

Wheatland News May 2026



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

Editorial



I love the month of May. Although tree blossom is generally coming to an end, hopefully there won't be anymore frosts and tender annuals and perennials like dahlias and pelargoniums can be planted out. We're seeing sheep and lambs and cows with their calves in the fields again. If you fancy a spot of stargazing, if the sky at night is clear you might see the Eta Aquariids meteor shower from the beginning of May to about May 20th each year with peak activity on or around May 6th. The Arietids shower is then visible towards the end of the month, from around May 22nd. There are also 2 full moons in May, on 1st and 31st May which is rare. On May 3rd just after sunset, look to the west to spot a celestial "swarm". The stars of the

Beehive Cluster will appear to buzz just below the crescent moon. Take a closer look, and you might notice one of the "bees" has a reddish hue—that's Mars joining the fun.

Perhaps, because of boasting two public holidays and the colour that fills gardens and fields, it is the National Smile Month in the UK. The annual cheese rolling at Cooper's Hill near Gloucester, which sees runners hurtling downwards after a wheel of cheese, normally happens on spring bank holiday Monday. But if you think the UK has strange traditions, on the 13th May, in America, you can celebrate Root Canal Appreciation Day. I think that's one I'll give a miss.

Wheatland News Local Coordinators

Please send reports to your contact for your parishes listed below.

The deadline for getting your contributions for the **June 2026** edition of WN to the **Local Coordinators or the EDITOR** will be **noon on TUESDAY 20th May 2026**. Due to editing and printing deadlines, late submissions **CANNOT** be included and will be sent back to the submitter for inclusion in the following month's edition.

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HEATING OIL

The government has released over £50 million of targeted support to help low income and vulnerable families in rural communities struggling with heating oil costs to help tackle surging prices. Heating oil is different from other energy sectors in that it does not have the same consumer protections and is not regulated by Ofgem.

This money is being released by a new "Crises and Resilience Fund" and is distributed through unitary and county councils. The Shropshire Council website seems a bit confusing, in one section it states £750k is allocated to heating oil payment, not sure if this is actually ring-fenced for heating oil payments, but it still says details are being worked out. The section on the CRF has some details on how to apply. If you, or if you know of anyone who might be eligible to receive payment from this fund, see the page <https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/shropshire-council/crisis-and-resilience-fund-crisis-payments-welfare-support-team/> this gives some details on eligibility for the fund and how to apply. It seems you can either phone 0345 678 9078 or apply through email to localsupport@shropshire.gov.uk giving information about personal circumstances including details on savings and bank statements. From the website it appears that phone would be the best approach.

The price of crude oil is fluctuating widely and is often linked to what is being said and reported in the news. No one knows when or if things will return to normal, and although we may be coming to warmer months, the worry of not knowing if people can afford to heat their house can be a real issue. Because this is a new fund, replacing the previous Household Support Fund, it could be that eligibility and how to apply are not widely known. Please help anyone who you think would benefit from this.

Brown Cleef group of Parishes



Brown Cleef Benefice

Rector – Revd Joe Simons
 The Vicarage, Ditton Priors, Shropshire, WV16 6SQ
 01746-599217 07872-464276
 browncleebenefice@outlook.com

St John the Baptist, Ditton Priors, and Holy Trinity, Wheathill and Loughton

CHURCHWARDENS:

Carole Smith Mark Smith: 01746-712394

St Michael & All Angels, Aston Botterell

CHURCHWARDENS:

Anne Preece: 01746-787237

Ben Upton: 07870-160039

St Giles', Chetton

CHURCHWARDEN:

**Sheila Millington:
01746-789443**

SS Peter & Paul, Cleobury North

CHURCHWARDENS:

**Mike Bradbury: 01746-787676
Jane Bufton: 07716-877421**

All Saints', Neenton

CHURCHWARDEN:

Dot Cartwright: 07854-559474

Brown Cleef Services for May 2026:

Saturday 2nd May.

2.00pm	Airman's Memorial Service	Rev Joe Simons	Eudon George
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Sunday 3rd May. The Fourth Sunday after Easter. (White)

9.30am	Holy Communion	Rev Joe Simons	Ditton Priors
11.30am	Morning Worship	Rev Joe Simons	Aston Botterell

Sunday 10th May. The Fifth Sunday after Easter. (White)

9.30am	Holy Communion	Rev Joe Simons	Ditton Priors
11.30am	Holy Communion	Rev Joe Simons	Chetton

Thursday 14th May. Ascension Day

6.00pm	Evening Prayer	Rev Joe Simons	Ditton Priors
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Sunday 17th May. The Sunday after Ascension Day. (White)

9.30am	Holy Communion	Rev Joe Simons	Ditton Priors
11.30am	Morning Worship	Rev Joe Simons	Neenton

Sunday 24th May. Pentecost. (Red)

9.30am	Morning Worship	Rev Val Smith	Ditton Priors
11.30am	Holy Communion	Rev Val Smith	Cleobury North

Sunday 31st May. Trinity Sunday. (Gold or White)

10.00am	Group Holy Communion	Rev Joe Simons	Chetton
3.00pm	Pet Service	Rev Joe Simons	Wheathill

Brown Cleef Readings for May 2026

Sunday 3rd May

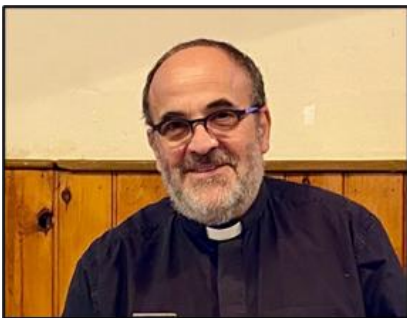
The Fourth Sunday after Easter

White

Psalm 31. 1-5, 15 – 16 (or 31. 1 – 5) (Genesis 8. 1 – 19); Acts 7. 55 – end; 1 Peter 2. 2 – 10; John 14. 1-14.

Sunday 10th May The Fifth Sunday after Easter	White	Psalm 66. 7 – end. (Genesis 8. 20 – 9. 17); Acts 17. 22 – 31; 1 Peter 3. 13 – end; John 14. 15 – 21
Thursday 14th May Ascension Day	Gold or White	Psalm 47 or 93. Acts 1. 1 – 11 or Daniel 7. 9 – 14; Ephesians 1. 15 – end or Acts 1. 1 – 11; Luke 24. 44 – end.
Sunday 17th May The Sunday after Ascension Day	White	Psalm 68. 1 – 10, 32 – end (or 68. 1 – 10). (Ezekiel 36. 24 – 28); Acts 1. 6 – 14; 1 Peter 4. 12 – 14; 5. 6 – 11; John 17. 1 – 11
Sunday 24th May Whit Sunday – Pentecost	Red	Psalm 104. 26 – 36, 37b (or 104. 26 – end). Acts 2. 1 – 21 or Numbers 11. 24 – 30; 1 Corinthians 12. 3b – 13 or Acts 2. 1 – 21; John 20. 19 – 23 or Job 7. 37 – 39.
Sunday 31st May Trinity Sunday	Gold or White	Psalm 8. Isaiah 40. 12 – 17, 27 – end; 2 Corinthians 13. 11 – end; Matthew 28. 16 – end

Reflection for the month by Revd Joe Simons



We celebrate in our churches on 24th May the Feast of Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit to the early disciples, the account can be read in Acts 2.1-21. It is a momentous day for us as Christians as we too celebrate the Holy Spirit the power of God falling afresh on us. It gives us a strength beyond our own to enable us to do what we are unable to do in our own power, but it also cements our relationship with God, a God that is with us always and everywhere.

But that Holy Spirit is at work in all the creative and life giving processes across our entire physical world. As Christians we should work at our ability to listen to God in nature and in the entire created order. This is especially apposite as Pentecost falls in Spring, at time of new life and rebirth, God's creative power an outward sign of God's invisible gracious presence.

This is something that many poets, novelists and artists have understood throughout the years. C.S. Lewis (writer and theologian) wrote:

“All ground is holy and every bush (could we but see it) a Burning Bush.”

How many bushes have we walked past which could have been for us a burning bush?
How many times have we stood on ordinary soil which could have been for us Holy Ground, an opportunity for a meeting with God?

God longs to speak with us, to open up a relationship with us and that needs us to be open and available to look for God in moments of stillness and calm. In a world where so much is in turmoil and the path ahead seems hard to discern maybe now is the time for us to seek out what is already ours, the love of God made real in Jesus, enabled by the Holy Spirit which carries the word of God into our world.

If you are reflecting on your faith and would like a chat, please do get in touch it would be great to hear from you.

