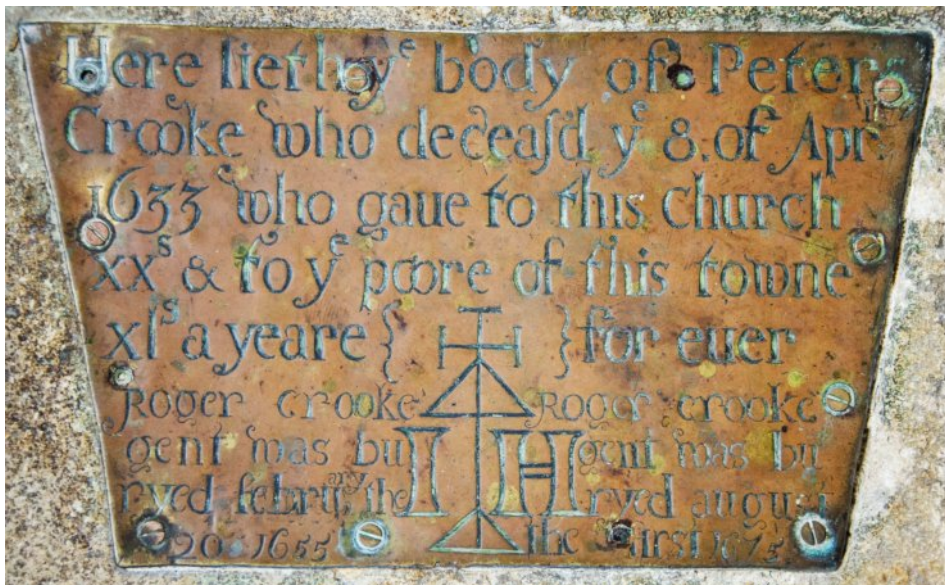


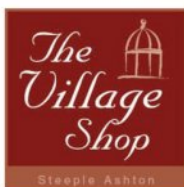
STEEPLE ASHTON
NEWSLETTER

GREAT HINTON
APRIL 2023



Memorial Plaque of Peter Crooke, who died in 1633

Peter Crooke was a prominent Steeple Ashton clothier, and one of the last to live here before the industry moved to local towns to take advantage of the available water power. His brass memorial, inscribed with his clothier's mark, is in the stone floor of the Lady Chapel in St Mary's Church – denoting the final resting place of this benevolent resident. Crooke left money in trust to both St Mary's Church and the poor of Steeple Ashton.



Steeple Ashton Village Shop

Opening Hours - please see pages **9-10** for the current shop opening hours.

Shop telephone: 01380 871 211

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Editorial

Hello everyone - More for you to read this month - 48 pages which is the most the printer likes to deal with! Bryan has written a very nice obituary for his friend Richard Matthews and also an interesting piece about the charities which were amalgamated in 1977 to include Luffenham of which he is a trustee. I managed to squeeze in the photo I mentioned last month of the shearing shears and a small article about their use. Anyone who is interested in the production of local woollen cloth should read Ken Roger's book, Woollen Processes which describes not only the development of this cottage industry but also details of the industrial processes which were used after mechanisation. It is on sale in the Trowbridge Museum.

Happy Easter to you all. **Helen**

Newsletter Deadline for 2023

April 25th; May 23rd; June 20th

Items for the **next** newsletter should be received by **Tuesday April 25th**. They should be sent to Mrs Helen Montague-Smith, 1A Butts Lane, Steeple Ashton or by email to **helenmontaguesmith8@gmail.com**

All published items solely express **the views of the author** and are the copyright of the author and the newsletter unless otherwise stated.

The Editor would like to remind you that it is up to you, the readers, to supply all news and copy for the newsletter. The sender's name and address need to be received before printing. Telephone 01380 871285.

Inquiries for advertisements in the newsletter should be made to **Bridget Lewis** : email: **adverts4steepleashton@gmail.com** or 01380 871279

Please send your ads by email if possible.

Please note, we do not deliver flyers for advertisers.

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Wednesday 23rd April at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall. This is a meeting of the parish and its local groups and organisations and all residents are cordially invited to attend. There will be updates and reports on current PC projects, the Neighbourhood Plan and local groups are invited to also present reports. Refreshments will be available – please do come along!

Keevil Airfield Activity Mar - May 2023

The Parish Council has been advised that the military is conducting several training exercises, which involve both ground troops and aircraft during a week in late March, and again Mid-Apr to Mid-May. Local residents may be aware of increased military vehicles and personnel in the vicinity during this period. A small installation is being created on the airfield which requires aggregate, deliveries scheduled to take place in late March. The RAF has assured the PC that it will do its utmost to minimise disruption in the local area.

Parish Council Vacancies

The PC has received confirmation that no election has been called to fill the vacancy arising from the resignation of Cllr Francis Ash. The Council may now proceed to co-opt a new member. At the current time the PC has four vacancies.

We would welcome new recruits, particularly to make our council more diverse to better represent our village population.

If you care about your community, want to make a difference and get involved in some exciting projects, please contact me, Robert Leonard (871244) or our clerk, Nicola Duke (01373 864127), for an initial chat. New members can be co-opted to the council through a simple vote, there is no need to go through an election process. You do need to be over 18 years old and have lived or worked in the parish for the past 12 months.

