

CHURCH NEWS AND VIEWS

Remembrance 2014: Birdingbury and London



Photo: Aileen Withington

On 9th November in Birdingbury we enjoyed a very meaningful Remembrance Sunday service led by Rev Graham Hardwick. Over 40 people gathered at the War Memorial to hear our 'old soldier', Bill Cowley, read the names of the fallen. He was ably assisted by Simon

Davy looking resplendent in his uniform. It was lovely to gather afterwards at Somerville Cottage for coffee and chat. Thank you Sue and Peter.

Karen Armbrister

The next day, Bryan and Liz Tompkins were up early to go to London to visit the WW1 Memorial poppy installation at The Tower London.

'We found the sight of all those poppies, together with the reverence of the huge crowd, a deeply moving experience. The people, or were they pilgrims, were making their own record in their mind, on camera or i-pad. Many thoughts were evoked on the loss of life, the suffering of individual soldiers and of their families. Was it really futile? Where does love your enemy as yourself come in? What about the enemy?'



Photo: Bryan Tompkins

Liz Tompkins

The day after Bryan and Liz's visit was Armistice Day, 11th November when the last poppy, the 888,246th, of this amazing installation was put in place by 13 year old Cadet Harry Hayes watched by military and civic dignitaries and thousands of

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

Elizabeth Kirk

Elizabeth, who died recently after a long illness, was an immensely talented Lay Reader. She was a person with a deep personal faith who had a unique ability to share the Bible through story telling. She knew how to 'be still' and in this respect used prayer, music and reflection to great effect. Many within our villages enjoyed her 'Soul Space' sessions. She had the gift of being able to work at ease with both young children and adults. We have lost a good friend whom we shall miss. God bless and thank you Elizabeth.

The Vacancy

The Benefice churchwardens and PCCs are getting on with the process of appointing a vicar. At the last Birdingbury PCC meeting, we approved the latest draft of the Parish Profile which will now be considered by one of our archdeacons. This document will form an important part of the information offered to potential applicants when the vacancy is advertised.

In recent years we have been very lucky to have the Revd Barbara Clutton as an un-paid, half time vicar. Over at least the last 40 years, Birdingbury has been fortunate to have a succession of vicars working part time in our community and at the same time having a diocesan role. It is highly unlikely that we will be able to continue in this way. There are no more Barbara's and the diocesan posts have largely disappeared. We cannot afford a full time vicar, so the challenge is to make part time work attractive and realistic to applicants. We have to plan for a future with more lay leadership. At St Leonard's we are already well blessed in this respect, but to have a healthy future, we will have to do a lot more.

We need to maintain some of our current services but at the same time broaden our appeal to others. These are interesting times! With the right kind of leader we can meet the present and future needs of our village. Please chat to us about what you think is the best way forward.

The pattern of Services

Our 6 months trial service pattern comes to an end at the end of January. The experience is proving to be a bit like 'the curates egg': some bits are good and some not so!

However it is a pilot, and we need to learn from it and make some adjustments. The future service pattern must take account of the needs described in 'The Vacancy' (above). It is impossible to please all the people all the time. We need a monthly pattern that suits the present wishes of many and yet is fit for the future. That is tricky, but worth aiming for! What do you think?

Looking ahead to Christmas

We hope you will join in our Christmas activities. It will be lovely to see you at any, or all of our events and services:

Saturday 13th December from 2pm - 5pm - Family Christmas activities at Bourton Village Hall. Book places with Karen

Sunday 21 December at 4pm - Karen will lead an informal and interactive service, suitable for all ages, where the story of the famous Christmas truce of 1914 will be explored alongside the nativity story. We will ask for God's blessing on our crib and the Birdingbury choir will be there to lead our singing.

Monday 22 December from 6.30pm - Carol singing for 'Coventry Night Shelter'. Meet outside the Club at 6.30pm. Wrap up warmly and bring a torch or lantern.

Christmas Eve at 11pm - We welcome Rev Hugh Priestner to lead us in a traditional Christmas Communion which will last around 1 hour from 11pm. Meet at the bus shelter at 10.40pm and collect a lantern to guide you to church.

Christmas Day at 10.30am - Dick will lead a short, joyful Christmas morning worship for all ages.

Dick and Karen

HARVEST FESTIVAL AND MINI MARKET SEPTEMBER 2014

This was a delightful morning. We had a very successful Mini Market and Refreshments Stall selling homemade jams, chutneys, pickles and cakes etc. £197.86 was raised from these sales. This, together with the offertory from the Harvest Festival service, was donated to The Farming Community Network.

