



# The Window

August 2025



## ROMANCE IN NORTH STOKE

*(OR ANY EXCUSE FOR A PARTY?)*

From a school playground in Wales via a career in the RAF to settlement in North Stoke, their love has sustained them, driven them, and grown to envelop a whole village. Andrew and Dorinda Jones reaffirmed their Marriage Vows in St Mary's Church on 29th June, to mark their 40th anniversary. Villagers gathered round to help with preparations, arrange the flowers, supply endless canapes, erect canvas around the Village Hall, fill the church of course, and finally distribute bubbly. There was one moment of panic when the "the Kiss" had to be repeated for the benefit of the photographer!

It was a gloriously hot day for a party, but men dispatched to dress in shorts sandals and colourful shirts to eat and dance night away in and around the village hall well late into the night. The hog roast and the cake helped soak up the ale.





## **Ipsden Churchyard a Haven for Wildlife & People?**

Ever wondered what wildlife you might find in your local Churchyard? I have! New to Ipsden, encouraged by our local church, and with the aid of *Caring for God's Acre* resources and some helpful locals, I have been discovering the wonderful plants and animals that make St Mary the Virgin's churchyard their home.

Firstly, I set about making a habitat map, with the help of aerial maps, a burial plot plan and several visits to the churchyard itself. Then I conducted various surveys to see what is already there and provide a baseline for any future changes in management.

Eighteen bird species have been found to make use of the churchyard to either roost, breed or feed so far. The usual ones you might expect to see in your garden, like Blackbird and Robin, but also finches (Goldfinch, Chaffinch and Greenfinch), Wren, Dunnock and the UK's smallest bird, the Goldcrest. There have been surprises too, with Kestrel and Sparrowhawk both using the relative safety of the churchyard as a quiet place to feed on their prey, and other raptors like Red Kite using a boundary tree to roost in. A Corn Bunting making a tree its song-post was another highlight

A plant survey has also been an eye-opener. The list is currently up to 67 species (not including boundary shrubs & trees), 38 of which are associated with the grassland. There are species present indicative of calcareous grassland including Hoary Plantain, Small Scabious and Mouse-ear Hawkweed as well as frequent Lady's Bedstraw. A species count of a few 2m x 2m plots yielded an average count of 15 species per square (indicating the sward is of moderate quality).

No reptiles have been found, as yet, but a short-tailed field vole brought a smile to my face, sheltering under a survey 'tin' one morning.



Gradually I have been building a database of records, which will help to inform the current management of the churchyard and be fed into a national database.

The hope is to encourage more wildflowers by leaving some grassland areas uncut for longer, and to develop other measures, to create a more diverse range of habitats over time.

I would love to hear from you if you want to get involved, or let me know what you've found there too!

**Emma Magill**



## THE NEXT IPSDEN PARISH COUNCIL MEETING



on **Tuesday 23 September 2025** in the Village Hall at 6.30pm

**All are welcome.**

The agenda is posted a few days before the meeting on the **Ipsden Village Website Home** (PC Agendas & Minutes page) and on the **Parish Council** notice board outside

### RAISING MONEY FOR AIR AMBULANCE

Shirley at the Village Shop has kindly allocated a limited space in her window as a "Book Swap". The idea is that was that you buy a book for £1.00 or you swap a book for a book.

Please observe this **one out, one in** rule strictly, otherwise the books pile up and the area becomes unmanageable.



The idea should work, with people having new books to read whilst the Air Ambulance receive the money.

### Save the Date for Ipsden Bingo!

Come and join us on Saturday 4th October in the Village Hall for a fun night of bingo. For those who don't know how to play there will be a coaching session at 6pm and the evening will start at 7pm.

Books will be £10 for adults or £5 for half a book and £1 for children.

All proceeds towards the renovation project at our beautiful church, St Mary the Virgin.

**Shirley Merrick**



## Nettlebed Arts and Craft Show

The Nettlebed Arts and Craft Show will be held over the weekend of 2 and 3 August at Nettlebed School Community Hall. It will be open from 11am until 6pm on the Saturday and from 10am until 4.30pm on the Sunday, with free entry. Tea and cakes will also be available. If you are interested in exhibiting, please email [nettlebedas@gmail.com](mailto:nettlebedas@gmail.com) and ask for an entry form.