Planning Applications

The below listed planning applications were considered at the March PC meeting:

PL/2023/01059- 3 Jacobs Mead, Coach Barton, Steeple Ashton, BA14 6EX – Proposed single storey rear extension, replacing existing lean-to, utility and conservatory.

PL/2023/00980 and - PL/2023/01013 11 Ashton Common, Steeple Ashton, BA14 6DY - To renovate an existing double garage including new

roof covering and garage doors. Also, to position a new heating oil bunded tank.

The below planning application will be considered by the PC at the Planning Only meeting on 3rd April 2023:

PL/2023/01767 – 32 Acre Short Lane, Steeple Ashton, BA14 6HD - This is a householder application for internal alterations and proposed first floor extension and garage conversion to the existing dwelling at 32 Acre Short Lane, Steeple Ashton. The proposal additionally includes a new oak double garage.

Wiltshire Council Planning Decisions

PL/2022/07181 - Land off Hinton Lane, Steeple Ashton, BA14 6EE - Change of use from agricultural land to recreational equestrian use, erection of a barn and hay store, and other associated development including revised access arrangements – Approve with conditions.

PL/2023/00908 – Church House, Vicarage Lane, Steeple Ashton, BA14 6HH - Proposed Works to Trees in a Conservation Area – No objection.

PL/2023/00298 - 9 Common Hill, Steeple Ashton, BA14 6EE - Proposal: Rear single storey brick extension, with a flat roof/ roof light configuration and associated internal alterations – Approve with conditions.

Parish Council meeting dates 2023

The Parish Council will meet on the following dates, at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall:

Monday 3rd April – Planning Only/Neighbourhood Planning

Annual Parish Meeting- Wednesday 23rd April

Annual Council Meeting - Wednesday 3rd May

Parish Council Contact:

The Clerk can be contacted on 01373 864127 / 07971 987806 or email clerk@steeple-ashton.co.uk. All Councillors have live @steeple-ashton.co.uk email addresses which are also posted on the website.

Find us on Social Media through the **Parish Council page**, we cover many topics of interest to our residents. There is also a **Steeple Ashton Village Discussion Group** and a group called ‘**Steeple Sells**’ for those of you that would like to buy and sell things locally – these pages are not a part of the Parish Council policies or procedures, just a natural extension of social media activities. We would love you to get involved – search for ‘Steeple Ashton’ on Facebook. If you are a village group and need help with your social media or village event promotions, please get in touch with the Parish Clerk at clerk@steeple-ashton.co.uk or 07971 987806.

