

# FOREST EDGE NEWS

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

## “Congratulations and Celebrations”

Saturday 22nd May was the day of The Eurovision Song Contest.....hence the corny title above.....and it is nice to remember a time when the UK did not score ‘nul points’. Far more importantly, it was also the day when, in St James’ Ramsden, Laura Winter married Andrew Earnshaw!

I realise that weddings are always happy occasions but this particular event was incredibly joyful. I have rarely been aware of so much delight, excitement and love. Perhaps this was because the congregation was small and therefore the atmosphere was less formal and more friendly than many such gatherings. Also because of Covid restrictions there was a sense of fun, of beating the gloom which has overshadowed the last 18 months. This was the fourth date which the couple had chosen. The Pandemic had forced them to abandon three. But nothing was going to stop them this time! Perhaps it was because many in the village have known Laura since she was a little girl and have admired her and her family for years.

Although numbers were limited in church many locals came before and after the service to wish them well.

It was also the first wedding in Ramsden, or indeed, in the benefice, since Lockdown began. So many reasons for rejoicing!

Below, the ecstatic newly weds leave the church. Has someone just mentioned Dad, Ian’s shoes? He even had a matching face-mask! *PTO*



## Forest Edge Benefice Church Services

June 2021

### Sunday 6th June

10.30am, Holy Communion, CW,  
Ramsden

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

### Sunday 13th June

10.30am, Holy Communion, CW,  
Leaffield

### Sunday 20th June

10.30am, Holy Communion, CW,  
Ramsden

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

### Sunday 27th June

\*10.30am, Holy Communion, CW,  
Finstock \*

### Sunday 4th July

10.30am, Holy Communion, CW,  
Leaffield

**\*Please Note:** The service at Holy Trinity Church, Finstock, may go ahead if this is permitted by the Government and the National Church.



## Michael Aylmer shares some great news

As many readers will have already heard, Michael was recently accepted for training for ordination. I asked him to tell us something about the process which has brought him to this point and he kindly replied with the following update and account of his journey toward the priesthood. I am sure that Michael's many friends in the benefice will be delighted to hear from him and join me in sending love and good wishes. Ed



“As some of you may know I have recently been recommended by the Church of England for ordination training. I'm currently on a year-long Ministry Experience Scheme, which is a bit like work experience (I'm currently working with two rural benefices in Herefordshire) but is also a scheme to discern and develop vocations—whether that be in ordained ministry, lay ministry or serving God in a secular job or role.

I've felt called to ordination for a long time, and people sometimes say that the wheels of the Church of England move slowly—but I've found that the process has moved at the pace I've needed it to. However inadequate or ill prepared I initially felt all those years ago to fulfil my vocation to be a priest, “our Father knows what we need before we ask him”, and I know that over those years He prepared me for this moment, and will continue to do so for the years to come.

I have felt incredibly blessed and supported over my time in Hereford, and this time has enabled me to discern God at work in forming me into the person He's calling me to be, but also to be better at seeing the work of God in all our lives. This has been a strange, and for many, a horrible year but I have been constantly surprised by the feeling of the presence of God in the lives of others—the blessings great and small which have directed our course of action and enabled us to see the hope embedded in the world. And I've really enjoyed experiencing ministry in the Church of England's most rural diocese.

My DDO (Diocesan Director of Ordinands) has been massively helpful in overseeing the process of getting me and other potential candidates ready for the selection panel, which in my case involved giving a presentation and having two interviews over Zoom.

The panel interviewed me by grilling me on how my sense of vocation maps onto the Church of England's discernment criteria: Vocation, Ministry, Personality & Character, Leadership & Collaboration, Mission & Evangelism, Quality of Mind, Relationships, and Faith and Spirituality.

The Church of England has a marvellous system of making the candidate then wait a week before finding out whether the selection panel has recommended them for ordination training, which left me in a state of nervous anxiety. But I found it such a valuable spiritual experience—it really brought home to me that it was all ultimately in God's hands and that it was for Him I was doing it for, now and for the rest of my life. Those days of prayer brought me closer to Him, and made me realise how much I really wanted to get recommended—how deeply I really wanted to serve Him in ordained ministry. Thankfully I did get recommended for ordination training, and I start three years' training at Cuddesdon in September! I'd like to thank everyone who has welcomed, supported and prayed for me over this period. I've really appreciated it—Thank you.