**Fiona Hayward**



## Music is Back at the Barn

Once again there will be live music on a summer's evening in the courtyard of the beautiful eighteenth-century barn at Ipsden Farm, on Saturday 9 August from 6pm until 9pm (gates will open at 5.30pm). There will be free parking for those attending at Ipsden Farm, The Street, Ipsden, OX10 6AG

Bring your own picnics (please, for insurance purposes, no BBQ's) and drinks, blankets or chairs, and come and relax and enjoy a varied programme of acoustic music by local musicians and singers.

Tickets are £8 for adults at the gate and in advance from Ipsden Village Shop. Under 16s are free. Tickets are also available at £9 via <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/pcc-of-ipsden-entertainment-committee>

**Kate Moberly**

## Road Closures Notice

Oxfordshire CC has confirmed that there are going to be road closures for the installation of fibre ducting:

**from 05/08/25 to 13/08/25 - On the road through Newtown**

The work will be carried out by MKJ Group Ltd on behalf of Gigaclear Ltd for them to build a full fibre broadband network. MKJ has confirmed that access to and from residential properties will be maintained but at times access may be slightly delayed. All residents affected will receive a letter with information about the road closure work and contact details closer to the date. Diversion signing will be in place for through traffic.

**Ipsden Parish Council**

## The Missing Keys

There is a set of keys on my desk, which do not belong to me, or the Church. I do not know whose they are, as they were handed to me by a young member of the congregation who found them on the church path outside St Peter and St Paul's Checkendon, on Sunday 15th June. Someone is missing these, as there is a whole life attached to this ring – a house, a business, a desk, perhaps. Keys of varying degrees of complexity, representing different levels of security, different areas of responsibility.

I hazard a guess that they belong to an older person, as the keys have an air of seriousness, and a well-worn gravity about them. The key fob, too, is something old, and worn, and of value. A whole life, so much work, is represented by these keys, but they have been lost, and have fallen, in a moment, to be picked up by a sharp-eyed youngster who knows how long afterwards. Now they sit on my desk, a puzzle. I've put notices up outside and inside the church alerting passers-by, or re-tracers of steps, that they have been found. But there has been no response, only silence.

Could they be yours? Do get in touch with me – I'd be only too pleased to return them to you, assuming you are able to describe them to me.

Our keys (and increasingly, key-codes) say so much about us – they let us pass, they keep secrets and the things we value, they hedge us and others in or out. "Keyholders" are figures of authority and status. There is, nightly, a "ceremony of the keys" at the Tower of London, when responsibility, along with a large ring of jangling keys, are passed from the day watch to the night watch, together with the assurance that everything is now securely locked up. Imagine being handed the keys to the Tower!

Our hearts have keys, too. It is often said that the key to a man's heart is his stomach. But the Bible enjoins us to "guard our heart" against the greed, malice and deceit that can creep in, leaning on the Lord in faith and hope. (Prov 3:5, Deut 6:5-6) May our hearts all be places of peace and joy, guarded by our hope in God's love. May your heart be always open to the gift of love, and truth.

With my best wishes to you all for a happy summer holiday period.

*Revd Canon Kevin Davies*



<b>Date</b>	<b>Ipsden</b>	<b>North Stoke</b>
Wed 2 July	935 129(Please wait to be admitted)5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410	
<b>Sun 3 Aug</b>	<b>9.30am Holy Communion</b>	<b>11am Holy Communion</b>
Wed 6 Aug	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
<b>Sun 10 Aug</b>	<b>10am Service of The Word. Zoom Meeting Id 188 513 761 (Please wait to be admitted)</b>	
Wed 13 Aug	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
<b>Sun 17 Aug</b>	<b>9.30am Holy Communion</b>	<b>11am Holy Communion</b>
Wed 20 Aug	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
<b>Sun 24 Aug</b>	<b>9.30am Morning Prayer</b>	<b>11am Morning Prayer</b>
Wed 27 Aug	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
<b>Sun 31 Aug</b>	<b>Team service 10.30am Songs of Praise at St Leonard's, Woodcote</b>	
Wed 3 Sep	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
<b>Sun 7 Sep</b>	<b>10am Service of The Word. Zoom Meeting Id 188 513 761 (Please wait to be admitted)</b>	
Wed 10 Sep	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
<b>Sun 14 Sep</b>	<b>9.30am Holy Communion</b>	<b>11am Holy Communion</b>
Wed 17 Sep	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
<b>Sun 21 Sep</b>	<b>9.30am Morning Prayer</b>	<b>11am Morning Prayer</b>
Wed 24 Sep	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 28th Sep	<b>9.30am Morning Prayer</b>	<b>11am Morning Prayer</b>



# THE KINDNESS OF STRANGERS

By Rev Romey Poston



In her autobiography, foreign correspondent Kate Adie tells some of the nitty-gritty of travelling to the world's most troubled areas to send home news of what is happening. She talks of the privilege of being a witness to history: "part of events great and small, smelling the atmosphere, feeling the vibrations of emotion." And adds, "every so often, someone tries to swat you."