Joe



Brown Clee Benefice News

We have had a wonderful few weeks in the Benefice with Easter Services and events. From the Communion and Ashing at the start of Lent, through our Lent Course and services in each parish leading up to Palm Sunday and Holy Week.



We had a fun Easter Coffee Morning at Ditton Priors. The children happily joined in with the Easter Egg Hunt in the church, finding clues and collecting their eggs. The Easter Bonnet Competition was close run, with the bonnets now proudly displayed in church. Thank you to all who came and all who helped make it such a successful community venture. We are already looking forward to our next event.



Holy Week started with our Palm Sunday service at Chetton, evening services each night, a Passover Meal in Cleobury Village Hall (thank you to Revd Val and Keith along with all who attended and gave so generously to our mission fund). Our Good Friday Vigil and new fire compline on the Saturday were very moving services leading up to Easter Sunday.



Easter Sunday saw St John's decorated beautifully. Our thanks go to all who donated to the Easter Lilies and those who dress the church. Revd Joe addressed a full congregation from across the Benefice, with the choir in good voice.



COMING UP – We are continuing with our monthly Gentleman's Breakfasts. We are holding these in The Pavilion, Ditton Priors. The dates for the next three months are; Tuesday 12th May, Tuesday 23rd June and Tuesday 21st July, starting at 8.30am. Please let Charles Gill 07778539942 or the Benefice Office know if you would like to join us.

The building projects at Ditton Priors to bring in drainage and a toilet is ongoing and we are currently raising funds before starting work. If anyone would like to make a contribution towards the cost of the works do please contact the Benefice Office on 01746 599217 or browncleebenefice@outlook.com



A Time for Prayer and Reflection

Please do join us at a time for prayer and reflection every other Thursday starting on Thursday 30th of April at 10.30am in The Pavilion, Ditton Priors. This will last for roughly 1 hour. It is a time to come together to pray as a group into our mission and vision for the Benefice.

It will also be a time to maybe reflect on a passage of scripture or some other reading or event that has spoken to us in a particular way.

Everyone is most welcome. If you feel that you would like to take part please let either Revd Joe or Emma at The Benefice Office know by any of the usual ways

Ditton Priors News *Marjorie Jones writes:*

Spring has well and truly sprung and we are well into British Summertime. The renewal of Spring is always amazing, with flowers, blossoms and fresh greenery a delight for all.

Together with the Blessings of Easter Day, we are all renewed in our faith and thanksgiving. We give thanks for our God-given lives and pray for strength and courage to face whatever lies ahead.

SERVICES

-  Sunday 3rd May. 9.30am. Holy Communion
-  Sunday 10th May. 9.30am. Holy Communion
-  Thursday 14th May. 6.00pm. Evening Prayer
-  Sunday 17th May. 9.30am. Holy Communion
-  Sunday 24th May. 9.30am. Morning Worship

EASTER COFFEE MORNING

28th March. This was a happy occasion and well attended. We raised £423 for Church funds and Easter Egg Hunt and Easter Bonnet Competition were lots of fun. A big 'Thank You' to all who took part.

FIRST SATURDAY COFFEE MORNINGS

Continue in Church, 10.30am- 12.30pm on 2nd May, 6th June, 4th July, 1st Aug. and 5th Sept. There is no charge for this popular community event and all are welcome.

RESIDENTIAL HOMES

Our next visit is on Monday 20th April and then on 18th May.

OPEN THE BOOK

Our next visit into School is on 22nd April when we shall be telling the story of Moses in the Bullrushes.


BRIDGNORTH WALK DAY

Monday 4th May Bank Holiday. The Church will be open from 10.30- 1pm for Coffee and Cakes. There will be a Bric-a-Brac stall and all are welcome.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 12th May at 7pm in Ditton Priors Church. This meeting is open to all, when the Church Wardens and Council Members are elected for the next 12 months and reports given for the previous year. All are welcome to attend.

CHURCH FETE

Saturday 16th May 1pm -4pm - in and around Church. There will be a Barbecue, entertainment by  the Saxophone Ensemble 'Black Eyed Susan's, a variety of stalls and games and the usual Raffle. The Sun will shine, so do come and join us. If you would like to have a stall, or help in any way, please 'phone Marjorie (01746 712 423)

PAM'S PLANTS

Saturday 23rd May 10.30am-1pm. Plants for sale in Pam and Bob's garden (opposite Church) and Coffee and Cakes to be served in Church.







PET SERVICE

Sunday 31st May at 3pm at Wheathill Church. All pets, children and grown-ups are welcome to this informal Service. We all know what a blessing our pets are to us, so let's give thanks for the unconditional love we receive from them.

CHURCHYARDS

The Mowing has begun and let's hope we have no trouble with trees this season. The cost of maintenance last year was £4,554; £950 for tree removal and £3,600 for mowing. We received £1,000 from the Parish Council towards this. I feel strongly that the Churchyards are a Community asset and the Church finds it hard to meet these costs. So please consider donating to this. We all like to see the grounds looking tidy and well-kept in the centre of our lovely Village. Donations to Revd. Joe, Church Wardens, myself or any Church member will be much appreciated. Thank You!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

-  **Saturday 13th June.** Loughton Fete. 2-5pm Details next month
-  **Saturday 4th. July.** Pimms & Puds. 5-8pm at the Pavilion
-  **Thursday 6th August.** Burwarton Show Refreshment Tent.
-  **Thursday 20th. August.** Teas in the Churchyard
-  **Saturday 10th October.** Harvest Supper
-  **Saturday 21st November.** Christmas Fair 10.30am at the Pavilion

CLEANING ROTA FOR MAY

- Sunday 3rd May. Mrs Shirley Wall & Mrs Anita Casswell
- Sunday 10th May. Mrs Anne-Marie Shilling & Mrs Debbie Jones
- Sunday 17th May. Mr & Mrs Dennis Griffiths
- Sunday 24th May. Mr & Mrs John Ballard
- Sunday 31st May. Mr & Mrs Tony Brown
- Sunday 7th June. Mrs Jutta Langham & Mr Steve Allen

100 CLUB RESULTS

£20. Sophie Lloyd

£10. Frances Andrews

3 X £5 to Dennis Griffiths, Amanda Hughes, Andy Johnson

EASTER LILIES

Thank you so much to the many of you who, in memory of loved ones gave donations towards the Easter Lilies. I hope you have been able to visit the church, and see just how many Lilies we had to make a wonderful display.

Shirley.

Wheathill and Loughton News *Marjorie Jones writes:*



Sunday 31st. May. 3pm. Pet Service at Wheathill



Saturday 13th June. 2 - 5pm. Loughton Fete



Sunday 28th June 6pm. Evening Prayer at Loughton



Sunday. 26th. July. 5pm. Songs of Praise at Wheathill followed by a Barbecue

Aston Botterell News *Anne Preece writes:*

We have had the masonry repaired in the church to remould one of the pillars and other stone work that needed doing. Also, the organ has been tuned. This is all adding to expenditure this month. We did not have our service in Aston Botterell for April as it was Easter.

Our best wishes go to Chris Berry who has not been well, but is hopefully recovering also to Sophie who is still ongoing with treatment on her finger after having the end pulled off.



Sunday 3rd May. 11.30am, Morning Worship

Events:



Friday 8th May. Quiz with fish and chips at The Boyne arms at 7pm.

Saturday 27th June. Fete; table tops available for sales .. Musical artists taking part from 11.30am till late afternoon. Refreshments available and ice cream, also cream teas, a family day out. Anyone wishing to book or take part please let Anne Preece know.

Thank you to Ben and his team Dan and Collin for looking after the church ground ... Ben is looking for a sit on mower.

Anyone coming to church ..come from the Bold farm way ...the whislewood road is terrible and a disgrace with POTHLES.

Thank you to all who give their support to us ...

Neenton News *Dot Cartwright writes:*



Sunday May 17th, 11.30am – Morning Worship.

We're all looking forward to summer, and people will be booking their holidays, but don't forget we have our APCM (or AGM as some people call it) on May 13th at 2pm in church.



Another date to remember is June 20th when we will be holding our famous Duck Race and fete at the Pheasant. Hope to see you all there.

The tote winners for the first quarter of the year are as follows;

1st prize Carol Radnor

2nd prize Ian Moreton

3rd prize Sue Hale

Congratulations

Chetton News *Shelia Millington writes:*

Services



Sunday May 10th, 11.30am - Holy Communion.



Sunday May 21st, 10am - Holy Communion, group service.

Flowers & cleaning

Paul & Mo.

Hundred Club

£15.00 Mo Verney no 73.

£10.00 Helen Dunn no 1.

Our Palm Sunday service was well attended with parishioners from across the Benefice. Thank you to the bellringers and choir, Rev Joe and Rev Val.

