



The Window

March 2025



“Oidhche Bhlas Burns”

As a secret lover of haggis and all things Scottish, I felt incredibly lucky to be able to wander down The Street and step into a glorious village celebration of Burns Night at Ipsden Village Hall on the evening of Saturday 25 January.

Hot on the heels of the previous week’s pantomime hilarity, Burns Night in Ipsden followed suit – with enthusiastic ‘tartan-touched’ audience participation in a fully-fledged and called *Ceillidh*, and a huge and generous effort by the organising committee.

A big thank you to Dylis Beaumont for masterminding the whole event, as well as educating us all on the finer details of Robert Burns’ life (who knew that he had 12 children and 4 wives before he died prematurely at 37?). James Sutherland lifted the evening with live bagpipes to greet guests on arrival and to pipe in The Haggis.

Rev’d John Blair showed us all a side of him that we rarely see, as he brandished a large kitchen knife before disembowelling the hapless Haggis whilst addressing and toasting the night’s second most celebrated participant. Jeff Hayward delivered the Grace in a traditional Scottish manner.

Continued on page 2



"Oidhche Bhlas Burns" (Continued)

Gary Magill walked a fine line in his Toast to the Lasses, whilst Fiona Hayward replied with humour and panache. Both risked being upstaged by Holly Munoz, who had the hall enraptured with her original and touching poem ("Toast t'oor Toon"), a heartfelt ode to Ipsden which brought the house down. Fortunately for most, Gill Munoz gave us a translation of her brilliantly executed Burn's poem, else she might have been only one of a few that could follow the story line!

The hall was festooned with tartan bunting, and the evening was a sell-out. The splendid menu including a glass of something fizzy on arrival, as much haggis, neaps and tatties as anyone could dream of. And finished off with the delicious, traditional Scottish Cranachan (cream, oat and raspberry desert) plus, of course, a 'wee dram' for each guest.

The hall was bursting at the seams as young and old got up to reel the night away to Allison Butcher's expert calling of old favourites such as the "Strip the Willow" and "The Dashing White Sergeant". Huge thanks to Dilys and to all those who set up, cooked, announced, recited, served, and cleared up for all your hard work. A great and enjoyable evening was had by all, so thank you for coming along and raising just over £1,000 for the St Mary's Church Restoration Fund. Most impressive!

Michelle Paisley

Editor's Notes: Thanks to Gill Munoz for the photographs and, in case you're wondering, "Oidhche Bhlas Burns" is a traditional Gaelic greeting roughly translated as "Happy Burns' Night"; a "Ceilidh" is a social event with Scottish folk music, traditional dancing and perhaps some storytelling. Robert Burns was born on 25 January 1759 and each year this day is celebrated as a tribute to Scotland's National Bard.



Lawn Bowls

Pangbourne Bowls Club are looking for anybody who is interested in playing bowls during the summer period. Experience isn't necessary, and an open day is being arranged for a date in April.

Pangbourne play friendly and league games, so you can be as competitive as you like. Social events also take place during the summer. If anybody is interested in giving it a try give me a ring on 07958235124.

Tim Elvin

The Food Bank Needs You!

We have a wonderful team of volunteers from both North Stoke and Ipsden villages who take weekly food donations from both churches over to Springwater Church in Sonning Common. The food is sorted and packed before being picked up by local delivery volunteers and delivered to our clients in local villages.



Thank you for your ongoing support. Please continue to help us; you can do this in a number of ways. We always need donations of packets and tins of nonperishable food, cleaning fluids, toiletries, dog and cat food, nappies and baby food/milk; boxes are still kept at both churches for donations.



You can donate money, either regularly or on an ad-hoc basis, to the Food Bank via Shirley at the Post Office in Ipsden. And you can join our band of volunteers, which entails giving about two hours of your time on a Thursday morning once a month and packing bags alongside another member of our team.