As a former foreign correspondent myself, I recognise some of the adventure, the need for inventiveness to get your copy home, and the immediacy of suddenly finding your toe has stumbled over the line into dangerous territory.

But Kate Adie chooses to call her autobiography, 'The Kindness of Strangers'. It's not the immediacy, the being an eyewitness at the sharp end of world events, that stays with her, but the kindness and hospitality she receives from complete strangers in her work.

Now, of course, being a curate is not the world's most intrepid occupation – well not normally – but I have absolutely the same sense of privilege in coming alongside people in life's events, great and small; of being there in the highs and lows, and of being invited, all undeserved, into the life of the community.

At the end of July, my spell as curate in the Langtree Team came to an end. Above all, I am left with enormous gratitude for the welcome and support I have received from everyone. From the very start, I have met with nothing but kindness and encouragement. I have had the privilege of getting to know local families (and indeed thereby some of the history and special identity of these communities) through visits and special events like the panto. I have loved spending time with couples as they prepared for married life and being with them on their wedding day has been an absolute joy. Then there is the very profound privilege of being with a family to prepare a fitting funeral for a loved one. I have been honoured to walk with you all in these times.

It's not long since we entered the season of 'Trinity' in the Church year. Many will tell you that the idea of the Trinity is impossible to understand but, you know, it is not so. It simply tells us that God is a God who is all about relationship and love. In his very self, our three-in-one God is a community of mutual respect and love.

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And, astonishingly, he reaches out to us and invites us to become a part of that community to learn the joy of living in mutual respect and love. How amazing to be invited.

Thank you for letting me be, for even a short while, a small part of the wonderful communities of Ipsden and North Stoke, and for your kindness.

I wish you every blessing.

**Romey**

### **THE BEREAVEMENT CAFÉ**

Quietly, and without much fuss, on the first Wednesday of every month, the Woodcote Community Centre starts to look a little like a fifties tea room, all china cups and lacey tablecloths. For on the first Wednesday of every month between 10am and 12 noon there meets *The Bereavement Café*. It has been a very treasured part of my time with the Langtree Team.

I am so grateful to those who come along to the Bereavement Café. Those who come, of different ages and backgrounds, have one thing in common. They have all lost someone they dearly loved; they have suffered a life-changing loss. Any life-changing injury takes a lot of time. Time to heal, time to adjust, time to find a new way to live with your new, undesired circumstances. It's deeply searching and hard work. Living with, and adjusting to, loss is just the same.

So, it takes courage to turn up and enter a room full of strangers, especially when you are wounded by your loss. But this is a group that welcomes, that listens, really listens to one another, that understands because they recognise something of their own experience in the other person's story. There is a lot of support, a lot of healing and a lot of kindness in that. And surprise, surprise, they don't stay strangers for long.

The Bereavement Café continues. If you have lost someone you love, try coming along. You will be made most welcome, you will find people who understand and you will find you are not on your own.

If you would like to learn more, please call  
Sue on **01189843858** or Vanessa on **07967 245151**

## **View from the Vicarage**



### **REFRESHING THE SOUL IN AUGUST**

August arrives like a deep sigh—a moment suspended between the busyness of early summer and the rustle of autumn preparations. The days are long and golden, the gardens full, and the pace of life, for many, slows just a little. It's a time for holidays, for family gatherings, for quiet walks and warm evenings. For many, it's a month of long days, quiet evenings, and warm breezes. Yet

beneath the surface of holidays and sunshine lies a deeper invitation: to be still, to be nourished, and to refresh the soul - a time for reflection and gratitude.

In the life of the Church, August may seem quieter than other months. There are no major festivals, no great liturgical shifts. Yet in this stillness, there is space to listen more closely—to the world around us, to one another, and to God. The beauty of creation is on full display: sunflowers turning their faces to the sun, bees humming in the lavender, and the first gatherings of harvest have begun. These are not just signs of summer—they are reminders of God's abundance and faithfulness.

Many of us take time away in August, whether it's a trip abroad, a staycation, or simply a few days off work. These moments of rest are not just luxuries—they are essential. Even Jesus took time to withdraw and pray, to rest and be renewed. In our own way, we are invited to do the same. Whether we find rest in nature, in prayer, in the company of loved ones, or in solitude, we are reminded that rest is holy. It is a gift, not a reward.