We had a very enjoyable coffee morning at Church House last month, thank you Lisa for hosting yet again.

Dates for your diary -On May 17th Chetton Heritage Museum in conjunction with the Midland Oil Engine club are holding a show at Lower Cockshutt Farm (WV16 6RF). A tractor run will start off at 10am, always a spectacular sight watching them all drive away in convoy. The show will be open from 9.30am to 4.30pm. There is something for everyone, aircraft, engines, vintage cars etc, also

craft stalls, bouncy castle and plenty of refreshments of all kinds. £8.00 entry, under 12s free. Proceeds towards the Midlands Air Ambulance and St Giles Church Chetton.

Breakfast at the Down - Saturday May 23rd, 9am. Contact Sheila to book your place.

Cleobury North and Burwarton News *Jane Bufton writes:*



Sunday 24th May. 11.30am Holy Communion.

Lottery Results

- Michelle Ritchie. £100
- Jane Bufton. £30
- Pat Warren. £20

Subscriptions for the coming year are now due. If you would like to join the lottery and are able to give to this worthwhile cause, then do let Jane know – she will be coming round soon to collect your subs if you do already belong to the Lottery.

Cleaning and flowers are kindly being done by Megan and Helen Griffiths. Thank you.

Friday 29th May is Julia's Coffee and Chat with lovely cakes at Cleobury North Village Hall between 10.30am and 12.30pm. Do come to join us for this popular get-together.

Ditton Old Photographs & Memorabilia Morning, **Saturday 23rd May.**

The Ditton Priors Local History Group thrives on input from the community and we are continually building the archive with photographs and information from the people of Ditton. However, we know there must still be lots of memorabilia, and particularly old photographs out there that would add valuable historic information to our collection.

So, on Saturday 23rd May, from 10.00am - 1.00pm, we're holding a special open morning at the Village Hall for people of Ditton Priors and its surrounding area to bring along their old family photos, village photos, any historic items related to the village, and of course, your memories of them and old times. We know these things are quite special to those that own them, so we're not asking you to leave them with us, but we would like to copy them or photograph them, there and then, so you can take your originals away with you again.

If you come along, we'd be delighted to see you. And of course there will also be tea and coffee, and time for a good old chat!



The Fighting Cocks, Stottesdon



Exciting news from Stottesdon. Following the so sad loss of Annie, the much loved licensee of the Fighting Cocks last summer, the pub has been closed over the winter months. But on April 1st, a date Annie would indeed have been amused by, the pub was reopened by her children Geogia and Matt, to be greeted by a massive turnout of villagers all there to celebrate the welcome return. There really was standing room only.

Opening hours remain the same, evenings Wednesday, Thursday Friday, and all day Saturday and Sunday. At the moment they will be serving drinks and nibbles only, but they are hoping to open the restaurant side in the future. The pub remains very dog friendly and

is already back to being the living heart of the village. They plan to be hosting functions as required, so don't be shy to get in touch with any events you might have planned.

What better way to support the pub than by popping in for a glass of your favourite tippie, either in the welcoming interior rooms or the ample beer garden?

Cheers!



The Brookes mobile library serves most of the parishes in the Wheatland News area. If you want to see if the library stops near you, refer to the map at <https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/libraries/mobile-libraries/> if you expand the map and click on the picture of a van it will tell you when and where the mobile library stops and how long the van stops for.

The library stops in most places on alternate weeks. If you are not a member of Shropshire libraries you can apply in the van, alternatively you can apply through the library website (<https://libraries.shropshire.gov.uk/protected/join-the-library>) and you can then pick up the card through the mobile library. You'll need to present some form of acceptable ID for this option. The mobile library has a good selection of books in the van, including some with large print and there are some audio books as well. You can also search and reserve books online, there is a small charge for reserving books, you'll also need to register and sign-in the library.

The Willows Country Café, Ditton Priors



Amanda and Karn are excited to announce that following refurbishment the Willows Country Café will be reopening its doors on Thursday 23rd April at the usual premises:

Oak Farm, Station Road, Ditton Priors, Shropshire, WV16 6SS

Opening hours: Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 9.30 to 3pm; Saturday 10am-2pm

With breakfast, brunch and lunch menus and a selection of cakes, there's a wide range of fantastic home-cooked goodies to suit everyone.

Gluten free, vegan and vegetarian options are always available.

Loyalty cards are ready to hand out to you with every hot drink purchased.

Amanda and Karn are looking forward to welcoming you all back to their lovely café.

Brown Clew Community News

Heating Oil Theft

Richard and Cathy Fox, Ditton Priors Oil Collective write:

There has been a spate of oil thefts from the local area, the most recent is in Erdington. Please be vigilant and at the very minimum make sure your oil tank is locked and as difficult to access as possible. We have had thefts in Ditton Priors in the past 12 months, thieves come here because they know so many rural properties use oil for heating.

Brown Clew C.E. Primary School

Danny Harley, Head Teacher shares the work of the Sports Ambassadors:



Written by Zac, Ella, Maisie, Isabel and Ted



What we do?

Being Sports Ambassadors, we provide different sport-related activities for the whole school.

For KS1, we run a club every break time for any Reception/KS1 children that want to do it. We try and make this a fun time with their friends. We also make sure that they have safe, enjoyable and active break. We do lots of different activities - and have made our own timetable, which usually works like this:

- Monday: Outdoor Lego, blocks and construction activities
- Tuesday: Bikes and scooters
- Wednesday: Football
- Thursday: Bikes and scooters
- Friday: Tennis and parachute games

Sometimes, when it's really wet, we do parachute games in the school hall.

We also have organised and led our own P.E. lessons. This has included a multi-sports activity day with all of Fireflies and Grasshoppers. We have also organised an athletics competition for all the children from Reception to Year 4, and a dodgeball competition for the rest of the Year 5s and 6s.

We have even been out of school and got the coaches for some of the Year 3/4 sports teams.

Recently, we wanted to raise some money (with School Council) for some new scooters and bikes for Reception and KS1, so we held a bake sale and raised over £250!

How do we do it?

We have five members: Zac, Ella, Maisie, Isabel and Ted. We all work really hard to make sure that the younger children see sports and being physically active is a really fun thing to do. It does require us to give up quite a lot of our break and lunch time, but it's so enjoyable to do that we don't mind at all. We also feel that it's really important that, as older children in the school, we can be role models to inspire others - which we all find really rewarding.

We are all really proud that we were selected to be Sports leaders/ambassadors. We are really determined to help others to like sports, like we do! Seeing the younger ones have fun is brilliant; however, we have loads of fun doing it ourselves. We really like that we have been trusted with the responsibility to do it, and that we are given the chance to organise and run everything independently ourselves. We feel really confident leading activities and everything that's involved with it.

Brown Clee Surgery Patient Participation Group. *Tina Ranson Writes:*

The PPG holds 4 meetings a year, and anyone who is a patient of the Practice can attend. Ideally we ask that people contact the PPG (browncleppg@gmail.com) so that we can make sure we do not exceed the capacity of the hall.

This may be a real possibility at the next meeting on Tuesday 21st April, as we have a speaker from Counterweight, an organisation which has been commissioned by the NHS to help people diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes. Katrina Campbell is going to explain the help that is available to such patients, and we hope that lots will take up this opportunity.

In addition, we are expecting to meet two new Practice Partners - Dr Wendy Matthews and Dr Clare Bravey, who will tell us about recent changes in the Practice and their plans for the future.

If you would like to come to any of our meetings please contact us by email, or ask Surgery for my phone number. Browncleppg@gmail.com

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

An abundance of blossoms made for a blooming good show!

April's meeting of the gardening club is traditionally our Spring Show and what a show it was! The challenge each year is to see what is in bloom in our gardens and to find flowers that have not been either battered by wind and rain or scorched by sunshine. Many varieties of daffodils had come and gone quite early this year, but tulips seemed to be in their element, just in time for the show. Blossom too seemed to be in abundance and so the village hall was filled with wonderful floral displays. Elsie Jordan was again our judge this year and as always she carried out her duties with care and professionalism. Elsie commented on the quality of the entries and how difficult her job had been choosing from so many worthy entries. She said it had been the best standard she had seen at the club and Elsie has been judging for many, many years.