Michael Aylmer

## Congratulations etc ...continued

Andy's family are from Yorkshire and the vicar seemed delighted to welcome folk from 'God's own country' where he too has his roots. Because of those disagreeable Covid restrictions we weren't allowed to sing the three beautiful hymns they had chosen, so we hummed them instead! What a fun way around a problem!



Here you see them signing the register. Harvey Winter and Carl Weathers were witnesses. The Best Man was Joshua Parker and the Bridesmaid was Roz Baker-Frampton. Laura and Andy live in Oxford where she is an Accounts Manager and he is studying for a PhD in archaeology.

*“The winter is past;  
the rains are over and gone.*

*And I have found the one my heart loves.”*

From a selection of Bible verses which Andy compiled for the service.

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**Leaffield Grand Plant  
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Saturday June 5th, 2 - 4 pm**

On The Village Greens in aid of heating for the church.

Garden plants - shrubs, perennials, annuals; Vegetable plants; House plants.

**If anybody has any plants or cakes to donate, please bring on the day or call Nicky Salomé-Bentley 01993 878000 or Jane Digby 01993 878585.**



**Wit and Wisdom**

*“I’m an angel. The horns are only there to hold up the halo.” – Suzanne Wright*

*“He who dares not offend cannot be honest” - Thomas Paine*

*“Everyone you meet always asks if you have a career, or married or own a house as if life was some kind of grocery list. But nobody ever asks if you are happy.” - Heath Ledger*

*“I sought to hear the voice of God And climbed the topmost steeple, But God declared: "Go down again -- I dwell among the people." - John Henry Newman*

*“ If you oppress poor people, you insult the God who made them; but kindness shown to the poor is an act of worship.” - Proverbs 14.31*

**Congratulations to The Rev'd Dr Sally Welch,**

Vicar of Charlbury & Shorthampton, who has been made a Canon of Christ Church. Sally is our former Area Dean and the author of several books. She also works with the Christ Church Cathedral Centre for Christian Pilgrimage as well as helping schools and churches explore how pilgrimage spirituality can be used in their particular settings.



**Leaffield Youth Club**

Leaffield Youth Club is looking for 2 new leaders and volunteers to help with the running of the group, training will be provided. Please get in touch with Jo Williams 07891074375.

**Table Tennis in Leaffield Village Hall**

We are starting table tennis again on **Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> May** – 17.45 to 18.45 – and will be following Covid guidelines of maximum 6 players at any one time. For more details contact: Roger Thewlis - [rogerthewlis@gmail.com](mailto:rogerthewlis@gmail.com)

**How does the Wychwood sound at Dawn?**

To celebrate Dawn Chorus Day 2021 sound artists Richard Bentley and Loz Colbert headed out to Wigwell Nature Reserve and Singe Wood to record the sounds of the Wychwood waking up. Their wonderful recordings capture one of nature's most miraculous soundscapes: a full-throated Dawn Chorus.

Though the Dawn Chorus remains a bit of a mystery, it's thought to happen because birds wake up before there's enough light to start feeding—so they focus on singing instead. Birds don't all start singing at the same time but join gradually. The familiar robin is among the first birds to punctuate the pre-dawn stillness with its energetic call; as the sun rises finches and sparrows add their voices to the sunrise. This order is reversed at sunset, with robins out-singing other birds as the light fades.

Loz and Richard's recordings provide a great opportunity to immerse yourself in one of the loudest Dawn Choruses of the year without getting up at 3.30am! Just copy and paste the link: [https://soundcloud.com/wychwood\\_project/dawn-chorus-from-singe-wood-laurence-colbert](https://soundcloud.com/wychwood_project/dawn-chorus-from-singe-wood-laurence-colbert).

As many readers will know, Loz is the son of Angela Findlater from Ramsden.

**Delight as cathedrals reopen to visitors again**

Cathedrals were delighted to be reopening to visitors this month, although relief and euphoria were tempered by the financial concerns of many after the prolonged closures.

Income at St Paul's Cathedral, which has annual running costs of £8 million and depends almost entirely on tourist ticket sales, dropped by 90 per cent last year; a similar loss is forecast for 2021. Along with Westminster Abbey, which was down £12 million last year (News, 31 July 2020), it relies heavily on foreign visitors, not predicted to return in pre-pandemic numbers.

At Gloucester Cathedral, the Dean, the Very Revd Stephen Lake, said: “This has been a long time coming. . . Gloucester Cathedral is meant to be open 365 days a year, and now we can return to our famous welcome for all. The building is huge and safe; so now is the time, especially for local people, to return to this special place, where we have been praying for you throughout the last year of this crisis. This is your cathedral — welcome home!”