Please contact me if you would like more information or if you can help: 07972 831030 or vcstretch@aol.com

Vicky Stretch

Ipsden Garden of Remembrance

Thank you to all that showed an interest in helping to create a Garden of Remembrance in Ipsden churchyard, it will be good to have as many hands/ heads on board as we can muster. We would like to hold a small meeting at the churchyard on Friday 21 March at 10.30am just to talk it through with everyone, no actual work yet, just talking.



Please come along if you can, even if you haven't committed to helping, as we would appreciate any ideas you may have to help us create a lovely garden of remembrance. Hopefully by March we will all be enjoying some lovely Spring weather. Best wishes.

Wendy Conway

Help for Ukraine

My son (Eddy of pantomime fame!) and I are off to Ukraine again in early April and would like to fill the pickup that we are taking with as much useful stuff as we can cram in. We have been asked to bring portable generators (new or second hand) and medical supplies in particular, but please no clothing. If people want to make a financial contribution then I would be pleased to make the necessary purchase. Many thanks, please get in touch if you can help: Guy@hildred.net

Guy Hildred



From a previous trip to Ukraine made by Guy

Dates for Your Diary

Sat 8 March	Denny Webb Painting	See February issue
Wed 12 March	Ipsden Coffee Morning	See page
Sat 15 March	Cholsey Repair Café	See page
Fri 21 March	Remembrance Garden Meeting	See page 4
Sat 22 March	Denny Webb Painting	See February issue
Sat 29 March	Sheperd's War	See page 10

Distribution of The Window

Thanks to Vaughan Williams and the team of volunteers who give up their spare time to deliver paper copies to homes in Ipsden, Mongewell and North Stoke. The Window is available online on the Ipsden village website and some paper copies are held in the Ipsden shop for individual collection.

Ipsden Village Lottery Winners

25 Jan	Jenny Booth	15 Feb	David Kelley
1 Feb	Wendy Conway	22 Feb	See next issue
8 Feb	No winner	1 Mar	See next issue

Ipsden Village Lottery Tickets

There are numbers available for the Ipsden Lottery, which helps fund our Village Memorial Hall. A ticket is £1 per week, payable in 10-week blocks, with the winning number worth £25 each week. The winning number is the Saturday night bonus ball number in the National Lottery. If you are interested in joining, please talk to Shirley in the shop to arrange payment and to choose your number.

Clare Davis

This newsletter is edited, published, printed and distributed by the churches of Ipsden and North Stoke. The copy deadline for the next issue will be 21 March please.

March and April Church Services

As well as during services, both churches at Ipsden and North Stoke are open daily during daylight hours for visits and private prayer.

Date	Ipsden	North Stoke
Sun 2 March	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Holy Communion
Wed 5 March	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Wed 5 March	<u>Ash Wednesday</u>: Team Service (including Ashes): 7.30pm at St Leonard's Woodcote	
Sun 9 March	10am Service of The Word. First Sunday in Lent: Zoom Meeting Id 188 513 761 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Wed 12 March	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 16 March	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Holy Communion
Wed 19 March	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 23 March	9.30am Morning Prayer	11am Morning Prayer
Wed 26 March	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 30 March Mothering Sunday	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Holy Communion
Wed 2 April	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 6 April Passion Sunday	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Holy Communion
Wed 9 April	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 13 April Palm Sunday	10am Service of The Word. Zoom Meeting Id 188 513 761 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Wed 16 April	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Fri 18 April	GOOD FRIDAY: WORDS FROM THE CROSS. 12 noon at St John the Baptist, Mongewell	
Sun 20 April EASTER DAY	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Holy Communion

View from the Vicarage

Welcoming Spring: A Season of Renewal



As the chill of winter begins to fade and the first signs of spring emerge, we are surrounded by a sense of renewal and hope. March is a time of transformation, where we witness the beauty of nature coming back to life. The days grow longer, the air becomes

warmer, and the landscape is painted with vibrant colours of blooming flowers and budding trees. Spring is not just a season; it's a reminder of the resilience and renewal that we all experience in our lives. It's a time to embrace new beginnings, whether it's starting a new project, rekindling old friendships, or simply taking a moment to appreciate the beauty around us.