The Jack Brazier shield which is given for 'best in show', was awarded to Tricia John for a pot of stunning tulips. Tricia had won the tulip bulbs in the gardening club raffle at the October meeting and planted them up in the autumn. What a super story! Tricia was also awarded first prize in the

'Pot of Spring bulbs' class, so well done Tricia. Other entries worthy of a mention were Judy Robertson's single daffodils, Glenys Allen's small vase of mixed flowers, Ruth Henley's vase of blossom, Laura Jones' large flowered double daffodils, Sue Johnson's bowl of succulents, Molly Jones' hellebores and Margaret Link's mixed daffodils. Finally, the much coveted prize for the longest stick of rhubarb went to Ruth Henley and I believe it was two feet long! We must find out Ruth's secrets of success. The 'overall show winner' prize this was a draw between Laura Jones and myself, so we were each awarded a trophy and therefore there was no runner up this year.



Whilst the judging took place, members enjoyed a cuppa and home bakes, kindly served by Sharon again this month, and a catch-up with friends before beginning the challenge of the gardening quiz. Our experienced Chair, Sheila Maddocks set the questions, using her extensive knowledge, to produce a very tricky quiz. This year's winners were Tricia John, David Wall and Sally Harris. Well done to them! Laura Jones once again took on the coordination of the entries to the photograph competition and did an excellent job of displaying them to great effect. The winning entry was from a new member, Sue Johnson, who had captured a beautiful image of a bee pollinating a flower. This will be used as the cover image on the gardening club's printed programme for 2026-27.

The next meeting of the gardening club is on Thursday 14th May which will be our AGM followed by the annual plant sale. This is the final meeting on this year's programme at the village hall until October. We will be

holding our annual garden visit in June, when we will be going to Aulden Farm near Leominster. The final gathering of the club is the member's picnic which we will be holding at Stockton Bury Gardens, Kimbolton in July.

If you would like more information about our gardening club and its activities, please contact me.

Bev Harris

Secretary Burwartonanddistrictgardening@gmail.com (07933724728)

Brown Clee Young Farmers Club

Brown Clee Benefice would like to thank the Young Farmers for a very successful joint Quiz and Curry night back in March, and for the money raised for Benefice funds – The Young Farmers do so much for charity and to support the local community. We look forward to future events.



Chetton Village Hall.

Sue Bayliss writes:

The hall has just past its 60th anniversary, and is in good order after the many improvements we have undertaken.

The Plants Sale is to be held between 10am and Noon on Sunday May 17th.

We are due to receive the KAVS from the Lord Lieutenant on 5th June, and are looking forward to attending the Chetton Annual Community Meeting on May 20th.

We would appreciate any support you are able to offer the village hall committee, for booking inquiries and any other information please contact Sue on 01746789239.



Chetton Annual Community Meeting

20th May in Chetton Village Hall from 7 pm. Talks on local topics, a special presentation and light refreshments.

From Rosie Buggins-Allsop

Cleobury North Village Hall. *Sharon Jenkins writes:*

May 2026

Late spring is bringing all manner of weather to the area. On Saturday of last week, we very much had all of the seasons in one day in Cleobury North and it was interesting to see how the bright spring sunshine turned into hail and snow within an hour. Hopefully we have a great summer ahead and it will be nice to sit outside and watch the world go by, in this beautiful part of the country.

May bookings include meetings for the Burwarton Show Committee, Shropshire Community Health Trust, Brown Clee Football Club, Burwarton Parish Council and we are happy to welcome the Shropshire Hills National Landscape to our Village Hall.

Just a reminder that the Bridgnorth Lions are doing their Junior Walk on the 4th May 2026, which starts and finishes at Cleobury North Village Hall. The theme this year is "Community Matters".

As we move forward to 2026, the Village Hall is looking to put on some local craft events, to support local crafters and makers and will continue to fundraise to ensure that the village hall continues to thrive. Also, we are looking at actioning an in-door table top sale in the summer for local people.

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

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

Cllr. George Hollyhead – May 2026

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

I trust everyone had a lovely Easter break. It was wonderful to catch up with some of you at the Easter Sunday Service at St John the Baptist Church in Ditton Priors.

You will all be aware that, at the end of February, Shropshire Council voted to increase council tax by 8.99%, after receiving special permission from the Government to exceed the normal 4.99% limit. This rise took effect on 1 April 2026.

For an average Band D property, this means an extra £162 a year (roughly £13.50 extra per month) on top of any increases from the police, fire service, and your parish or town council. Many of you in Brown Clee have already shared how stretched household budgets are, with rising energy costs, fuel for rural living, and day-to-day pressures. This hike is simply too much for hard-working families, pensioners, and those on fixed incomes in our rural wards.

I spoke out strongly against this increase and voted against the motion at council. Unfortunately, we were outvoted with 44 councillors voted in favour and 21 voting against.



I voted against the rise for 2 main reasons:

1. Residents are paying more but getting less local services.

Despite the significant rise in Shropshire Council tax, services — especially vital road repairs and maintenance in our rural area — are unlikely to see any substantial improvement. At the same time, the council is pushing devolution, limiting the services it provides locally and shifting more responsibilities onto parish and town councils. These parishes will then need to raise their own precepts to fund the extra work — which essentially means another stealth council tax rise for residents. I have been advising parish councils in our area not to agree to these devolution deals until we get proper clarity and fair funding.

2. We must tackle waste and inefficiency first.

Before asking residents for more money, the council should deliver real savings through better management, reduced bureaucracy, and a sharper focus on frontline services. With the Government providing substantial Exceptional Financial Support (including £121.4 million in loans for 2026/27), there was breathing space to address waste rather than immediately increasing the burden on taxpayers.

I fully recognise the pressures the council faces, however I do not believe the heaviest burden should fall on households in rural areas like Brown Clees.

The increase is now in place and will have appeared on your April bills. If you are struggling, please check the council's website for any available support or do not hesitate to get in contact with me directly.

What I will do next

I will continue to fight hard to make sure residents get the services they need and deserve — especially now that you are paying so much more in tax. I will also keep strong pressure on the council to cut unnecessary spending, reduce waste, and deliver genuine value for every pound you contribute.

In regards to the roads, I have finally been able to get regular meetings with the local Head of Highways, Andrew Keyland, which is something I have pushed for since my election. I can now ask directly to prioritise certain pothole repairs on the waiting list, which has seen an increase in the rate of repairs around our ward. Please report any potholes via Fix My Street. If nothing has been done after a few weeks, get in touch with me or your local parish clerk (with the reference number) and I will contact Andrew directly on your behalf.

As always, do not hesitate to get in touch regarding any local issues that I can assist with via my email george.hollyhead@shropshire.gov.uk

Warm Regards

George

Cllr. George Hollyhead

Brown Clees Division

george.hollyhead@shropshire.gov.uk

07484 541513

DITTON PRIORS HALLS

HORSE RACE EVENING

SATURDAY
23RD MAY
7PM



own a horse in the race for £3 & a chance to win the "Overall Horse Owners Trophy"

PLOUGHMANS SNACK LICENSED BAR

£8 per person

**Tickets available at
Parker Motors**

**Ditton Priors
Village Hall
Station Road
WV16 6SS**

Ditton Priors Halls Social Committee. *Louise Tyson writes:*



Ditton Priors Ladies Friendship Group 2026. *Gill Severn writes:*



Ditton Priors Ladies Friendship Group are holding their next meeting on Wednesday 6th May at Ditton Priors Pavilion at 7:30pm.

Ade Robinson is coming to share some of his knowledge of gardens and gardening with us. We are very much looking forward to the evening, plus we are also holding a plant swap.

Non members welcome, £3 on the night. Please contact Margaret Bill 01746 712030 or Gill Severn 07972 501738 for further information.

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

Thanks to everyone who supports the Friends. There are several projects in progress at the moment including the installation of water and a toilet and improvements in the heating and lighting.

If you are interested in becoming a member at £10 a year, please contact one of our trustees.

We will be at the church fete on May 16th if you would like more information.

Debbie Lowe 01746 712368 07773 181877

Pippa Martin 07581 073474

Helen Groves 01746 712466 07969 526445

Marjorie Jones 01746 712423

Ruth Jones 01746 712029



Jo's Slow Stitching' workshop at the pavilion in Ditton Priors.

On Friday 17th April we hosted a lovely day enjoyed by many people who stitched small pieces inspired by their local community & landscape. The small pieces will create a larger piece which will be displayed within the Brown Clee Benefice church group later this year. Thanks all for attending and huge thanks to the Willows cafe who supported the workshop.



Mayflies *by Clive Jackson*

During May if you are near water, you might see the emergence of winged adult Mayflies, so named because they start to appear in May. "Mayfly" is not a single species but represents an entire order containing multiple species.



Mayflies (order Ephemeroptera) are aquatic insects whose immature stages (nymphs) live in freshwater, while winged adults are short-lived and

primarily focused on reproduction. "Ephemeroptera" is derived from the Greek word for "lasting a day," this order of insects earns its name from a notoriously short-lived adult lifespan, which can last less than 24 hours.