Find us on the website at <https://steeple-ashton.co.uk/>

~~~ **[www.steeple-ashton.co.uk](http://www.steeple-ashton.co.uk)** ~~~



## Steeple Ashton Village Hall

### **Hello everyone.**

Firstly, we would like to thank all of you who baked, helped, donated and bought for the Earthquake Appeal Coffee Morning held in the hall on 4th March. There was an amazing turnout and apart from raising an astonishing sum of £1775.00, everyone seemed to enjoy getting together as well. Fantastic.

On Tuesday 24th January, the committee gathered in the Village Hall to meet with BBC Radio Wiltshire who wanted to interview us for Village Halls week. It was an interesting experience - certainly a first for me! After some pre interview banter, the interview went ahead and was aired live on Sue Kinnear's programme - very scary! But I think it went well and the listeners got to learn little about Steeple Ashton Village Hall.

### **EVENTS UPDATE:**

**French Pop-up Café** - This will definitely be held on Saturday 8th July starting at 10.30, more details to follow, but it will be a great morning, with the hall decorated to give a French café vibe and stalls to browse, selling delicious locally made cheeses, charcuterie and Breads, along with a Brocante stall with all sorts of beautiful and wonderful delights to buy. You will be able to buy a cup of 'Real' coffee (or tea) and a pastry to enjoy at café tables with friends and family, so please put it in your diary - along with a request for sunny weather!!

**Candlelit Supper** - this will be held on Friday 8th December, menu yet to be decided, but again please put it in your diary.

Those are our current Village Hall-led events, but of course we get involved in helping at other events as well:

**Garden Fair** - May 13th, organised by Sandie Lewis. We'll be running the tea and cakes in the Skittle Alley to raise more funds for our Kitchen and Bar project.

**Coronation** - On 29th April there will be a Coronation Crowns workshop in the hall, where children can come along to decorate supplied crowns with all sorts of lovely colours, gems and shiny things prior to the Children's Crown parade on Sunday 7th May in St Mary's Field. The Coronation event is being co ordinated by Gill Aldridge and Sandie Lewis

with a myriad of helpers and should be a fabulous afternoon for the village to celebrate together.

We are also delighted to say that we have two new co opted members of the committee - Sandie Lewis and Justine Grace - who will bring fresh energy and ideas alongside the existing committee and hopefully will be happy to continue, following our AGM next month.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Finally, notice of our AGM on Wednesday 19th April at 7pm,  
when all villagers are welcome to come along.**

**BOOKINGS:** Sandra Stevens 07827 291945 or email:  
stepleashtonvh@hotmail.com

**GENERAL ENQUIRIES:** Marian Little 01380 871161 or  
email: secretary@stepleashtonvh.org.uk

**Please feel free to contact us at any time with any queries**

### **Bryan writes...**

The Peter Crook memorial plaque featured on the front cover is inscribed as follows:

*Here lieth ye body of Peter Crooke who deceas'd ye 8. of April 1633 who gave to this Church XXs & to ye poore of this towne Xs a yeare for ever*

The sums mentioned are 20 shillings (£1) and 10 shillings (50p).

Below this inscription are two more (presumed) members of Peter's family, both named Roger Crooke, who died in 1655 and 1675.

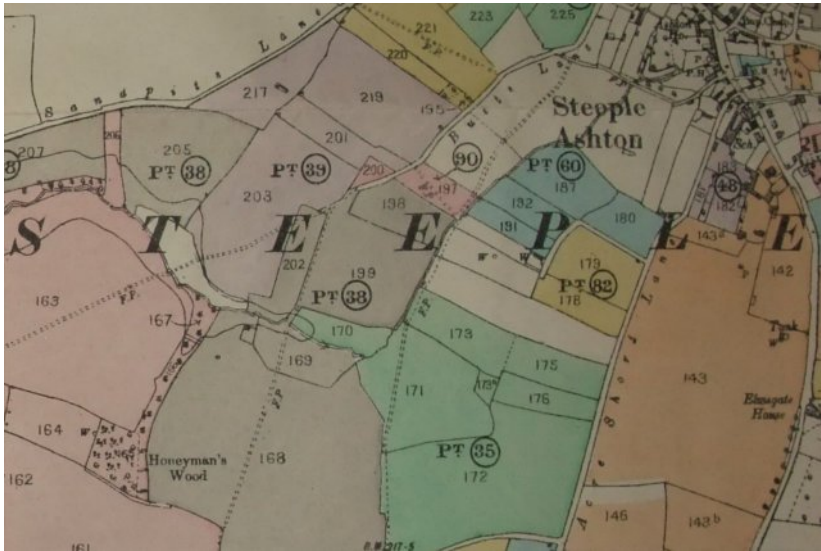
In 1977, the Charity Commission for England & Wales amalgamated five small charities relating to the parish of Steeple Ashton, under the title The Charity of Crooke & Others. Today, the trustees of this charity administer the income from these five village charities – including the income from Luffenham Meadow gifted in the will of Samuel Martyn in 1643.

The following paragraph is extracted from a lengthy report on the charities of the parish of Steeple Ashton, dated 10 July 1833:

*Samuel Martyn, of Eastown, who died 12th November 1643, gave by Will to six trustees therein named, their heirs and assigns for ever, a close of meadow or pasture, with the appurtenances, called Luffnam\*, containing by estimation two acres, lying in the parish of Steeple Ashton, between Alberry and Oakhill, upon trust that every year for ever after his decease there should be given at Martinmas, out of the rents and profits thereof, two coats of frieze or other fitting cloth unto two poor men, and*

*two gowns, of the same frieze or other cloth, unto two poor women, of the tithings of West Ashton and Steeple Ashton.*

*\* [Otherwise Luffingham or Luffenham.]*



### **Luffenham Meadow (under the T), on 1930 Rood Ashton Estate Map**

The ‘Oxford Dictionary’ (1995) describes a meadow as a “piece of grassland, esp. used for hay; low ground, esp. near river.”

Luffenham remains much as it was in Samuel Martyn’s day. This unusual-shaped meadow lies in a small valley half-way along the footpath between Steeple Ashton and West Ashton, and is bordered along the south-west side by a brook, crossed by a stone-built footbridge which was restored by The Friends of Steeple Ashton in 2020.

### **LUFFENHAM NEEDS NEW FRIENDS!**

The Friends of Steeple Ashton – who have been the tenants of Luffenham since November 2005 – are to disband in April. The trustees of The Charity of Croke & Others have received an individual offer to maintain the field in its present state during the coming months; and if required, a local farmer who has been carrying out the annual late-summer cut is willing to continue the hay-cutting, taking the baled hay in payment.

However, this voluntary arrangement is only a short-term answer, and would not contribute to the total income required by the trust to enable it to fully perform its legal obligations. Ideally, a new group or organisation would need to be formed to continue the excellent work

previously carried out by Tony Evans and Geoff Witts on behalf of the FOSA, in managing this important nature amenity for both present and future generations.