In Scripture, we often see moments when even the most devoted followers needed restoration. Elijah, after triumphing over the prophets of Baal, fled into the wilderness exhausted and discouraged. It wasn't in the fire or the wind that God refreshed him—it was in the gentle whisper (1 Kings 19). August reminds us that God's voice is often soft, easy to miss in the hustle, yet ready to meet us where we are.

This season offers us an opportunity to see rest not as laziness but as obedience. Psalm 23 assures us that God makes us lie down in green pastures and leads us beside quiet waters—not to make us unproductive but to restore our soul. It is okay to pause. In fact, it is necessary. Sabbaticals, retreats, even an afternoon walk can become sacred moments when we open ourselves to the renewing touch of the Spirit.

Whether it's reading through the Psalms under the shade of a tree or watching birds soar over a field, creation and Scripture work hand-in-hand to speak life into our hearts. St Paul tells us that God's invisible qualities are revealed in what He has made (Romans 1:20). We can spend time outdoors and let the rhythms of nature recalibrate our hearts toward His goodness.



## **View from the Vicarage (Continued)**

August is also a bridge—a threshold into the final stretch of the year. It offers time to reflect on where God has been faithful and where He is still beckoning us forward. We should take this chance to pray intentionally: not rushed prayers squeezed between obligations, but deep, lingering conversations with the One who knows our hearts. We can ask Him to search us, to cleanse us, to prepare us for the next season.

Refreshing the soul doesn't always mean dramatic change. Sometimes it's just a deep breath, a quiet prayer, a moment of awe. In August, we are invited to dwell in those spaces. And as we do, we rediscover what Jesus promised: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). That rest is still available. That peace is still being offered. Let August be a holy pause—where we allow God to do the soul-work we didn't even realise we needed.



*Blessings to you all,*

*Canon John*



## **THE EDITOR**

Peter Bennett has reluctantly had to lay down his pen after 6 years as our editor. He has developed a super template for producing this fine magazine which I have found easy to manage for this month as a guest editor. We now need someone to take over from Peter on a more permanent arrangement. In

the meantime please send contributions for September's edition to [revjwblair@gmail.com](mailto:revjwblair@gmail.com)

**THANK YOU PETER FOR YOUR PATIENCE  
AND A JOB WELL DONE**

## Musical Madness in the Vegetable Patch



Emma and Farmer Jed at Blue Tin certainly know how to throw a party. In the middle of July they invited the International Ukelele Club of Sonning Common for two performances which included a light supper. And how to describe it? Wacky? Madcap? Off the wall?

As Emma says, 'Henley Festival may have its amazing art installations but stick a uke band in a veg garden at the top of a hill in the Chilterns and that's proper English quirk right there!'

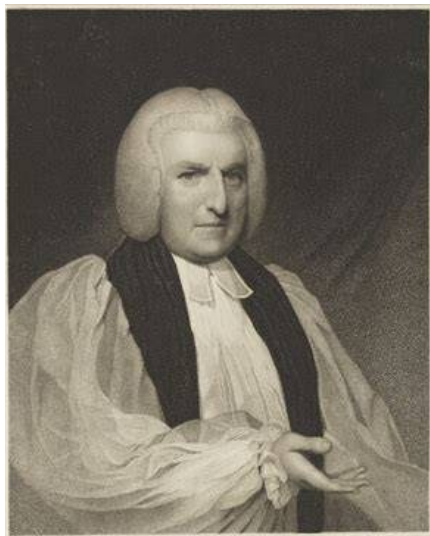
The band's founder, Sam Brown, was electrifying, her zany, elfin appearance combined with colourful language, which somehow added to her charm. Her effervescent enthusiasm swept up the audience in the magical madness of the evening. The band was obviously enjoying itself and among many memorable numbers, Ipsden's own Lucie Henwood gave a powerful rendering of Stand By Your Man. If you haven't heard the International Ukelele Club of Sonning Common yet, get your ticket early when they next return to Blue Tin for a night out like no other.

**Gillian Kelley**



### **To truly enjoy your holiday - it's all about balancing relaxation, adventure, and self-care.**

- \* Avoid over-scheduling. Leave room for spontaneity and downtime.
- \* Relax intentionally, and choose activities that calm your mind.
- \* Disconnect from screens to reconnect with yourself and others.
  - \* Organize tasks early to avoid last-minute chaos.
  - \* Practice mindfulness
  - \* Step out of your comfort zone
- Reflect , plan, and embrace the value of rest
  - \* Create a playlist



## **SHUTE BARRINGTON**

### **LEGACY IN MONGEWELL**

Shute Barrington (1734–1826), was a distinguished English churchman, who left a lasting imprint on Mongewell.