They are key components of freshwater food webs and are widely used as bioindicators of water quality because they change quickly with pollution, sediment, or low oxygen.

The greatest threat to Mayflies comes from pollution, including sewage, pesticides and heavy metals from industrial

effluent, which can particularly affect nymphs.

Even modest levels of pollution can have an effect, killing up to 80% of mayfly eggs before they hatch.



Nymphs are preyed on by fish, amphibians, and even some birds as well as invertebrates like caddisflies, stoneflies and dragonflies.

As a key part of the food chain, any pollution that impacts the nymphs also has repercussions for anything that relies on them for food, so can have a serious impact on the wider ecosystem.

After mating, the females dip their abdomens into the water and lay their eggs, which fall to the riverbed. They hatch into nymphs, which spend the best part of two years in their larval form feeding on algae, vegetation and plant matter before emerging as adults and restarting the cycle.

Did you know?

- There are two adult stages. The sub-imago, or 'dun', is the dull, brown-coloured winged form that first emerges from the water. Then, after a second moult, mayflies become an imago, or 'spinner', the full adult form.
- Mayflies are the only insects with a winged "pre-adult" stage that moults again into the adult.
- Most adults have reduced mouthparts and don't feed; their brief adult phase is mainly for mating and egg-laying.
- Across the order, adults typically live from a few hours to a few days, while nymphs can grow for months to several years.
- Mayflies are older than the dinosaurs. They were the first winged insects to evolve, and there are fossils dating back more than 300 million years.
- Over 3,000 species of Mayfly are known throughout the world
- The hatch of the giant mayfly *Palingenia longicauda* on the Tisza and Maros Rivers in Hungary and Serbia, known as "Tisza blooming", is a tourist attraction.
- Nike produced a line of running shoes in 2003 titled "Mayfly". The shoes were designed with a wing venation pattern like the mayfly and were also said to have a finite lifetime

As well as Mayfly, many other insects and beetles are emerging in May. Ladybirds will be seen in numbers feeding on aphids. We might get frustrated by flies around us but along with things like woodlice they feed on dead and decaying material and help to break down detritus. Butterflies and moths will appear feeding on nectar from flowers. It's important to understand these small creatures are some of the most important animals in the food chain, allowing and encouraging these creatures to thrive affects all other wildlife.

Acton Scott Heritage Farm: Visiting and Volunteering

by Alison Benbow

Hello to all those who loved taking their children/grandchildren to **Acton Scott Heritage Farm** before it closed. I am included in this, so I thought an update from someone who enjoys volunteering there was a good idea. So, here goes, with an insight into visiting the Farm and being a volunteer for anyone who may be interested in coming along.



As a visitor I took my daughter and her two young children there on Easter Monday and they loved it in the same way my children did all those years ago. There is plenty to see and do including; the fabulous Shire horses Edward and Bernie, the Gloucester Old Spot pigs Dulcie and Joan, Dulcie amuses with her snores and Joan delivered three enchanting piglets the night before, Golden Guernsey goats, geese, hens and chicks, and of course the Dairy Shorthorns and the adorable Shropshire sheep with their cute lambs. There is butter making in the dairy on some of the open days and you can come into the Bailiff's Cottage to see what the Bailiff's wife or Granny Bailiff is up to. There is a play barn too (who knew my grandson had such a good aim) and all things spinning and weaving can be seen in the fleece barn. There is also a play area and a great café (open Wednesday – Sunday even when the farm is closed), so a great outing overall and I will certainly be taking them again. There are specialist weekends to come, and workshops too so check out the website for details. <https://actonscottheritagefarm.org.uk/>.

The farm is open 10:00 – 16:00 every Saturday and Sunday and bank holidays until 1st November and Wednesdays to Sundays in the school holidays.



So, onto volunteering. Those of us who volunteer do it because we love the place and we are a friendly enthusiastic and expanding team committed to making the farm a success. It is a charity so relies on us for all sorts of tasks both small and large and I have done many things from tour guiding, cooking on the range as the Bailiff's wife (well probably, Granny) to weeding, cleaning and our favourite task of raking leaves, no skills needed for most of the tasks just enthusiasm. We also have a Sewing Bee once a month where we make costumes and other essential items and work on our patchwork and rag rugging.

Volunteering is great fun, social and rewarding, if you fancy coming along for an hour or so, or longer then please follow the directions for volunteering on the website and we would love to see you. Volunteer days are usually Wednesdays, and the Sewing Bee is the first Wednesday of every month. For more details see <https://actonscottheritagefarm.org.uk/>, and please email sabrina.cleevly@ashf.org.uk. With any questions about volunteering.

Alison



The Severn Valley Group of Parishes

Rector: Revd Kina Robertshaw - Revkinarobertshaw@gmail.com

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

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

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

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

St Mary, Highley

CHURCHWARDEN

Carl Hinkinson

St Mary, Billingsley

CHURCHWARDEN

Vacant

St Peter, Chelmarsh

CHURCHWARDEN

Vacant

St Bartholomew, Glazeley

CHURCHWARDEN

Vacant

Severn Valley Benefice Services

3rd May

9.30am	Morning Prayer	Chelmarsh
10.30am	Holy Communion	Highley

10th May

9.30	Holy Communion	Chelmarsh
10.30	Morning service	Highley
6pm	Evening Service From Egyptology to Stottesdon; Rev Sally Wallace-Jones	Billingsley

17th May

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

19th May Ascension Day

7pm	Holy Communion	Highley
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24th May Pentecost

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

31st May Trinity Sunday

10.30am	Highley	Benefice communion
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Chelmarsh News:

Our Easter Services went well. On Palm Sunday, we began with a procession outside the church, with lusty singing of "All Glory, Laud and Honour". The end of the procession was a verse behind the front and by the time we all got into church we decided to skip the last two verses. But otherwise it was a great success. On Good Friday we held a meditation on the cross in the church. The cross was the shrouded in a purple sheet and taken to Billingsley to place in its Easter Sepulchre. There was a good attendance on Easter Sunday morning and in the afternoon Glenys Williams revived the Easter Egg hunt, held in her garden.

The annual parish meeting took place on April 12th, We are delighted to welcome David D'Arcy to the PCC. Anita Manley has now stood down as electoral roll officer after a number of years of service; we are very grateful to her. Please speak either Anita or myself (David Poyner) if you might be able to help; you do not need to join the PCC and the work is mainly checking there are no changes to the roll before the annual parish meeting. The church finances are stable; whilst there has been heavy expenditure on the building and the churchyard, we have been able to claim back much of the money spent on the new loures for the bell tower by grants. We are particularly grateful to the Shropshire Historic Churches Trust for their support.



All our May services are listed in the table at the start of our section for the Wheatland News.

Last month I reported on the work to tune the organ. This involved some gymnastics on the part of the organ tuner and his assistant, as can be seen in the adjacent photograph. However, I am pleased to report it was worth the trouble, At our service for Passion Sunday in March we were pleased to welcome as organist Rachael Davenhill, who normally plays at Glazeley. She expertly played our newly in-tune instrument.

Billingsley News:

Our Easter services went well. On Good Friday we received a shrouded cross from Chelmarsh, to be placed in our Easter Sepulchre. This represents the body of Christ, laid in the tomb on Good Friday evening to rest there until Easter Sunday. Then, at our 8am communion, the shroud was removed and the empty cross was restored to the altar, to symbolise the resurrection. The Easter Sepulchre dates from the early 14th century, when these ceremonies would have first been performed.

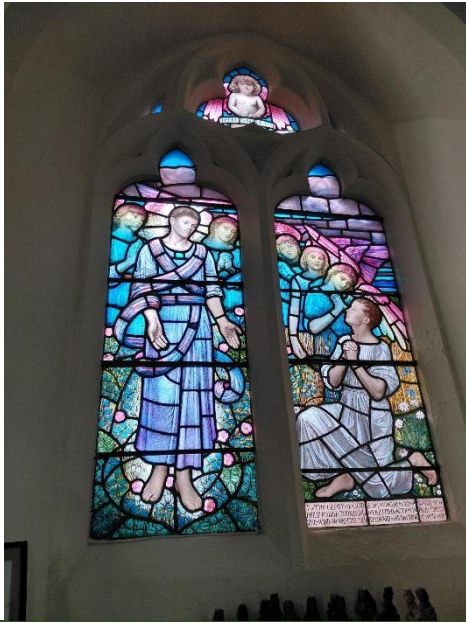


We have had two musical events of note at Billingsley. The first was in March, with the Daddy's Hat concert. We welcomed guitarist Jonny Owen who specialises in Spanish music and Marcy and Ami, from the Cleve Hill Liberty Band, who combine the piano accordion and banjo. So we had very different musical styles. We had 24 people attend; the most we have ever had for a Daddy's Hat at Billingsley. Then, our first evening service of the year was on Sunday 12th April, when Michael Timms put together an hour of recorded sacred music with an equally good attendance. Music is a place where all can meet and feed their own spiritualities, regardless of whether they identify those with God.