The Harvest service was about food provision by and for people locally as well as worldwide. There was a very interesting talk from a representative of Rugby Foodbank about their work in the Rugby area. Also Peter Johnson from Grandborough Church spoke about how they set up their monthly Farmers' Market.

Very many thanks to everyone who so kindly donated groceries to make a food chain around the interior of our Church. Your donations, weighing an amazing 92kg, were given to Rugby Foodbank. There are letters of thanks from FCN and Rugby Foodbank on the church notice board.

The service was well attended and we enjoyed singing all the lovely harvest hymns and, surprisingly, listened to a song from "Queen" asking what must God think of us and what we have done to this beautiful world which he created.

Thanks to everyone who helped to make this so successful.

Daphne

DECEMBER and JANUARY SERVICES in Draycote Benefice Churches

Date	Place	Time	Service	Readings
Sun 7th Dec	Frankton	9.15 am	Holy Communion BCP	
	Bourton	10.30 am	Holy Communion	
	Stretton	6.00 pm	Evening Worship	
Sun 14th Dec	Stretton	10.30 am	Benefice Family Communion	
Sun 21st Dec	Bourton	10.30 am	Carol Service	Romans Ch 16 vv 25—end Luke Ch 1 vv 26—38
	Frankton	10.30 am	Family Communion	
	Birdingbury	4.00 pm	Carols, Candles, Crib	
	Stretton	6.00 pm	9 Lessons and Carols	
Wed 24th Dec Christmas Eve	Stretton	4.00 pm	Christingle Service	Acts Ch 13 vv 16—26 Luke Ch 1 vv 67—79
	Stretton	9.30 pm	Holy Communion	
	Birdingbury	11.00 pm	Midnight Communion	
Thurs 25th Dec Christmas Day	Birdingbury	10.30 am	Morning Praise	Hebrews Ch 1 vv 1—4 John Ch 1 vv 1—14
	Frankton	10.30 am	Holy Communion	
	Bourton	10.30 am	Holy Communion	
	Stretton	10.30 am	Family Service	
Sun 28th Dec	Princethorpe	10.30 am	Benefice Holy Communion	
Sun 4th Jan	Frankton	9.15 am	Holy Communion BCP	
	Bourton	10.30 am	Holy Communion	
	Stretton	6.00 pm	Evening Worship	
Sun 11th Jan	Stretton	10.30 am	Benefice Family Communion	
Sun 18st Jan	Birdingbury	10.30 am	Holy Communion	Revelations Ch 5 vv 1—10 John Ch 1 vv 43—end
	Bourton	10.30 am	Morning Praise	
	Frankton	10.30 am	Morning Praise	
	Stretton	10.30 am	Family Service	
Sun 25th Jan	Birdingbury	10.30 am	Morning Praise	Acts Ch 9 vv 1—22 Matthew Ch 19 vv 27—end
	Stretton	6.00 pm	Holy Communion	

Letter from Rev David Shaw of Stretton

As I was thinking about this letter and Christmas in particular, I remembered how commercial it had all become. It still remains special but perhaps is sustained by spending money in increasing amounts. During my pondering, I was reminded of a story about Christmas which seemed to me to put it all into perspective.

A church had a considerable sum of money left to it, and decided to spend some of it on a very expensive nativity scene which would be the centre-piece of their Christmas decorations. The Nativity Set duly arrived and much care and attention was used on Christmas Eve setting it out so that it would have a dramatic effect on the many people who came to church on Christmas Day. This hugely expensive set with its beautifully made 2ft high figures was put in place. As a last, flourishing act, the baby Jesus was laid in the manger. All was ready, the church lights switched off and everyone went home to be ready for the grand unveiling.

Christmas Day arrived and there was indeed great excitement about this nativity scene; it had after all been the talk of the village. But when they went inside, anticipation turned to consternation ... Jesus was no longer in the manger! He was nowhere to be found even though they searched everywhere for him. Christmas Day was ruined, or at least it would have been if John, an eight year old boy, hadn't turned up on his brand new Christmas bicycle. And there, strapped to the crossbar of his bike, was the baby Jesus. You see, he told them, he was so pleased with his bike that when he saw the door of the church open he decided to take Jesus for a ride on his new bike to thank him! Christmas had indeed been saved in the village! Perhaps it had even been enhanced because young John had reminded them that, in the midst of all this activity, it is Jesus Christ which is its centre, its heart.