During 2021, the trustees of The Charity of Crooke & Others sought advice on the sustainable management of Luffenham from Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. As a result, a site visit was arranged for June 1. Water Team Manager Alice Baker and Reserves Officer (Central) Matt Callaway attended, accompanied by representatives of the FOSA and the trustees of The Charity of Crooke & Others.

Subsequently, Alice and Matt produced a comprehensive, illustrated six-page WWT report, containing comments on and advice for the sustainable care and management of the meadow, trees, hedgerows and stream. This report has been adopted as the template and guide for future tenants, and is available on request.

The trust of The Charity of Crooke & Others is due to meet in May – by which time the trustees hope that this article will have encouraged volunteers to step forward enabling new tenants to be selected. If interested parties wish to discuss further, please phone Bryan Berrett, on 01380 870480.

**Bryan Berrett**

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## **Keevil School**

Children receive surprise visit from leading author

This month saw children all over the UK celebrating World Book Day in style. Local children attending Keevil Primary School were even treated to a surprise visit from one of their favourite authors.

World Book Day is a charity event held annually where every child in full-time education in the UK and the Republic of Ireland is provided with a voucher to be spent on books.

The event is a fantastic initiative that helps highlight the magic of reading, writing and illustration to young people all over the country.

To mark the occasion, the children and staff all dressed up as a character from one of their most cherished books. The diverse range of costumes varied from Harry Potter to the Cat in the Hat.

To add to the children's excitement, author Michael Brownlow was welcomed into the school to help inspire the pupils.

Michael has written and illustrated more than 80 children's books. He is well known for the "Ten little..." series. Michael believes that "everything changes when someone learns to read because they learn



empathy, gain knowledge and nourish their imagination. Books help people to connect and understand one another.”

Michael led an assembly for the entire school, where he talked about the power of language and showed students how some of our letters can be traced back to Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics.

Afterwards he spent time in each class working with the children, developing story ideas and teaching children how to create illustrations.

Head Teacher Lindsey Hermon said “We were delighted to be joined by Michael. It was clear to see how much he inspired the children judging by the excellent standard of their storytelling and illustrations after his visit.”

[Please see photographs of the visit on p25)

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## STEEPLE ASHTON VILLAGE SHOP

**Normal Opening times:**

**Monday – Friday: 7.30am to 4.30pm**

**Saturday: 8.30am – 4pm**

**Sunday: 9am to 12noon**



Looking around the shop recently I started to focus on the items we stock that are suitable for people with specific dietary requirements - and spotted quite a few, so whilst we don't claim to be a health food shop, we do stock the following:

**Oatley**, a dairy-free vegan oat milk

**Artisan** Nut Roast mixes, two types, both low sugar and vegan, in Mediterranean Sundried Tomato and Country Vegetable with Cashew Nuts

**Gordon Rhodes** gluten free cooking sauces, Chilled Out Chilli con Carne, Glorious Goulash, Chicken Curry, Moroccan Tagine, Sausage Casserole and Comfortable Stew and Bread Sauce

**Mutti** tomato products, Polpa, Pizza Sauce and Peeled Tomatoes, all without added sugar and fat free

**Garafolo** Italian gluten free penne

**Quorn** Mince, frozen

**Hale and Hearty** Waffle and Pancake mixes, a Dark Oat Cookie mix and a Chocolate Baking mix, all of which are vegan and gluten free

**Wilton Wholefood##s** dried apricots, prunes sultanas, ground and flaked almonds, walnuts, sultanas, porridge oats, arborio, pudding, ground and long-grain rice, candied peel, glace cherries, etc

**Artisan Grains** Couscous, 4 Grains and Tricolour, both are low sugar and vegan

**Mr Organic** Pasta Sauces, both Arrabiata and Basilico, tinned cannellini

beans and chickpeas, all of which are low sugar, organic and vegan  
**Fussels** organic rapeseed salad dressings, Garlic, Blueberry and Basil  
Vinegrette, Watercress Salad Dressing, Quince and Cider Vinegar Dressing  
Clipper organic Instant Coffee and Ground Coffee

**Fairtrade** organic tea

**Mezete** Original Greek Hummus, Smooth Classic Authentic, Middle  
Eastern Herbs and Red Hot Chilli, all gluten free and vegan

**Tortilla Chips**, gluten free

**Mr Crumbles** macaroons, plain and with dark chocolate, both gluten free

**Farmhouse Biscuits**, vegan Oat Flip Biscuits

**Nairns** gluten free, low sugar Stem Ginger Oat Biscuits

**Wiltshire Honey**, pure and local

**English Teashop** organic camomile tea

**Potato crisps, nuts and olives**, which are of course gluten free

But if you have no need to watch what you eat, why not try the new  
Coolmore Cakes from West Cork Bakery. There is a rich fruitcake, an iced  
lemon cake and an iced coffee and walnut cake, all new and richly  
delicious.

We remind you that the shop Annual General Meeting, open to all  
shareholders, will take place on the 6th June in the Village Hall. If you  
would like to become a shareholder, please enquire with Julie in the shop.  
We currently have two vacancies on the shop Committee which we are not  
intending to fill before the meeting as we hope there will be a number of  
nominations from people coming forward who are keen to join us -  
nomination forms are available in the shop.

### **Easter Opening Hours**

Good Friday 7th April: 09.00 - 12.00, Saturday 8th April: 08.30 - 16.00,  
Easter Sunday 9th April: CLOSED, Easter Monday 10th April: 09.00 -  
12.00

**Caren Felton**

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### **NATURAL HISTORY CLUB - News**

April brings, not only traditional showers, but awakening wildlife  
