

CHURCH NEWS AND VIEWS

Farewell to Canon Barbara Clutton

There was a packed church in Stretton for Rev Barbara's farewell service. It was lovely to see so many people from all parishes supporting her. There was a good turnout from Birdingbury too.

We have not been in the village or church life very long and so did not get to know Rev. Barbara very well. It was, therefore, great to hear about her calling to ministry and her journey along the way. She is quite a remarkable woman, who has given so much to her parishioners over the years.

A very special service was followed by lunch in Stretton village hall.

All in all, a memorable day for Rev. Barbara and judging by all the accolades and gifts she received, she will know how much she was loved and will be missed by so many.

Ian and Mel Palmer



Photo: Alec Ross

St. Leonard's news and updates from Dick and Karen

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting, Wednesday 9th April, 7.30pm in the Birbury.

This is your opportunity to come and review our report of activities for 2013 and to plan for next year and beyond. It is also a meeting when Church Wardens and other positions of responsibility are filled, including members of the PCC. If you feel you would like to nominate yourself, or wish to play an active role in any church activity, then please do contact Daphne, the PCC Secretary. We will be delighted to hear from you.

If you don't normally receive a copy of the Annual Report and would like one, please don't hesitate to ask for one.

Considering the future for Draycote Benefice

On Sunday afternoon March 23rd, over 50 people came to our first open meeting for the church community across all of our benefice parishes. The group of eight churchwardens from our villages have been keen to give you all the opportunity to contribute to discussions about the future of the Draycote Benefice. To those who were at this meeting, thank you for your creative, thoughtful and prayerful ideas.

The key points from the discussions will be available to see in Birdingbury Church in the near future, so that everyone who wishes can indicate what they think are the really important issues for our future. These priorities will shape our thinking and actions as we seek to appoint new leader.

We have completed the first phase of our '8 Essential Qualities' growth programme and await the results of the initial surveys with interest. This analysis will help us to create a person specification for the clergy appointment process.

This interregnum has given us the opportunity to welcome visiting clergy. In recent weeks we have enjoyed Rev. Graham Hardwick's thought provoking sermon about Lent. We have also welcomed to St Leonard's the Rev. Pam Gould and Rev. Rob Rogers. There will also be a greater opportunity for services led by lay people.

A cloakroom and servery at St Leonard's

At last, we are quietly confident that we are making progress towards improving facilities at your church. Recently we had another meeting with members of the Diocesan Advisory Committee [DAC] at which we agreed that the best way forward was to abandon any plans for an attached new build or detached cloakroom and focus on an internal solution using the existing vestry space.

The PCC have since voted unanimously to ask the DAC to support this option in principle, after which we will submit a formal faculty application in the belief that it would be considered sympathetically. The kitchen servery unit will then be approximately where the hymn books are currently stored.

We may also ask for permission to move the font across to the other side of the back of the nave. In the future we may also want to consider how we could realign the staircase access to the balcony, so that it is more accessible. Some of the space could then be used to store items that are currently in the vestry.

We hope that it won't be too long now before we can provide facilities that will make St Leonard's more useful to everyone.

Dick Withington and Karen Armbrister

Message about Easter lilies from Eira

If anyone wishes to donate a small sum of money towards the cost of lilies to decorate the church for Easter Day, please could you give it to Eira Owen (Thurlby, Main St., 632876) or Jacky Hart (The White House, Marton Rd., 632893) before Saturday April 12th if possible.

Three thank you notes from Daphne, our Church Treasurer

1. I have received a cheque for £25 for St. Leonard's as part of the Historic Churches of Warwickshire Ride & Stride 2013. Many thanks to everyone who participated. Look out for further details for the 2014 Ride & Stride later in the year.
2. Many thanks to everyone who took part in the Progressive Supper 2014. A generous donation of £450 has been given to St. Leonard's Church from the proceeds.
3. Thank you to all who kindly donated to the Farm Community Network. A cheque for £108.20 has been given to the above to help the Farming Community in Somerset, following the flood damage there.

Benefice events for April and May

The Draycote Benefice **Children's Easter activities**
Good Friday, 18th April 2014 9.30am in Stretton Village Hall
Art, craft and gardening activities

Followed at **11.00am** by an informal
'HOT CROSS BUN' service at All Saint's Church, Stretton
'The Easter story from the last supper to the resurrection'

To book a place for the activities call or email: Karen Armbrister 01926 632030 /
karen.armbrister@btinternet.com

Thurs 3 April 2.30pm **Service and Tea**, Bourton, Frankton and Draycote Village Hall

Wed 9 April 10.30am **Home Communion**, Jackie Westcott's, 'Loen', Main St.