In May, we have our usual 8am communion service on the 4th Sunday of the month. In addition, our 6pm evening service on the 10th May features the new vicar of Stottesdon, Sally Wallace-Jones. Sally started her working life as archaeologist, specialising in Ancient Egyptian pottery. After marrying and tiring of spending 6 months each year in Egypt, she retrained to become a teacher, before experiencing the call to ordination. Sally will be talking about her journey and how it has now brought her to Shropshire.

We are continuing to organise local history exhibition in the church (June 13th/14th) combined with a bric-a-brac sale and offering refreshments. If anyone has old photos of Billingsley and would allow us to copy them, please contact me (David Poyner).

Glazeley News:



Our Mothering Sunday service back in March went very well, with a good congregation. We also had a good turnout for Easter Day; particularly notable were the chocolate Easter eggs, brought specially from Italy for refreshments and the shortbread Easter Bunnies, surplus from Billingsley.

Our next service is Holy Communion on 14th May at 10am.

The windows and gutters at Glazeley Church have been cleaned by David Crook. The wonderful stained glass in our windows now glows with their original colour in the morning sunlight.

Our next breakfast at the Down will be on Saturday 23rd May at 9am. All are welcome. The cost is £10. Please let Marion or Sheila know if you want to come (07918 559043, marion.corfield@talktalk.net; skm268@hotmail.co.uk).

Chetton's Holy Well



In 1893, R.C. Hope published a book listing all the Holy Wells he knew about in England; it remains a key work for those interested in folklore. In this he describes a well at Chetton, next to St Giles's church. He had been told that last person to use it was one Mary Anne Jones. She had been "dipped" in the well in 1817 when she was 11 and had died in Chetton aged 24 about 1830. He was given this information by her surviving sister.

The Rev Southwold, vicar of Chetton and Glazeley (who had exactly the same problem as myself in finding stories to fill the parish magazine....) wrote about the well in 1939. He had checked the parish registers and discovered that Mary Anne Jones was actually born in 1817 and died in 1840; Sheila Millington has confirmed this from her copies of the parish registers. I suspect Mary Anne had her encounter with the well within a year or so of her birth. The Rev Southwold had been told a villager within "comparatively recent times" used to bathe his eyes in the water.

The well was recently visited by Lyn Parnaby and myself with permission of the landowner. It is close to the church and may well have been used as a water supply for the church and early villages around it. The well (actually a cistern fed by a spring) is now enclosed with three brick walls and covered with a concrete cap. A pipe connects it to a pump a few yards away. This looks to have been installed around 1910-20; it is a "cottager" style of pump made by Evans of Wolverhampton and carries their characteristic rampant lion trade mark. The Rev Southwold noted the presence of the pump with approval as it made it much easier to get water from the well. No dedication is known, but St Giles was associated with healing.

The water in the well is clear, although I am not sure I would want to bathe my eyes in it. The Rev Southwold claimed it had never been known to fail. After our wet winter, it was full.

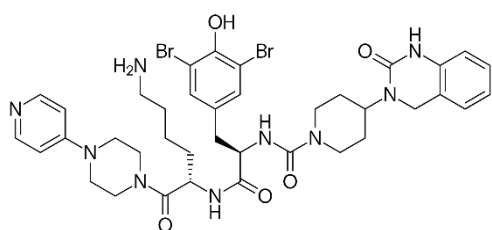


Molecule of the month; Calcitonin gene-related peptide (CGRP) and migraine by David Poyner

I am writing this article a few days before I go to Zurich for an international meeting on CGRP. CGRP was discovered in 1982; I started to do research on it in 1988, and it has been my constant companion ever since. I have published numerous papers about it and given many talks at conferences. All of this has been forgotten almost as soon as it was done. Science is all about very small steps and moving quickly on. This month is a story about CGRP and migraine; something I have not worked on as I knew there were far smarter people than myself following it. However, as I hope you will see, it has taxed even their ingenuity.

CGRP is a peptide (a very small protein) found in nerve cells that report sensations such as pain. These types of nerves are found almost everywhere in the body and so almost every organ in the body will have some CGRP. It was first discovered as a chemical that causes blood vessels to expand. We now know that it is important in protecting the body against infection or injury. Blood is needed to nourish our cells; if they are in trouble, they need more nourishment and hence more blood to help them survive. CGRP also sensitises nerve cells that report pain; a heightened awareness of this is important to reduce injury. Sometimes the natural protective mechanisms are activated inappropriately and do harm instead of good. This is what happens in migraine where nerve cells that connect to blood vessels on the surface of the brain become active. These nerves contain CGRP and they start to release it. That causes more blood to flow through the blood vessels, stretching them and the CGRP also activates pain sensors in the brain. This results in the throbbing headache that is associated with migraines, and it can be a very debilitating condition. Existing treatments for migraine provide effective relief for less than half of all serious sufferers and the best drugs also have side effects that can be dangerous for people with heart disease.

Around the turn of the millennium, people first became aware that CGRP levels were elevated in people



*Olcegepant, a first generation
CGRP blocker*

who were having migraine attacks and that drugs that provided relief lowered these levels back to normal. The drugs in question worked indirectly to reduce CGRP actions and so a number of drug companies started to hunt for agents that could block CGRP directly. At the time, this seemed like a tall order, as the type of protein that bound CGRP to cause pain (the CGRP receptor) was from a family that was notoriously difficult to target with drugs. What nobody knew was that there was a quirk with the CGRP receptor that made it possible to hit with conventional(ish) drugs.

The first drugs available would not dissolve in water; fine for a scientist like myself to play with (and I did!), but no use in clinical setting. The first drug that would dissolve so it could be turned into a conventional pill showed great promise in clinical trials. It was effective as the existing agents but without any side effects on patients who also had heart conditions. However, trials to see if it could be used long-term to prevent migraines before symptoms started revealed a problem. In a small group of patients, it caused liver damage. The drug had to be abandoned.

One response was to produce an antibody against CGRP. This binds to it as soon as it is released from nerve cells and neutralises it. The complex between CGRP and the antibody will not bind to the CGRP receptor. However, antibodies need to be injected, and this is not as convenient as a pill. The alternative approach was to try and engineer the existing drug to replace that part that was causing the liver damage. This has been done and now the “second” and “third” generation CGRP antagonists have successfully past clinical trials and are starting to be prescribed for forms of migraine that cannot be treated with conventional pain killers. After around 20 years of work and hundreds of millions of pounds, drugs have at last appeared.

Blow trumpet, for the world is white with May

May is the month of blossom, generally white but if you look you will see different whites. Spot the lovely cherry, “hung with bloom along the bough” as our very own Shropshire poet, A E Housman wrote. The cherry is soon joined by the apple trees, white tinged at the edges with pink, the crab apple and even the pear is worth a quick look at. The April hawthorn is still in bloom and will be changing whites until June



So with good reason to get out and about this month, with milder weather and hopefully some sunshine too, what is your excuse? I have a few suggestions about where you might go. Given what I am involved with, it will not surprise you that the local church and their churchyards are top of my list. There is so much to see and hear in these places and it is all free for you.

The Churchyard Task Teams from Caring for God’s Acre will be all over the County as usual this month, and anyone is welcome to turn up and take part or just watch what is going on. so from the 5th onwards they will start May in Clungunford and the following day in Acton Scott. Clungunford is like a large field so some scythers will be cutting grass, trying to avoid the flowers still in bloom like the cowslips which we are so fortunate to have in abundance in Shropshire. In Acton Scott there should be bluebells still in bloom and ivy to cut back.



The following week the teams will be in Stoke St Milborough on Tuesday the 12th and Kynnersly Cemetery on Thursday just north of Telford. At Stoke St Milborough you can check out the churchyard and the nearby Holywell, dedicated to St Milburgha, our own Shropshire saint. Culmington is the place to be the following week. (19th). This church has Saxon origins in abundance, which means you can stand by a wall of herring-bone bricks that are 1500 years old and still standing. I am sure embroiders and needleworkers will recognize this pattern immediately. (nearby Diddlebury has an even bigger wall like this) On the Thursday 21st the team will be scything the ground in Cressage and the same will happen in Knowbury on the 26th and Buildwas on the 28th. There is so much going on and just down the road from many of us.