and the start of summer migrant birds returning to breed in and around  
the fields and woodland in our village. It also signals the birds which have  
overwintered here to start returning to their breeding grounds, mainly  
Northern Europe and Scandinavia.

With this in mind, It would be a good opportunity to see and HEAR as wide  
a variety of birds as possible. So we are holding a:

**Dawn Chorus Walk - Saturday 29th April**

**At 5:15am**

**From: High St / Butts Lane junction To: Luffenham field**

All villagers and their friends are invited to join us. Simply meet us at the designated place and time above.

Unfortunately we cannot allow dogs to come. Also note the start time. It is a dawn chorus walk after all.

For more information or to simply let me know if you're intending to come, call or email me on 07922 125323 or [r.ferguson550@btinternet.com](mailto:r.ferguson550@btinternet.com).

**Our next meeting will be:** Thursday 1st June at 7:30pm at the Methodist Church Hall, High Street Steeple Ashton.

Please come along if you have an interest in natural history or want to learn from local like minded people.

Don't forget please report anything of interest such as sightings of animal / bird / insect activity or lack of. Or indeed unusual or rare plants or anything you can't identify to David Culverhouse, 01380 871621 [42anchor@gmail.com](mailto:42anchor@gmail.com) or Roger Ferguson 01380 870860 [r.ferguson550@btinternet.com](mailto:r.ferguson550@btinternet.com) If we can't answer your question then we probably have a member who specialises and can. **Roger Ferguson**

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## METHODIST CHURCH



**The story goes back to the picture drawn by ancient folk about the beginning of the world:**

We are more than halfway through reflecting on Christ's journey to Jerusalem.

The beginning of the weeks of Lent recall the way in which Jesus prepared for his work of teaching and healing and dealing with people, then dying and rising again to show us the love of God. So we also use these days to think about God and how the love of God can make a difference to our lives and in the World.

As we travel through the coming days to Easter Day, we are invited to reflect on our lives and the way we live them; to match them against the standards that Jesus set by the way he lived; and to invite God's help to match his ways more closely. May God help us this Lent to understand Jesus better, even as we look beyond ourselves as we reflect on the continued war in Ukraine and the devastating effects of the earthquake in Syria and Northern Turkey not forgetting the other calamities dotted around the world that God still loves.

*With Love and Prayers!*

**APRIL**

|                    |      |          |                                  |
|--------------------|------|----------|----------------------------------|
| <b>SUNDAY</b>      | 2nd  | 9.15 am  | Worship – Rev. Tracey Lewis      |
| <b>MAUNDY</b>      | 6th  | 2.30 pm  | CAMEO                            |
| <b>THURSDAY</b>    |      | 6.00 pm  | Worship - Tenebrae               |
| <b>GOOD FRIDAY</b> | 7th  | 11.00 am | Good Friday Reflection           |
| <b>EASTER</b>      | 9th  | 9.15 am  | Rev. Peggy Kabonde               |
| <b>SUNDAY</b>      |      |          | Worship with Holy Communion      |
| <b>WEDNESDAY</b>   | 12th | 10.30 am | Reflections & Fellowship         |
| <b>THURSDAY</b>    | 13th | 2.30 pm  | CAMEO                            |
| <b>SUNDAY</b>      | 16th | 9.15 am  | Worship - Rev. Graham Warmington |
| <b>THURSDAY</b>    | 20th | 2.30 pm  | CAMEO                            |
| <b>SUNDAY</b>      | 23rd | 9.15 am  | Worship - Pauline Tiller         |
| <b>WEDNESDAY</b>   | 26th | 10.30 am | Reflections & Fellowship         |
| <b>THURSDAY</b>    | 27th | 2.30 pm  | CAMEO                            |
| <b>SUNDAY</b>      | 30th | 10.30 am | Sector Service – Clive Illman    |

**C A M E O (Come And Meet Each Other)**

An open invitation for anyone who would like to meet others for a cuppa and a social chat from 2.30 – 4.00 pm on a Thursday afternoon at Steeple Ashton Methodist Church – All welcome.

**REFLECTIONS & FELLOWSHIP**

A group who get together on the 2nd & 4th Wednesday mornings of the month, to look at parts of the Bible to see how it affects our lives. This is an informal group and not 'heavy'; and led by our own Izzie Smears. Feel free to come along and try it. Any queries speak to Izzie on 01380 870538.

Spring is here....

**Hand Made Floral Arrangements for Easter** using the fresh, bright colours of seasonal flowers, plants and twigs and creating natural containers to display the blooms for an Easter centre for the table, door or an attractive gift. Prices from £15. Phone **Sue Edwards**, 01380 871566.

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## **CATHOLIC NEWS**

**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST TROWBRIDGE & ST BERNADETTE'S WESTBURY (incl VILLAGES).**

**PARISH PRIEST CANON TOM FINNEGAN**

TELEPHONE: 01225 752152

[www.stjohnthebaptisttrowbridge.co.uk](http://www.stjohnthebaptisttrowbridge.co.uk)

Diocese of Clifton Registered Charity No 1170168

**Please see below the usual weekly timings of our Masses:  
but please check newsletter for changes.**

**St John the Baptist - Trowbridge**

***Sunday & Weekday Masses:***

Saturdays 12noon & 6pm (Vigil Mass)

Sundays 10.30am

Monday/Weds/Friday 9am (First Friday  
of the Month 6pm) Tuesday 6pm

**St Bernadette's - Westbury.**

Mass times will be:

Sunday 9am

Thursday 10am

**Live streaming:**

All masses are streamed live on

[www.Churchservices.tv](http://www.Churchservices.tv) or on

You Tube 'Mass in Trowbridge'

**Parish Newsletter:**

This is available weekly on the Parish website

[www.stjohnthebaptisttrowbridge.co.uk](http://www.stjohnthebaptisttrowbridge.co.uk)

## **EASTER TRIDUUM SERVICES**

Holy Thursday 7pm--Mass of The Lord's Supper

Good Friday 3pm--The Lord's Solemn Passion

Holy Saturday 8pm--Easter Vigil

**Easter Sunday Mass**

St. Bernadette's Westbury 9am

St John's Trowbridge 10.30am

**Ministry Team for the Benefice of  
North Bradley, Southwick, Heywood  
and Steeple Ashton**  