A Prayer for Peace

In the spirit of renewal, let us also turn our thoughts to those in need of peace and healing around the world. The ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East have brought immense suffering to countless individuals and families. As we enjoy the tranquillity of our own community, let us remember those who are not as fortunate.

We pray for peace where the conflict has caused so much pain and displacement. May the leaders involved find a path to a lasting resolution and may the people of Ukraine and Gaza experience the peace and stability they so desperately need. May this spring bring not only personal renewal but also a renewed commitment to peace and compassion for all. Let us work together to build a world where everyone can enjoy the beauty and promise of this season.

Terrifying, the world in the hands of leaders who believe they are, in a deeply religious sense, the saviours of beleaguered nations now being resurrected.

Both Franklin Graham, son of American evangelist Billy Graham, and Prime Minister Netanyahu have compared President Trump to King Cyrus, the mysterious pagan Persian ruler credited as the agent of God's divine plan for helping Jews return from exile to Jerusalem 2,500 years ago. Cyrus shows up in Chronicles saying, *"The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of his people among you may go up and may the Lord their God be with them."* In Isaiah, God chooses Cyrus *"to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armour ... so that you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel."*

Continued on page 8

View from the Vicarage (Continued)

Vladimir Putin, on the other hand, has a complex relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church. He uses the church to promote a sense of national identity and unity, and his government has closely aligned itself with the Orthodox Church, using it to justify various political actions and to present Russia as a guardian of traditional Christian values.

This relationship is part of a broader strategy to position Russia in opposition to Western secularism and to strengthen his domestic support. It is as though this Vladimir sees himself as Vladimir the Great, who converted to Christianity in a pact with Basil II in 987 involving marriage and military enterprise. Vladimir then ordered the Christian conversion of Kyiv and Novgorod, where idols were cast into the Dnieper River after local resistance had been suppressed.

Both modern leaders have used Christianity to bolster their political agendas, but they do so in different ways. Both leaders use Christianity not just as a personal faith but as a tool to advance their political goals and consolidate power. Do you not find these strategies concerning? Whatever their involvement in immoral activities, Presidents Putin and Trump seem assured of the populist support of modern Christians who long for a return to power, no matter what the cost in lives or souls.

"Nearly all men can withstand adversity, but to test a man's character, give him power." Abraham Lincoln

*Blessings All,
Canon John*



Ipsden Coffee Morning

Do come and join us in 2025 - it's fun!
The next coffee morning is on Wednesday
12 March.

Clare Davis



Cholsey Repair Café

Cholsey Repair Café will be back on Saturday 15 March 2025. Doors at The Cholsey Pavilion will be open from 10am to 12.45pm and our team of repair experts will try to help you fix all manner of household items. We have to give fair warning that modern coffee machines tend to be a bit too complex for their own good but many other tools, kitchen gadgets, electrical items, items of clothing and even smaller pieces of furniture can often be restored to working order.

We make no charge for help, although spare parts must be paid for and we appreciate a donation towards operating costs. Have a look at www.cholseyrepaircafe.com for more information and advice.



Ian Wheeler

IPC Notices

An Ipsden Parish Council (IPC) name plate has been fitted above the notice board that is on the village shop wall. The notice board is used by the Parish Council for posting the minutes of the last IPC meeting and the agenda for the next IPC meeting, together with other information of relevance to parishioners that can be passed on via the notice board.

Ipsden Parish Council



Used Postage Stamps

We are still collecting for the charity "Dogs for the Disabled". Please bring your old postage stamps to Shirley at Ipsden Village Store.