Thurs 1 May 2.30pm **Service and Tea**, Bourton, Frankton and Draycote Village Hall

Wed 14 May 10.30am **Home Communion**, Jenny Hawes, Gables House, Back Lane

Easter Letter from Elizabeth Kirk

Celebrate Easter

I am a huge fan of 'The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy', from its first radio appearance to its current midnight re-run. Even so, I was shaken to wakefulness last night when I heard "... *one day nearly 2000 years after one man had been nailed to a tree for saying how great it would be to be nice to people for a change...*". Had I slipped into a parallel Radio 4 'Thought for the Day' universe? Of course not. But what a great way to re-word 'love your neighbour as yourself' – '*be nice to people for a change*'.

It just makes it sound so simple. To be honest, loving my neighbour is a bit too hard, almost too much and what does it really involve anyway? But we all understand being nice to people. I have recently been on the receiving end of a lot of people being nice: a bit of shopping, many lifts, lunch or a coffee shared, a listening ear, great patience shown, company given, the list is endless. Loving your neighbour is about such small acts, kindly offered and received (receiving, I have learned, is also part of 'being nice'). And for saying this - and a whole lot more – a man was nailed to a tree.

Which brings me to Easter: a time for Spring, new things, new life. That man, Jesus, couldn't be kept down. He overcame the wrong thinking about God and neighbour that nailed him to a tree, but he lives on. The churches in our villages will be celebrating that, and a lot more besides.

We would love you to join us but wherever you may be this Easter, be sure to celebrate love for neighbour and love for the God who sent the man who was nailed to that tree. Celebrate too, love for the man himself, Jesus, who just couldn't be kept down and lives in our love for God and neighbour - in our just being nice to people.

I wish you a loving, celebratory Easter,

Elizabeth Kirk

(Lay Reader to the Draycote Benefice)

Please feel free to contact your churchwardens, Dick or Karen, anytime if you would like to talk to us. If you would like to talk to a priest, we can put you in touch with one. Our contact details are on p.8 of Church News.

Please put this date in your diary: CHURCH FETE 21ST JUNE

APRIL and MAY SERVICES in Draycote Benefice Churches

Date	Place	Time	Service	Readings
Sun 6th April	Frankton Bourton Stretton	9.15am 11.00am 6.00pm	Holy Communion BCP Morning Praise Holy Communion	<i>Romans Ch 8 v 6—11</i> <i>John Ch 11 v 1—45</i>
Sun 13th April Palm Sunday	Birdingbury Stretton Bourton	10.00 am 11.00 am 6.00 pm	Walk led by donkeys to Holy Communion Morning Praise Holy Communion	<i>Matthew Ch 21</i> <i>v 1—11</i> <i>Psalm 118 v 1—2 + 19</i> <i>to end</i>
Thurs 17 April Maundy Thurs	Stretton	7.30 pm	Service + vigil until late	
Fri 18th April Good Friday	Stretton Frankton	11.00 am 2.00 pm	‘Hot Cross Bun’ service Devotions (at Elizabeth’s ‘Eglantine’, Fair Close)	
Sun 20th April Easter Day	Bourton Stretton Birdingbury Frankton	9.15 am 9.15 am 11.00 am 11.00 am	Easter Communion Easter Communion Easter Communion Easter Communion	<i>Acts Ch 10 v 34—43</i> <i>John Ch 20 v 1—18</i>
Sun 27th April	Stretton Birdingbury Princethorpe Frankton	9.15 am 11.00 am 11.00 am 6.00 pm	Holy Communion Holy Communion Morning Worship Holy Communion	<i>1 John Ch 1 v 1—22</i> <i>St. John Ch 20 v 19-31</i>
Sun 4th May	Frankton Bourton Stretton	9.15 am 11.00 am 6.00 pm	Holy Communion BCP Morning Praise Holy Communion	<i>Acts Ch 2</i> <i>v 14a + v 36 - 41</i> <i>Luke Ch 24 v 13—35</i>
Sun 11th May	Birdingbury Stretton Bourton	9.15 am 11.00 am 6.00 pm	Holy Communion Morning Praise Holy Communion	<i>Acts Ch 2 v 42—end</i> <i>John Ch 10 v 1—10</i>
Sun 18th May Rogation Day	Bourton Feldon Forest Farm, Frankton	9.15 am 11.00 am	Holy Communion Benefice Rogation Service	<i>Acts Ch 7 v 55 to end</i> <i>John Ch 14 v 1—14</i>
Sun 25th May	Stretton Birdingbury Princethorpe Frankton	9.15 am 11.00 am 11.00 am 6.00 pm	Holy Communion Morning Praise Morning Worship Holy Communion	<i>Acts Ch 17 v 22—31</i> <i>John Ch 14 v 15—21</i>
Thurs 29 May Ascension Day	Princethorpe	7.30 pm	Holy Communion	

Rogation Sunday 18th May 11am at Feldon Forest Farm

Thanks to George and Gill Browning, this year's Benefice Rogation Service will be at Feldon Forest Farm, Frankton. The service will be led by The Rev. Richard Smith, who is particularly keen that those who can, walk to the farm from various points in the benefice.