**www.threeinonebenefice.org**

**Fr Oliver Learmont** (Vicar)

The Vicarage, 62 Church Lane, North Bradley, BA14 0TA.

Tel. 01225 774845, 07464 795590

froliverlearmont@gmail.com

**Fr Tony Longdon**

Tel. 01225 754771 07951 703187

**Richard Havergal** (Licensed Lay Minister)

Tel. 01225 762668 rhavergal16@gmail.com

**Churchwarden of St Mary's, Steeple Ashton**

**Michael Moore**

Tel. 01380 870280

*The Pew News can be downloaded from the Benefice website.  
If you do not have access to the internet, do consider letting us  
have your postal address so that we can post/deliver you a copy.*

**Worship and Prayer in the Benefice  
in the month of April**

**Sunday, 2nd April**

**PALM SUNDAY**

9.15 am Palm Sunday procession and Holy Communion (CW)  
St Nicholas', North Bradley

10.30 am Palm Sunday procession and Family Service  
St Thomas', Southwick

11 am Palm Sunday procession and Holy Communion (CW)  
St Mary's, Steeple Ashton

6.30 pm Evensong (BCP)  
St Mary's, Steeple Ashton

**Monday, 3rd April**

**MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK**

7 pm Compline  
St Thomas', Southwick

7 pm Compline  
St Mary's, Steeple Ashton

**Tuesday, 4th April**

**TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK**

7 pm Compline  
St Nicholas', North Bradley

7 pm Compline  
St Mary's, Steeple Ashton

**Wednesday, 5th April**

**WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK**

7 pm Compline  
St Thomas', Southwick

7 pm Compline  
St Mary's, Steeple Ashton

**Thursday, 6th April**

**MAUNDY THURSDAY**

|                            |                                                        |                                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 7 pm                       | Holy Communion (CW), Stripping of the Altars and Vigil | St Nicholas', North Bradley        |
| 7 pm                       | Compline                                               | St Mary's, Steeple Ashton          |
| <b>Friday, 7th April</b>   |                                                        | <b>GOOD FRIDAY</b>                 |
| 12 noon                    | Service of Reflection                                  | St Nicholas, North Bradley         |
| 12 noon                    | Service of Reflection                                  | St Thomas', Southwick              |
| 2 pm                       | Meditation in Words and Music                          | St Mary's, Steeple Ashton          |
| <b>Sunday, 9th April</b>   |                                                        | <b>EASTER DAY</b>                  |
| 8 am                       | Holy Communion (BCP)                                   | St Mary's, Steeple Ashton          |
| 9.15 am                    | Festival Communion (CW)                                | St Nicholas', North Bradley        |
| 10.30 am                   | Family Service (CW)                                    | St Mary's, Steeple Ashton          |
| 11 am                      | Festival Communion (CW)                                | St Thomas', Southwick              |
| <b>Tuesday, 11th April</b> |                                                        | <b>TUESDAY OF EASTER WEEK</b>      |
| 9.30 am                    | Holy Communion (CW)                                    | St Thomas', Southwick              |
| <b>Sunday, 16th April</b>  |                                                        | <b>THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER</b> |
| 9.15 am                    | Holy Communion (CW)                                    | St Nicholas', North Bradley        |
| 11 am                      | Holy Communion (CW)                                    | St Mary's, Steeple Ashton          |
| <b>Sunday, 23rd April</b>  |                                                        | <b>THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER</b>  |
| 8 am                       | Holy Communion (BCP)                                   | St Mary's, Steeple Ashton          |
| 10 am                      | Family Service                                         | St Nicholas', North Bradley        |
| 11 am                      | Holy Communion (CW)                                    | St Thomas', Southwick              |
| <b>Sunday, 30th April</b>  |                                                        | <b>THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT</b>   |
| 11 am                      | Benefice Holy Communion (CW)                           | St Mary's, Steeple Ashton          |

CW - Common Worship, Order 1 (contemporary language);

BCP - Common Worship, Order 2 (traditional language).

The Coronavirus (COVID-19). In consideration of those around you when in church, you are encouraged to continue **using hand sanitisers and take appropriate precautions to minimise the risk of spreading the virus.**

\*\*\*

**Morning Prayer is normally said at St Nicholas', North Bradley, Monday - Wednesday. Further details are posted weekly in the Pew News and on the Benefice website.**

*"We lift up in prayer the people of our Benefice each morning; please let us know if you would like us to include in our prayers any particular person or cause." All are welcome!*

\*\*\*

**St Mary's is open for individual prayer during the day.**

*Please visit the Benefice website [www.threeinonebenefice.org](http://www.threeinonebenefice.org) for details of services, which may be subject to change - and for a range of information about the Parish and the Benefice.  
And note that the Blog is now up and running !*

### **Other Notices**

#### **Headstones in the churchyard, St Mary's, Steeple Ashton**

A list of headstones that have been laid flat in St Mary's churchyard, was first published in July, 2021, together with the request for anyone responsible for the maintenance of a headstone (heir-at-law) to notify us that a headstone should remain as it is, or to offer to fund its refixing. It has been decided that sufficient time has now elapsed for the receipt of any responses to this request; and permission (by way of Faculty) is being sought for the work already carried out.