In the north of the county, the church at Petton will be celebrating the feast day of one of their saints on the 16th May. It is an extraordinary building which only acquired a dedication to Saint Raphael and St Isadore as a treat for the millenium but goes back 4 hundred years. It has had all sorts of additions and changes in that time too. Next year it will celebrate its 400th birthday.



I could go on for ever. I will be starting May on a coach trip organized by Shropshire Churches Tourism Group visiting 4 churches and a pub for lunch, and all for £35. Another outing planned for September/October. Maybe I will meet you on it but in the meantime get out and about in your local area enjoying the treasures we all too often take for granted.

Anni Holden Calver,
Secretary of Shropshire Churches Tourism Group
Trustee of Caring for God’s Acre

Daddys' Hat



Daddy's Hat began his fifth season of music and poetry at Billingsley in March, continuing at Bridgnorth in April. This month, on Saturday May 16th, Ragni & Bob of Brown Clee will be entertaining our generous and enthusiastic audience at Highley, for the first time there. Do come and join them at 3pm, for just an hour of folky favourites! It's all free (including refreshments) but the Hat welcomes donations towards expenses at the hosting church.

Wheatland News and Loughton Chapel are delighted to announce the publication of Jim Hurford's wonderful recollections of 'a life well lived'.

Jim was (like Ruby at Wheathill) a Church Warden at the tiny chapel next to Loughton Hall, for around forty years, before retiring to Arden Grange, where Shannon and Sarah began helping him to write down his memories (with original monochrome photos!) of rural family life, farming and forestry, which span more than eighty years work, across mid Wales and Shropshire.

Badger Print are currently producing the resulting booklet, commissioned and financed by a few of Jim's friends, to raise some conservation funds for his beloved Loughton Chapel.

A special introductory offer will be 'buy one, get one free', assisting distribution and good will towards Jim's unique gift for our community. Pre-publication reservations are already flooding in via Daddy's Hat, under which the finished history will be displayed very soon. Phone 01746 787419 to get listed for a fiver bargain, delivered by hand!

MANY THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THIS AND PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF THE WHEATLAND NEWS. IT'S WORTH MENTIONING THAT IF YOU HAVE AN EVENT THAT YOU WISH TO BE PUBLISHED HERE YOU NEED TO THINK UP TO 6 WEEKS IN ADVANCE.

FOR EXAMPLE, FOR AN EVENT AT THE END OF THIS MONTH (MAY) WE NEED ARTICLES IN BY THE 17TH OF THE PREVIOUS MONTH (APRIL) IN ORDER TO GIVE US TIME TO COLLATE, FORMAT, PROOF-READ, SEND TO THE PRINTERS, AND OF COURSE GET PRINTED AND DITRIBUTED.

THE LAST FEW DAYS LEADING UP TO THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS CAN BE QUITE HECTIC AND STRESSFUL FOR THE EDITORS AND COORDINATORS. WE DO APPRECIATE EARLY SUBMISSION FOR EVENTS AND ARTICLES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE NEWSLETTER, IT MAKES EVERYTHING RUN MUCH MORE SMOOTHLY AND GIVES US TIME TO MAKE SURE EVERYTHING IS CORRECT AND FORMATTED.

THANK YOU

Stottesdon group of Parishes

St Mary, Stottesdon CHURCHWARDEN Clare Tibbits: 01746-718007	St Giles, Farlow CHURCHWARDENS - VACANT – please contact the key holder, Pam Phillips – 01746-718475	Holy Trinity, Sidbury CHURCHWARDEN – vacant – please contact the key holder, Andrew Sierakowski - 07934- 714149
St Mary, Cleeton St Mary CHURCHWARDEN Sue Dolphin: - 01584-890583	St John, Middleton Scriven CHURCHWARDEN - vacant – so contact Parish Rep Ann Constable 01746-789420	St Michael, Silvington CHURCHWARDEN - vacant – so contact Parish Rep Katie Hickman

Rector – Revd Dr. Sally Wallace-Jones. Email: revsamwj@gmail.com Phone: 01746 599057 / 07999 482107

Services in Stottesdon in May

Sunday, 03 May

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

Sunday, 10 May

9.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Cleeton St Mary
10.30am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Stottesdon

Sunday, 17 May

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

Sunday, 24 May Pentecost (Whit Sunday)

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

Sunday, 31 May Benefice Group Service (Trinity Sunday)

10.30am	Holy Communion	Revd Dr Sally Wallace-Jones	Sidbury
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Sunday, 07 June

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

Stottesdon Church Facebook page



Sally is posting reflections, pictures and details on the Stottesdon church facebook page. To look at, follow or comment on postings, please search for “Stottesdon Church” on facebook. You can do this from a mobile phone app, PC app or from the facebook webpage through any browser of your choice. To access this, you do not need to sign up to facebook, it is an open page.

A link to facebook is also available from a church near you:

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/10731/>

Click on “News and Services” and click on the “News Stories” tab and this should open the facebook page.

News from Cleeton St Mary

Sue Dolphin writes:

100 Club numbers for February.

£20, Gill Eyre	50.
£10, Albert Davies ,	37
£10, Margaret Taylor	4
£5, Chris Cuthbert	25.
£5, Jeff Dolphin	58.

News from Stottesdon



Spring has really arrived and whilst we may think the weather challenging a recent trip to Devon showed a side of the UK we really don't see in Shropshire.

This is Haytor on Dartmoor on Monday 13th April, not quite teeshirt weather but a beautiful day. I cant show you a photo of the following day as heavy rain and thick mist obscured everything with visibility down to about 20 metres. Nevermind, the mission was to find more copy for the the Wheatland News in the shape of a new addition to the household in Shropshire.



Here is the new puppy now at 5 weeks old and already a star. It's a few weeks before she can make the trip to Shropshire but she is sure to feature in future editions as she makes her presence felt and settles in at her new home. She has a very long and fancy kennel name but there is still work in progress to find a suitable everyday name for such a dignified little dog....any suggestions....there might even be a prize. Don't forget the name must have 'shout-ability'....and if you don't know what that is ask any dog owner to explain.

Ed: we'll be seeing and hearing a lot more about this bundle of fun in the coming months

No news from Silvington or Sidbury this month

News from Middleton Scriven

Ann Constable writes:

At our coffee morning in April, held in church, Matt and Donna Picken were our volunteers on 'kettle duty'. They made delicious flapjacks, lemon cake and rhubarb cake to go with the teas and coffees. A special thank you to Matt's mum for her delicious scones too. We were delighted to see church with all our tables filled. The cafe style layout works very well in our reordered church as there are no Pews in the way!

Thank you to the 20+ people who supported this community event some of whom are pictured below.



Middleton Scriven Annual plant sale: Saturday May 9th. 10-2pm including teas/coffee and cake. Plus, bake sale and raffle too! Please come and support this event.

Have you been busy in your garden, splitting up plants or growing things from seed? If you have any spare plants then we would be very grateful for all donations. These can be dropped off at church on the morning of 9th May or alternatively at Ann Constable's. (contact 07843209465)

Our Regular community coffee mornings take place on the second Saturday of each month (10-12 in church with teas/ coffees and cake.) Thank you to our volunteers running these.

News from Farlow

Caroline Bilson writes:

APRIL 100 CLUB WINNERS

Julie Howells	27	£20
Sylvia Best	74	£10
Helena and Mike Hales	42	£10
Edward Howells	52	£5
Brian Beddoes	60	£5

Many thanks to the Editors of the Wheatland News for the exciting new format!

Stottesdon and District WI

On Wednesday 15th April we held our monthly WI meeting at Chorley village hall. We had an excellent turnout for our mystery tasting session led by our Secretary Della Ransom and her daughter Tegan.

We were split into small groups to taste samples of the same food or drink and guess which was the most expensive and which was the cheapest and then we looked at value for money. In general, the groups' ability to distinguish between the most expensive foods (usually the branded ones) and the cheaper foods was very variable. Many of the samples looked very alike and conclusions boiled down to preference for taste and we know how susceptible we are to foods with added sugar or salt which tends to mask the taste of ingredients but appeals to the taste buds.

Most remarkable was the price of the two shopping baskets with a difference of over £16.00 between the cost of the branded goods and the cost of the cheaper goods, a startling result! However, I can't give up my Heinz ketchup, the alternative just isn't up to scratch in my opinion!

Needless to say, we finished up with the wonderful cake our home bakers produce.

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

Debbie Haynes, President of Stottesdon and District WI

07780113869, debbiehaynesflp@hotmail.co.uk

Date of the next meeting 20th May 19.30 at Chorley Village Hall when the subject will be Artificial Intelligence.

Stottesdon and District WI Fundraiser in aid of the Air Ambulance and the Stottesdon and District WI.