Remembering the story gave me fresh heart. Instead of complaining about what Christmas has become, about how commercial it is and so on, it is far more important to let people know what is at the heart of Christmas: to let everyone find their joy but also to realise that Christmas is God's gift of love to the world that is the centre of that joy.

May we know it and share it.

Happy Christmas

David Shaw

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 will happily put you in touch with one. Our contact details are on p.8 of Church News.

The Posada Returns On the first day of Advent

Our Posada's journey started in Frankton at the 10.30 Benefice Communion service on Advent Sunday, November 30th, where it was blessed before travelling to Birdingbury. It will end its journey at St. Leonard's on Christmas Day.

There are still a few dates left for December so, if you want to offer overnight shelter to the village Posada, please contact me and I'll let you know your chosen slot. It helps if you let me know what dates are not suitable for you.

Jenny Hawes, please contact me at: j.x.hawes@btinternet.com or 632678

The funeral and burial of Alison Childs of Southam took place at St. Leonard's on 14th November. Her father, John Payne, who was a long-term Trustee of Birdingbury Club, is also buried here.

Benefice events for December and January

Thurs 4th Dec 2.30 pm **Service and Tea**, Bourton, Frankton, Draycote Village Hall

Wed 10th Dec 10.30 am **Home Communion** at Jackie Westcott's, Loen, Main St.

Wed 14th Jan 10.30 am **Home Communion** at Jenny Hawes, Gables House, Back Lane

Are you looking for a church service with a difference?

A group of us are getting together to create a new service that will be different to anything we presently run in our benefice of churches in Bourton, Draycote, Frankton, Birdingbury, Princethorpe and Stretton.



We aim to start it early in 2015 and intend it to be suitable for all ages. It will be very informal, around 40 minutes in length, with Bible stories, interaction, involvement, contemporary music as well as some traditional music and new arrangements. We'll have refreshments together as well. We hope we'll even be able to form a music group to play at these services.

If you like the idea of this, want to be a part of the organising team, would like to contribute in some way or just want more details, then contact me: Karen Armbrister on 01926 632030 or karen.armbrister@btinternet.com

HELP WANTED for Holiday Bible Club 2015

We are hoping to hold Holiday Bible Club again from **August 3rd to 7th 2015** but we need more helpers. We are looking for Adult Supporters and Junior Leaders (aged 12 to 16 yrs) to help with teams of children during the week. You do not have to commit to a whole week, just whatever time you can give. All resources will be available for each team: we just need you to volunteer to help us. It is going to be a fun-packed week with lots happening.

If you can help, please contact **Frankie Suffell on 01788 813674** or **frankiesuffell@gmail.com** or **beverleysuffell@gmail.com**.

Church 'Cottage Pie' Café

Thanks to your generous donations, we were able to give £75.40 to Daphne for Church Funds following our recent café event. This was a very good figure, especially as the ingredients for the Cottage Pie, Cauliflower Cheese and Fruit Compotes were more costly than our usual Church Café enterprises.

Eira and Aileen

CONGRATULATIONS x 3

CONGRATULATIONS

to **Matt and Jenny Markham** who were married at St. Leonard's on 9th October.



It was a great joy for our church to host this lovely occasion: it isn't often that a member of the PCC is married here!

Photos: Jack Somerset

CONGRATULATIONS

also to **Lewis Rawlings** who was baptised by Canon Barbara Clutton at St. Leonard’s on 23rd November. Our best wishes to him, his brother Freddie and to his parents, Susie and Stuart.

CONGRATULATIONS

as well to **All Saints Church, Leamington Hastings**

For many years Birdingbury Church was linked with Leamington Hastings Church. In recent years this beautiful church has been damaged first by an arson attack and then lead theft.

If you remember, there was a note in the last Birdsong congratulating them on being nominated for an ‘Angel Award’ for their work in restoring Leamington Hastings Church to its former glory.

So it is really pleasing to be able to congratulate them on winning the **English Heritage ‘Angel Award’ for the Best Repair of a Historic Place of Worship.**



Photo: © John Phillips/PA Wire

Brian Cooke from Leamington Hastings is shown on the left being presented with the award by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Simon Thurley, Chief Executive of English Heritage, at the Palace Theatre in London on 3rd November.

There is an excellent short video on youtube.com that you may like to watch (<http://youtube.be/71AG7OYE2GU>).

Aileen Withington

St. Leonard’s contact information

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