Please also note that any repair or refixing of a headstone may only take place *after prior consultation with the Vicar, churchwarden and PCC.*

#### **The Vicar, churchwarden and PCC.**

### **Occasional offices**

For baptisms, marriage services and funeral services in church, please *contact Fr Oliver.*

#### **Vacancies for church officers at St Mary's**

There are currently vacancies at St Mary's for the role of churchwarden and PCC treasurer and PCC secretary.

*If you are interested in any of these roles, please contact Fr Oliver.*

#### **Concerts and other cultural events at St Mary's**

We welcome such occasions. If you are interested in using St Mary's as a venue, *please direct your initial enquiries to The Vicar.*

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## **Richard writes...**

One of the Bible readings for Easter Sunday – indeed, a required reading – comes from Acts Chapter 10. We find Peter telling Cornelius about the death and resurrection of Jesus. Cornelius is described as a centurion of the Italian cohort.....a devout man who feared God with all his household. Here he is, as this picture by Gerbrand van den Eeckhout shows.

Cornelius is a big strong man wearing his helmet and armour. He has a sword, and an axe on the floor. He's a tough guy – a Roman soldier, part of the army who killed Jesus. But he's also a Christian. So, it's not just women and fishermen from Galilee who believed in Jesus.

In the picture, Cornelius is visited by a man in dazzling clothes – an angel - who invites him to send for Peter, so that he can hear about Jesus. Peter tells us how the story of Jesus' resurrection had spread throughout Judea, and here is this Italian soldier hearing it as well. It is similar to the Easter story – the person in white who strikes terror not only into the hearts of the disciples who came to the tomb, but also into this great strong man from another country and culture. In Cornelius too we hear an echo of the Roman centurion who stood at the foot of the cross and declared as Jesus died – 'Truly this man was God's Son'.

But we can go back to before the writing of the Gospels to hear mention of Jesus' resurrection. Paul's letters to the early church were written 20 years before the Gospels, yet in one to the church in Corinth he states – 'Have I not seen the Lord?'. Paul mentions all the people who saw the risen Jesus – over 500, including Peter – and himself – 'Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared to me'.

These stories and testimonies of the Risen Jesus emphasise just how big the story is. Something utterly remarkable happened in those days to provoke such a response. They show that Jesus was fundamentally different to the many other preachers and upstart leaders that abounded in Roman occupied Israel at the time, and he has had a massive influence on the world over the last two millennia. Peter speaks to Cornelius of how every nation where anyone fears God and does what is right is acceptable to God.

The Easter story is an amazing one that demands a response from us as well. The post-resurrection appearances of Jesus of which Paul speaks were the driving force in his ministry to the early churches, and Jesus himself stated that if any wanted to be his followers, they must take up their crosses and follow him. That is a challenge to us as well as we move on from Easter into the future.

## **THE 2023 EDINGTON ARTS CHORAL WORKSHOP**

Something rather different this year on Saturday 20th May when Jeremy Summerly will be leading a choral workshop in Edington Priory Church, working with us on a number of Spirituals from an edition compiled and arranged by Bob Chilcott.

These beautiful songs well repay some in-depth attention, and will challenge us to explore a different kind of singing. Jeremy, well-known broadcaster and Director of the Edington Festival Consort, will give a short talk on their history and context before we get down to business. Some of the spirituals will be familiar (though we may remember them wrongly!) and others will be new to us. Either way, it will be a rewarding day's music lead by a knowledgeable musician and experienced and tolerant educator.

The day will run from registration at 9.30am, till approximately 4.30pm, ending with a run-through for family and friends after tea and cake to which all are welcome. The cost, at £20, (students £10), is less than last year, and includes arrival and mid-morning refreshments and music hire. Application forms are downloadable from [www.edingtonarts.org/whats-on](http://www.edingtonarts.org/whats-on) or you can email [anne@edingtonarts.org](mailto:anne@edingtonarts.org)

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### **FORGET-ME-NOTS**

The talk given by Bob Rogers at the March meeting entitled "Islands on The Edge" i.e. the Outer Hebrides, was illustrated by a film made by Bob, showing the wild life and stunning scenery of these beautiful islands, and was extremely interesting.

The Chairman asked for volunteers to kindly provide foods for the Easter Buffet Tea to follow the Bingo at the 19th April meeting. Members always enjoy tucking into the varied goodies brought along for the tea.

At the April meeting, the list will be available for those wishing to participate in the Fish&Chip lunch on May 17th to put their names down. The AGM will take place after members have enjoyed their lunch together.

A very pleasant afternoon was rounded off by tea, with biscuits and chocolate tea cakes, and a raffle prize for everyone.

If you would like to know more about this friendly and informal club visitors are most welcome (Village Hall 2.30pm 3rd Wed of the month), or contact Gloria on 01380/870593 or Glynnis on 01225/775681.



**THE FRIENDS OF STEEPLE ASHTON**

**IMBER**

**'SEVEN MILES FROM ANY TOWN'**

**A TALK BY PROFESSOR GORDON LEWIS**

**FOLLOWED BY CHEESE AND WINE**

**8 pm FRIDAY 28th APRIL**

**VILLAGE HALL**

**ADMISSION £5 (CASH PLEASE)**

### **Useful Information**

#### **Postal Collections:**

**Longs Arms** - Weekdays - 4.15pm; Saturday - 10am

**Newleaze** - Weekdays - 12noon; Saturday - 11am

**Great Hinton** - Weekdays - 9am; Saturday - 7am

**Mobile Library Visits - Wednesdays;** Longs Arms - 11.00 - 12noon;

Ashton Common Bus Stop - 3.35pm - 4.00pm