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## Leaffield Village Calendar 2022 Photo Competition

After the bumper crop of photos for last years (Lock Down) competition, we are again running the Leaffield Calendar competition.

The competition is growing year on year and we already have quite a number of photos already submitted, so take your mobile or camera every time you leave the house and get snapping.

Photographs of the landscape around Leaffield, flowers, birds and other wildlife or anything that takes your imagination will be considered.

The competition is open to all ages and is asking for Photographers and Artists to submit their work for inclusion in next years calendar.

Any entries should be 'landscape shape' and submitted to [simonsalomebentley@me.com](mailto:simonsalomebentley@me.com) before the end of August 2021

For further information, please email or ring [01993 878000](tel:01993878000)



## 'Morning Light'

St. Michael's, Leaffield is holding informal, lay led, services at 10.30 am on alternate Sundays,

June's services are on the 6th & 20th.

'Morning Light' is a family friendly service of about half an hour.

## Local Elections

May 6th saw local elections take place across the country. For the first time in its long history St James' Ramsden served as a Polling Station. The Memorial Hall was having major work done when the arrangements were made.

Conservatives have retained their majority on West Oxfordshire District Council. They lost one seat overall, the Liberal Democrats gained a seat, Labour stay on eight seats and the first Green Party councillor has been elected to the council.

Oxfordshire County Council remains 'No overall control' although the Conservatives lost 9 seats, the Lib Dems gained 8, Labour gained 1 and the Greens gained 3. A Lib/Lab/Green coalition led by Liz Leffman will now take charge.



## The Vicar writes.....



Perhaps, over the last few weeks, many of us have been feeling rather tired. That is the impression I get when talking with people in and around this benefice. The weather doesn't help. April was very cold and, this month, it doesn't seem to have stopped raining. It feels like the seasons have been put back by a month. April showers in May!

Whilst the weather plays its part, the fact remains, we are still living through this awful pandemic. The affect it is having on our lives cannot be underestimated. The vaccine programme has been such a tremendous success, but we are now in a race with the variant of the Coronavirus first detected in India. More uncertainty! Will this result in another rise in hospital admissions? Will the legislative measures, introduced to control the spread of the virus, be rescinded as planned on 21st June? No wonder we are feeling tired and jaded.

Jesus said: "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

In the Church, we talk a lot about prayer. We say, during our services, "let us pray", but we don't often explain what this means. Are we talking about hearing voices? Well, maybe, but probably not in the way we talk to one-another. In difficult situations, when the way forward remains unclear, we may become aware, perhaps for the first time, of a need to pray. There again, if life is going swimmingly, we may not feel any special need at all.

Prayer is often born out of necessity and, if we have no need, why should we want to pray? But most people have their ups and downs in life. The Christian faith teaches that all prayer is acceptable to God. If we feel that a prayer may be helpful, when life feels

rubbish, that's great! It's too easy to dismiss these prayers, perhaps thinking we are simply acting out of self-interest. If it helps, then what's the problem?

There may come a time when these prayers, offered when life feels rotten, don't seem to help in the same way. Whilst the first impulse may be to give up, an alternative is to ask 'why'? Why do those prayers, that used to seem so helpful, not provide the same reassurance? We could all choose to give up, to be downhearted, to blame others, to be angry or silent at times in our life, but God offers us so much more.

It is not uncommon to be faced with challenges, especially during this pandemic. But how we respond today dictates our tomorrow. Jesus promises to be with us and to send the Holy Spirit, the power of God, to be with us. I have found that I need to turn to God and say, "I need your help. Please come to me."

We find God in that inner place where we are at peace with our truest selves. Inner peace comes about through an evolving awareness of what drives us as individuals. There will be some things that motivate us, we are unwilling to face up to. There will be things we have done that we are ashamed of and would rather try to forget. But simply trying to forget is often not achievable. Whilst it is sometimes described as the road less travelled, a more positive outcome may be found through coming to terms with past mistakes and seeking forgiveness.

Thankfully, very few of us are all bad. Most of us are defined by many good and desirable characteristics. Our truest selves are marked by that original goodness that makes up our personalities. Finding inner peace is often about accepting, as individuals, we really are good people. It is about being prepared to love and accept that essential essence of who we are in the face of a world that is often chaotic and problematic.