His association with this locale was deeply personal and spiritual, culminating in his burial at St John the Baptist's Church, Mongewell.

Barrington was serving as Bishop of Llandaff, when, in the summer of 1770 he married Jane Guise, who subsequently inherited the

Mongewell estate from her brother William Guise, which acquisition marked the beginning of his long and influential association with Mongewell, lasting until his death in 25 March 1826.

The date of 14th August 1782, when Barrington was elected Bishop of Salisbury, was the beginning of his most influential period. It set in motion the events that led to his residence in Mongewell, and the restoration of its church, which was to be his enduring legacy in the region. He became lord of the manor and began shaping Mongewell Park into a landscaped estate that reflected his taste and values.

Barrington made Mongewell Park his personal residence, and his presence brought both prestige and development to the area. He was known for his philanthropic spirit, reportedly improving the lives of the local poor and fostering a sense of independence among them. Some accounts even credit him with initiating a form of the co-operative movement by opening a parish shop—an early gesture toward community self-sufficiency.

In 1791, the same year he became Bishop of Durham, Barrington undertook a picturesque Gothic restoration of the village church. This included the addition of a western apse, a brick turret, and a gallery for his family's use—possibly designed by the renowned architect James Wyatt. These enhancements reflected Barrington's taste for Georgian Gothic architecture and his commitment to ecclesiastical beauty. The church itself, originally Norman in origin, became a blend of historical layers: medieval stonework, 18th-century Gothic flourishes, and later neo-Norman restorations.

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Today, it stands as a romantic ruin, preserved by the Churches Conservation Trust, with monuments to Barrington and his family still visible within the chancel.

Barrington died in 1826 and was buried at St John the Baptist's Church, beneath the font near the south door. His marble monument in Durham Cathedral, sculpted by Francis Chantrey, commemorates his broader ecclesiastical legacy, but Mongewell remains the most intimate testament to his life.

Bishop Barrington left some money in his will for the support of the poor of Mongewell, which was distributed annually until 2023 when what was left was distributed by the trustees to 4 local charities - Riding for the disabled, Wallingford Food Bank, Style Acre, and Street Pastors (Wallingford)



## **Dates for Your Diary**

2 –3 August	Nettlebed Arts and Crafts	See page 10
5 Aug—13 Aug	Road Closures	See page 10
Sat 9 August	Music at the Barn	See page 11
Wed 13 August	Ipsden Coffee Morning	
Sat 16th Aug	Cholsey Village Show	See page 16
Sat 6th Sep	Liz & Damian Wedding	
Tue 23rd Sep	Ipsden Parish Council Meeting	See page 4
Sat 4th Oct	Bingo in Ipsden	See page 4

## **Ipsden Village Lottery Winners**

7 June	No winner	5 July	No winner
14 June	Colin Hives	12 July	David Baker
21 June	No winner	19 July	See next issue
28 June	Eleanor Llewellyn	26 July	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**

**We need a new Editor for this newsletter  
Could that be YOU ??**

**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 20 August please.**



# CHOLSEY VILLAGE SHOW

SATURDAY 16TH AUGUST 12—5 PM

CHOLSEY RECREATION GROUND

CLASSES FOR EVERYONE—FULL ENTRY DETAILS AND SHOW

SCHEDULES AT [cholseyhortsoc.org.uk](http://cholseyhortsoc.org.uk)

AN AFTERNOON OF FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT

VAN BUREN'S VICTORIAN THEATRE OF WONDERS

WALLINGFORD MORRIS \*\*\* CHOLSEY SILVER BAND \*\*\* STALLS

FUN DOG SHOW \*\*\* CHOLSEY BLUEBIRDS FOOTBALL SKILLS

CAR BOOT SALE \*\*\* CIRCUS SKILLS WORKSHOPS

PLUS 100'S OF EXHIBITS IN THE MARQUEE

FOOD AND DRINK INCLUDING HORT SOC REAL ALE BAR,  
PIMMS, ICECREAMS, TREEHOUSE SCHOOL TEA AND CAKES  
AND LUNCHES FROM MR AND MRS PARK'S BUTCHERS

FREE ENTRY AND CAR PARKING – ENTRY FROM STATION ROAD

## **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.