I am planning to lead a Birdingbury walking group. We will meet by St. Leonard's lych gate at 10.00am and walk through Wallace and Josie Mc Curdie's farmyard, across their fields and down to the river. We will then cross the Leam, follow it downstream until we reach a gate into George and Gill's land and then walk up into their farmyard.

For those of you who don't wish to walk, it would be good to car share if possible. (Contact Karen or Dick for a lift) Otherwise drive to Frankton, turn left at the little crossroads, go past the church and the fish ponds until you reach a fork in the unmetalled road. Take the left gate, signposted Feldon Forest Farm, which takes you across the fields to the farm buildings.

The service will be informal and family friendly. It will be mostly outdoors. Please wear appropriate footwear and clothing. If you wish, you are very welcome to bring food for a picnic and stay afterwards. We do hope you can join us this year and if possible, also enjoy a walk with Leam Valley views that will be new to most of us.

Dick Withington

A special Easter gift from Doreen: her Simnel Cake Recipe

Doreen has generously given us her famous Simnel Cake recipe. For many years she made one for Dick every Easter. She knows how he loves it and what a sweet tooth he has! He probably wasn't the only recipient of one of her calorific treats at Easter time.

When I asked Doreen for the ingredients and quantities, she said '*You need half a pound of everything and 4 eggs - and don't forget to put the marzipan layer in the middle!*' She told me that it is almost the same mixture as for her Christmas cake, which I found on a well-used page in my recipe folder.

I have added metric measures to save you rushing for a conversion chart.
Aileen Withington

DOREEN'S SIMNEL CAKE RECIPE

Grease and line a 8" (20cm) round cake tin. Cover side of the tin with brown paper. Preheat the oven to 300F (150C) or Gas 2.

Ingredients

- ½lb (225g) plain flour; ¼ lb (110g) ground almonds; ½ tsp mixed spice; ¼ tsp nutmeg
- 4 eggs; a few drops vanilla essence
- ½lb (225g) butter; ½lb brown sugar
- ½lb (225g) currants; ½lb sultanas; ½lb raisins; ¼lb (110g) cherries
- 1lb (450g) marzipan; 1 egg white for glazing; small amount of apricot jam



Preparation

- Sieve flour, almonds and spices together.
- Lightly mix eggs and vanilla essence.
- Cream butter and sugar together.
- Stir all fruit together in another bowl.



Then

- Slowly add egg mixture to butter and sugar. Add some flour if it starts to curdle.
- Fold the flour mixture into creamed sugar, butter, egg mix.
- Stir in fruit mixture until thoroughly mixed.
- Put half the mixture into prepared tin and spread evenly.
- Roll out ½ marzipan into a circle to fit the tin and place over the cake mixture.
- Spoon the rest of the cake mixture onto the marzipan layer and smooth over.
- Bake in pre-heated oven. Check after 2 hours (may take longer). Cover with foil if top browns quickly. When done, leave in tin for 10 mins then turn out to cool.
- Brush top of cake with warmed apricot jam. Roll out another circle of marzipan (put some aside for the decoration) and press onto top of the cake.
- Decorate cake using the remaining marzipan. 11 balls round the edge of the cake is traditional but I like to shape the marzipan into small nests.
- Brush top of cake and the added balls/ nests with beaten egg white.
- Put the decorated cake under a medium to hot grill until golden brown. Watch it very carefully so that it doesn't burn!
- Put some mini chocolate eggs in the nests or create your own decoration.

Doreen Johns

Lent and Easter traditions

I thought it would be interesting to accompany Doreen's recipe for Simnel cake with a few facts about why, since medieval times Simnel cake has been such a traditional thing to make around this time of year.

Simnel cake was originally made for the middle Sunday of Lent; also known as Refreshment Sunday, Sunday of the five loaves and Mothering Sunday. Young girls in service would make one to take home to their mothers on their day off. There are various meanings for the word Simnel, often referring it to the finest white bread. But the meaning I like best is that it was a cake intended to please.

As you may know, the eleven or occasionally twelve marzipan balls used on the cake are said to represent the twelve apostles minus Judas or Jesus.

Hot cross buns are also traditionally eaten at this time of year in many Christian countries. They are eaten hot or cold during Lent, with the cross standing as a symbol of the Crucifixion. There are many superstitions around these buns. One of them is that buns baked and served on Good Friday will not spoil or mould during the subsequent year. Another encourages keeping a bun for medicinal purposes and that giving a piece to someone who is ill will help them recover. Hot Cross buns are said to protect against fires and shipwrecks and should be kissed before eating. But the nicest superstition is that sharing a hot cross bun with another is supposed to ensure friendship through the next year particularly if "*half for you and half for me*" is said at the time.

So, if all those who can, make Doreen's Simnel cake for their mothers and share a hot cross bun with a friend or neighbour, Birdingbury should be a lovely place to be this Easter.



St. Leonard's contact information

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