (4)
7. Keep on with your needlework. It's quite unremarkable we hear (2.2.)
9. ".....live together in perfect harmony/Side by side on my piano keyboard, oh Lord, why don't we?" Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder (5.3.5)
12. Starts like a foot treatment, ends sounding like a coffee but is actually a group of spiny-finned marine fishes having pectoral fins at the ends of armlike processes and a long movable spine on the dorsal fin to lure prey to the large mouth (10)

13. "A Woman of No....." play by Oscar Wilde (10)
15. A red one became (in)famous during the Brexit campaign (3)
17. Lazy eyes, we hear, might dote on someone (7)
20. Could be dining, arm or awarded to a professor (5)
21. A French lady friend. (4)
22. Creamy white French cheese (4)



Dangerous Passenger

A few weeks ago a passenger in a taxi heading for Heathrow airport, leaned over to ask the driver a question and gently tapped him on the shoulder to get his attention.

The driver screamed, lost control of the cab, nearly hit a bus, drove over the kerb and stopped just inches from a large plate glass window.

For a few moments everything was silent in the cab. Then the shaking driver said, "Are you OK? I'm so sorry but you scared the daylights out of me."

The badly shaken passenger apologised to the driver and said, "I didn't realise that a mere tap on the shoulder would startle someone so badly."

The driver replied, "No, no. I'm the one who is sorry. It's entirely my fault. Today is my very first day driving a cab. I've been driving a hearse for 25 years."