Shepherd's War



Soldiers of
Oxfordshire
Museum

A series of events will be running alongside the popular *E H Shepard: Before and Beyond Winnie-the-Pooh* exhibition which opened at Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock earlier this year, including a talk by James Campbell. Also titled *Shepherd's War*, will take place at 2pm, Saturday 29 March 2025, and will see Campbell detail the life of Ernest Howard Shepard before he drew Winnie-the-Pooh, and explore the illustrator's experiences in the Great War.

E H Shepard has delighted generations of children with his charming drawings of Winnie-the-Pooh and friends. However, before the bear, he used his artistic talent to document his time in the trenches during the First World War, through a series of humorous caricatures, cartoons, and sketches. Serving as an officer in the Royal Artillery, he fought both on the Western Front and in Italy during the First World War. Shepard was initially considered too old to join up at the outset of the war, but would cover the events of the war as it unfolded through his regular work for *Punch* and other publications as a political cartoonist. However, by 1915, he was in uniform and undertaking officer training. From his early training he illustrated comical scenes and observations from around camps and barracks, and continued to make quick sketches wherever there was time when at the frontlines.

James Campbell
Shepherd's War
2pm
SATURDAY 29 MARCH 2025
An afternoon talk on the life and work
of E. H. Shepard

[Book Now](#) ▶

Starting on 20 February, during half-term, and continuing throughout school holidays up to the end of the summer, the museum will host Teddy Bear Tea Parties for young children alongside family craft workshops, including kite-making, crafting simple puppets, and animal-ear headbands themed around the characters from Hundred Acre Wood. More information about each of the activities on offer is available on the museum website, as well as the ability to book spaces in advance. See www.sofa.org.uk/whats-on

Duncan Parsons

Wellness for the Staff Too!

Like many of us extra food may have been consumed by our hospital staff over Christmas and the New Year; probably uniforms at Wallingford Hospital are feeling a little tighter! With that in mind our team have embarked on a regular "Wellness Walk."

Twice a week, led by our far too enthusiastic therapy team, we do a few laps of the playing field. We have been informed this may progress to running but hoping that applies to them, not us! It's just a fun way of staff getting off the ward for a little while, getting some fresh air and doing some gentle exercise.

Once a month we also have a bring-and-share lunch with staff bringing in yummy food from different countries and cultures. This may I fear rather defeat the campaign to shed a few pounds, but I'm prepared to take the risk!

The picture shows us before the walk, probably fewer smiles afterwards!

Siobhan Bennett



The Window Needs You!

Thank you to all those who contribute and help to make The Window inclusive to those who dwell or work in Ipsden and North Stoke. We always need articles. And that's where you come in! We don't have any reporters, almost all the contents have to come from those in the villages. That's you!

You might be surprised: what seems mundane and everyday to you may be interesting and new to others. And we are approaching that wonderful time of the year – Spring and Summer – when there are many events and much wonderful scenery. Please don't be shy and leave it to the "Regulars"! Just let us know if you need help or guidance. Send your contributions to ipsden.window@gmail.com

The Editor

Homer Snowdrops

*Oh, little white lily, where did you come from?
With the wind's cry so bitter and cold?
How did you venture out through all the snow,
When there's no other flower to be seen?*

These words are taken from a Welsh Poem.

We always welcome snowdrops, much like the bluebells a little later in the year. They are such a herald of Spring, pushing their way through snow or frost, they symbolise hope, fertility, renewal and rebirth.

Snowdrops are often associated with new beginnings, and with the ability to overcome challenges and to triumph light over darkness. So they have much folklore attached to their delicate blooms.



In a lovely German Legend, snow is portrayed as a gentle visitor seeking the colours of flowers to create a beautiful landscape. Most flowers turned it away but the kind-hearted Snowdrop welcomed the snow with open arms.

In return for its kindness, the snow decided to make the snowdrop's white petals even more radiant, symbolizing how generosity can lead to unexpected rewards and beauty in our world.

Diana Jackson

With thanks to William Jackson for the lovely photographs at Homer Farm.