Farlow Village Hall 23rd May 2026, Doors open at 19:00 for a 19:30 start.

Donations of a minimum of £5 per person with Chilli and veggie Chilli available for £1.50 with gluten free baguettes and tortillas available.

Come and have a fun evening with delicious food and help support the Air Ambulance and the W.I.



Mums
and
their
babies



Biological clocks and the rhythms of life by Drew Oliphant

Every evening in our oceans, billions upon billions of zooplankton make a daily commute from the deep, dark waters where they hide away from predators during daylight hours. Their destination is a phytoplankton feast in the shallow waters where these algae bloom. This 'daily vertical migration' is the greatest synchronised movement of life on the planet, and it is co-ordinated by biological clocks.

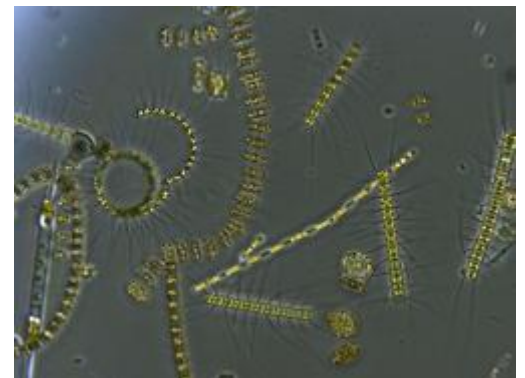


Zooplankton from the Gulf of Naples, Italy
Image credit: Zingone *et al.* 2019 Nature Conservation
doi: 10.3897/natureconservation.34.30789

Life evolved under predictable environmental changes in (e.g.) light-intensity, humidity, temperature, and food availability caused by the rotation of the Sun-Earth-Moon system. Biological clocks are self-sustaining oscillators, synchronised by external cues, which enable organisms to adapt their physiology and behaviour in advance of predictable environmental changes, rather than responding to them. Incredibly, biological clocks evolved across the tree of life, from bacteria to fungi, plants and animals. The circadian (~24 hrs) clock co-ordinates daily rhythms of physiology and behaviour and is the best studied biological clock as it is most relevant to us humans. In 2017, the Nobel

Prize in Physiology or Medicine was awarded to three American scientists who, in the 1980s and 90s, first discovered the circadian clock works in animals. Our advancing knowledge of the circadian clock workings helps improve our understand of how daily changes in our physiology influence health and disease and how disruption to circadian clock function can negatively impact our health. This knowledge is increasingly considered in the timing and method of drug delivery, the timing of operations, and the management of night-shift work. It has also enabled us to recognise artificial light at night as a problem which not only affects humans, but also the animals and plants living close to human habitation.

Beyond the circadian clock, there are an incredible range of biological clocks which operate at different timescales; for example, circa-lunar (~28.4 days), circa-semilunar (~14.2 days), and circa-tidal (~12.4 hrs). Such clocks enable some truly breath-taking natural phenomenon, such as the migration and spawning of land crabs, coral mass-spawning events, and lunar reproductive swarms and bioluminescent displays of marine worms (*Odontosyllis*). Christopher Columbus and his crew may have encountered such a bioluminescent display as they approached San Salvador Island in October 1492, describing the sight as "the flame of a small candle alternately raised and lowered".



How lunar and tidal clocks work remains a mystery. I am part of a team of scientists trying to understand the circa-tidal clock in marine crustaceans. We and others have demonstrated that the circa-tidal clock (~12.4 hrs) uses many of the same components as the circadian clock (~24 hrs). As such, these clocks share a common evolutionary origin but have become specialised for different time domains. The mechanisms by which these two clocks are tuned to different time domains is unknown, but we are working to understand this!

Mass on a small Island by Roger Cook



A Sunday in Madeira, International Women's Day 2026, pale sunshine, a light breeze. What to do? Go to mass at the Se, the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption, a late fifteenth century gothic building in the vey centre of Funchal, the capital port city of this young island.

A young island? Well yes, at a mere five million years, the result of a volcanic event off the West Coast of Africa, it is indeed a geological infant. Undiscovered, entirely unpopulated, before Portuguese adventurers came ashore in 1419.

Verdant, Madeira means 'wood', Funchal means 'fennel', it was quickly exploited for its agricultural potential. Henry the Navigator introduced sugar as a cash crop from Sicily and Portuguese settlers became rich on the proceeds.

Slavery was sadly introduced, more for domestic purposes than in the fields, with slaves being shipped from West Africa, but also from the original population of the Canaries. The sugar crop began to fail in the later 16th century, and at the same time the Portuguese realised that with higher temperatures they could manage two harvests a year in Brazil instead.

What next for the island? They moved on to the production of fortified wine, a product that would happily endure export by slow trading vessels. Madeira wine became a staple drink amongst the prosperous of Western Europe, its popularity nicely exemplified by it being the tincture of choice at the toast when the American Declaration of Independence was signed two hundred and fifty years ago this July.

Trade with Flanders and the Low Countries meant the importation of some fabulous ecclesiastical art. Silverware, sacred art and altar pieces were shipped to be used in the churches and convents of the island. A stone's throw from the cathedral, do visit, if you get the chance, the Museum of Ecclesiastical Art. It is a treasure trove set in a most handsome building with stunning views over the roof tops of the port city. The tile work alone is worth the admission.



And so, to the celebration of mass. In honour of the special date, all female attendees were given a carnation on entry. A fine gesture, all the more notable as the congregation was about a thousand souls, perhaps two thirds of whom were women and girls. The mass of course in Portuguese, but with one bible reading in English. Family groups, children being herded into pews, push chairs in the side isles, latecomers standing by the fine collection of side chapels.

The sharing of bread and wine was necessarily shared by a number of appointed celebrants using the side chapels to avoid a total scrum! As we looked sideways, we realised there were more attendees in our one pew than we normally worship with on a Sunday morning in Shropshire. And another difference.....you couldn't see your breath!

As for the coffee and cakes element, a street corner café with espresso and pastel de nata for 1.80 Euros hit the spot very nicely.

If you have similar experiences of faraway worship, why not let the Wheatland News know all about it? We look forward to hearing from you.

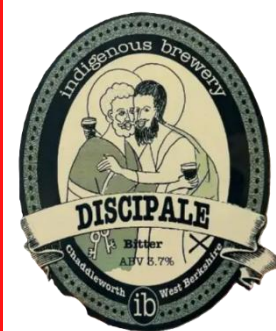
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May has two official holidays in Britain. **May Day** is a festival of ancient origins marking the beginning of summer. Traditional English May Day celebrations include crowning a May Queen and dancing around a maypole often circled with ribbons. The earliest records of maypole celebrations date to the 14th century, and by the 15th century the maypole tradition was well established in Britain.



There are several interpretations of the symbolism of Maypole dancing, but perhaps the most popular is that simply they were a part of the general rejoicing at the return of summer, and the growth of new vegetation. To get the right pattern on the pole the dance itself is quite intricate. May Day celebrations were abolished and its celebrations banned by Puritan parliaments during the Interregnum but reinstated with the restoration of Charles II in 1660.

Whitsun is the name for the Christian holy day of Pentecost. It falls on the seventh Sunday after Easter and commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus' disciples. **Whitsuntide**, the week following Whitsunday, was one of three holiday weeks for the medieval villein; on most manors he or she was free from service on the lord's demesne this week, which marked a pause in the agricultural year.



Whitsun was one of the favourite times in the traditional calendar, and Whit Sunday and the following week, was a time for celebration. This took the form of fêtes, fairs, pageants and parades, with specially brewed **Whitsun ales** being popular. The word "ale", in the sense of an ale-drinking party, was part of many compound terms for types of party or festivity based on the consumption of ale or beer. The word "bridal" originally derives from **bride-ale**, the wedding feast organised to raise money for the couple.



The official givers of the Whitsun-ale were usually two wardens (usually church wardens, ahem!) who, after collecting subscriptions in money or kind from every one of their fairly well-to-do parishioners, provided celebrations and amusements. After the feasters had eaten and drunk to contentment (or beyond), they took part in sport on the turf of the churchyard, or on the village green. Wrestling, boxing and quoit throwing were popular; while mummers and Morris dancers entertained.



Photo by Tim Green from Bradford - Morris Dancers, York



Being at the end of May, Whitsun was often associated with good weather and people often wore new or their best clothes making it a very colourful festival.

In this edition of the Wheatland News are several things to do in May like the Chetton Heritage Museum show on Sunday the 17th May, visiting Acton Scott, or simply go to the Fighting Cocks in Stottesdon or The Willows in Ditton Priors.

These holidays have been celebrated for hundreds of years. Do something fun over them – it's your ancient right.