With every blessing,

Paul

Rev'd Paul Mansell

Vicar, Forest Edge Benefice

## IN OUR FOUR PARISHES

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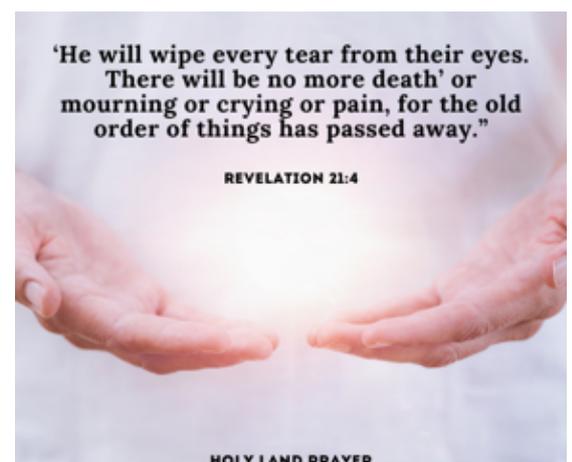
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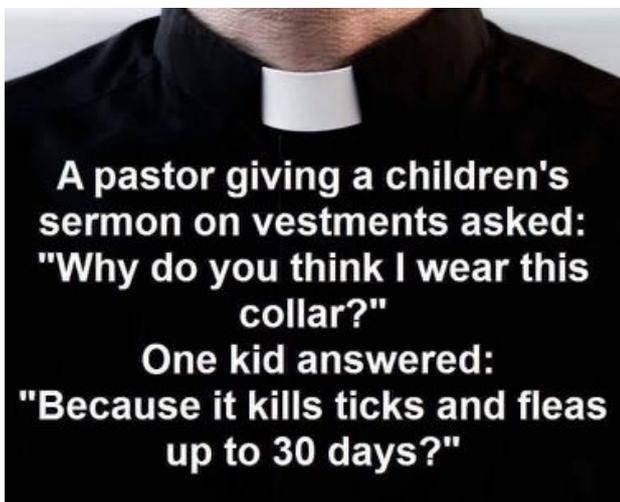
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A pastor giving a children's  
sermon on vestments asked:  
"Why do you think I wear this  
collar?"

One kid answered:  
"Because it kills ticks and fleas  
up to 30 days?"

## Global faith leaders speak out against vaccine nationalism

THE Archbishop of Canterbury is among faith leaders who on Monday joined the heads of the world's largest health and humanitarian organisations to urge governments to choose between "vaccine nationalism or human solidarity".

A joint declaration, signed by Christian and other faith leaders around the world, says that "equitable vaccine distribution is a humanitarian imperative", repeating the message: "No one is safe until everyone is safe."

The aid agency Christian Aid warned in a new report published this month of "vaccine apartheid", as wealthy countries monopolise vaccine supplies and leave populations in the poorest countries waiting for perhaps years to be protected.

# Crossword Corner

Congratulations this month go to Hilary Stacey from Fawler. A book token will be with her shortly.

The answers were: **Across** 1.Fishermen 5.Walls 8. Amateur 10. Tailors 11. Carbohydrate 14. Seedy 15. Blenheim 16. Atlantis 18. Orsino 19. Divorce Court 23. Marconi 24. Abstain 25. Elegy 26. Europhile **Down** 1.Franciscan 2. Stairwells 3.Merry 4. Natural 5. Written Precis 6.Lion 7. SoSo 9. Ebony and Ivory 12. Pediculati 13. Importance 15.Bus 17.Idolise 20. Chair 21. Amie 22. Brie

Good luck with this, my penultimate effort! Answers (and anything else you would like to see in the newsletter) to me by 20th June please.*Ed*

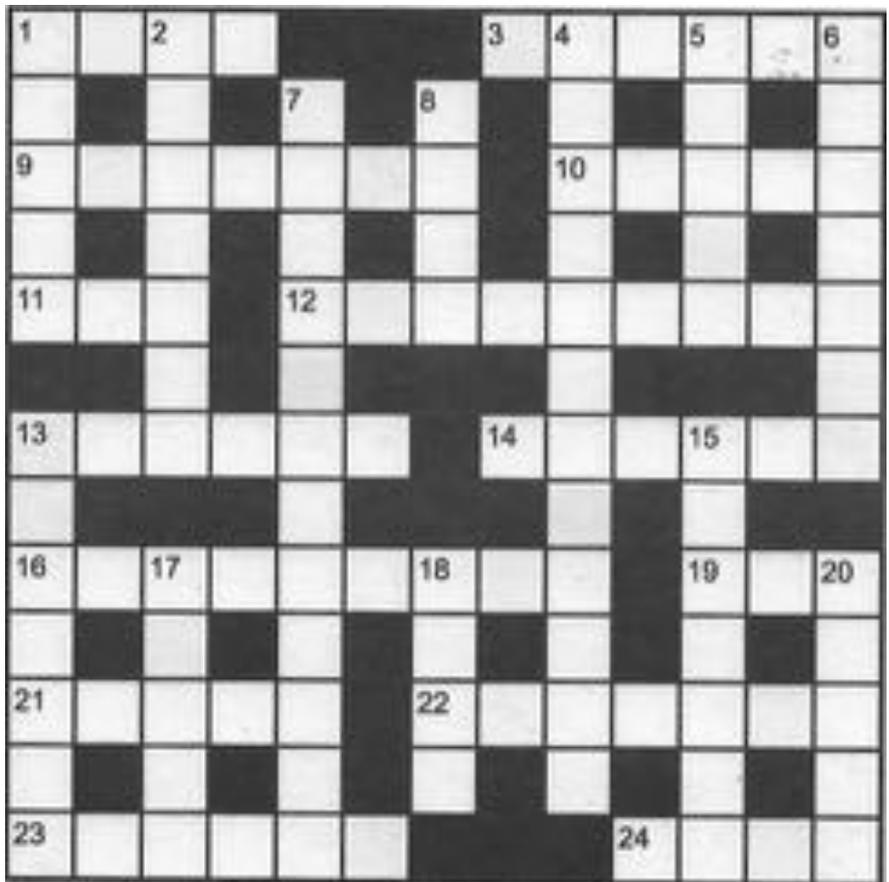
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## Clues Across

1. 4840 square yards. Sounds painful! (4)
3. American government is often described as a system of '..... and balances'. Perhaps they come from Prague! (6)
9. Frozen food store, on the governments 'Green list' (7)
10. Small insect followed me. I wonder what he intended? (5)
11. Not me, a female sheep. (3)
12. Novel by Charles Dickens set in the fictional town of Coketown. ( 4.5.)
13. As a child I was given such a book every year. (6)
14. Mary Tudor was given this nickname because of her cruelty (6)
16. Celebrating re Joseph's cake topping. (9)
19. There will be trouble if this hits the fire! (3)
21. 1953 film starring John Wayne and Geraldine Page.(5)
22. 'Monday is .....day' (7)
23. Recurring images in patterns, designs, literature or music.(6)
24. Beth took Louise Bonne of Jersey to a Conference. We hear they are an odd couple! (4)

## Clues Down

1. "..... with me" is a famous hymn, sometimes sung at funerals. (5)
2. A clergyman after fish eggs in a famous Girls' school.(7)
4. A loathsome git could turn out to be a specialist doctor.( American spelling!)(12)
5. A lucky thing to wear on a bracelet (5)
6. It's Fay's turn to please. (7)
7. Russian composer and piano virtuoso born in 1873. (12)
8. A river in Central Europe which flows from the Czech Republic to the Baltic Sea.Sounds smelly! (4)
13. The first of the Old Testament patriarchs and father of Isaac. (7)



15. An illegal position on the playing field (in football, rugby, ice hockey, etc.) (7)
17. John's sister in early old fashioned reading books (5)
18. Mid Western U.S. state, sounds in debt.(4)
20. They can be Siberian, Bengal, Malayan or one of several other species. 100 years ago there were c 100,00 in the world. Now there are fewer than 4,000.(5)

## A Fishy Story

Some time after the Ark landed, God was in touch with Noah again. To Noah's surprise, he was asked to build a second craft.

Would it be the same as the first one, Noah enquired.

'No, this one is special – it's just for fish.' God answered.

'For fish?' Noah asked. 'Any particular sort of fish?'

'Yes, indeed, Noah,' came the reply. 'For carp.'

'I see', said Noah, who didn't really see at all. 'Any special construction requirements?'

'I want a hold, at least ten decks, and an upper deck at the top. It has to be a multi-storey carp ark..'

## Counting Heads

A rather self-important Bishop visited one of his churches to preach and was dismayed to find only a handful of people in the congregation.

'I say, my man,' he said to the vicar. 'Didn't you tell them I was coming here today?'

'No, my Lord,' replied the vicar. 'And I can't think who did.....'

The secret to living well and longer is: eat half, walk double, laugh triple and love without measure.

Tibetan Proverb.