April 5th; April 19th; May 3rd

**theWI**

**INSPIRING WOMEN** Marching with the WI

AGMs are notoriously badly attended! This year's WI AGM fell on one of the most abysmal days of the year so that the fact that almost half

the membership attended is a tribute to the inspiration of the WI and the commitment of its members.

The President and the secretary reports both spoke of the breadth of activities undertaken during the past year - talks, outings and campaigning - and the enjoyment we have shared. Membership has grown so that we now have 55 members. Finances are good, too, the treasurer reported. The Institute has continued playing a role on the school management committee and the village hall committee as well as being cake makers and washer-uppers at several village fundraising activities.

Most of the existing committee were willing to stand for election once more, two further members –Viv Wright and Sue Culverhouse were also nominated. Since rules allow a committee of ten members no election was necessary. Ann Hunt will continue as president for her third year. Thanks were given to Rosie Brett-Green for her time on the committee; personal commitments make it difficult to continue in this active roll.

The Presidents Cup was awarded to Chris Smith. Chris has for some time enabled other members to attend meetings by running her ‘chauffer’ service, collecting three other members and taking them home after the meeting, thus enabling them to attend with ease and others to enjoy their company.

Over the last year the monthly competition has received a growing number of entries. Members vote for their favoured entry and points are given for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd as well as for entering, and the points are accumulated throughout the year. As they say ‘you have to be in it to win it’. This year it was a close run thing, but top marks went to Rosie Brett-Green. An old document produced by the NFWI states that competitions raise standards! Here in SA, competitions are just very good fun.

The business of the evening was quickly dealt with so that members soon retired to a warming cuppa and biscuits, greatly appreciated on such a cold night.

We hope Spring will be well and truly in the air for the meeting on the 12th April (7:30p.m. in the village hall) . The subject is ‘Flowers and pots for the summer’. A theme many villagers will be considering, no doubt. So if you’d like to come along you’ll discover how welcoming and inspirational our group can be. The competition is for a flower arrangement in a cup. It will be fun to see a large variety of interpretations.

**Anon.**



## The Friends of Steeple Ashton

April 2023 will see The Friends membership celebrating the society's 50th Anniversary at a lunch on Wednesday 12th April, then conducting the formal business of winding-up at the final AGM at 7pm on Friday 28th April. The draft minutes of the 2022 AGM are available for members to download and review on the village website under Parish Council – Documents – Minutes. Details of both the lunch and the AGM have been delivered to current members; please contact the undersigned on 871914 should you need information.

*Little Imber on the Downe  
Seven miles from any towne.  
Ship bleats the unly sounds.  
Life twer sweet, with ne'er a vrown,  
Oh let us bide on Imber Downe*

The last Friends event, open to all the community, will be in the Village Hall at 8pm on Friday 28th April after the final AGM. Author and academic Professor Gordon Lewis will give a talk on 'Imber – seven miles from any town', the story of the village on Salisbury Plain that was evacuated during World War 2 to facilitate military training and which controversially was never reoccupied. The talk will be followed by cheese and wine refreshments, and an opportunity to view the society's archive material before it is handed over to the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre in Chippenham. There will be the usual door charge of £5 per head (cash please) to cover costs - we do hope you will be able to join us.

**Mike Beard**

### **THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION**

Steeple Ashton

### **100th Annual Dinner**

Friday 21st April 2023 7.00 for 7.30pm Tickets: £20

Please bring your own wine - glasses are provided.

To make a reservation, please ring Geoff Hyatt on 01380 871319

## **Village Coronation Picnic: Sunday 7th May**

Just as the excitement builds for the Coronation in London, so in Steeple Ashton we are busy preparing for our own festivities to mark this very special occasion.

We know that one or two village streets plan local parties for the Saturday, but across the nation, Sunday is when the major festivities will take place and for us the focus will be on St Mary's Field from 1.30 pm (weather permitting). So please do come to this free event for all villagers. Bring a picnic and enjoy a relaxing Sunday afternoon with friends and neighbours. Village children are invited to take part in the parade on the field to show off homemade crowns, live music will be on offer from our very own Adrienne and Paul and The Miller Brothers, and there will be a tug-of-war plus, hopefully, a five a side football competition too.

Every village child under 16 years old will receive a memento of this historic event. To ensure your child receives this free souvenir gift on the day, please pre-register by emailing your child(ren)'s names to: [SandieLewis@live.co.uk](mailto:SandieLewis@live.co.uk)

In order to help fund these free gifts for our children (nearly 220 of them!) we are asking kind villagers if they could donate to the Steeple Ashton Children's Coronation Fund. No matter how large or small your donation, it will be gratefully received.

With the help of the Steeple Ashton Rec Group we are setting up a Just Giving page to accept donations. In the event that we exceed our target amount, the monies remaining will go to help fund the regeneration work planned by the Rec Group for the good of the village. Our own Parish Council have grant funded us £1,000 for a healthy start to the fundraising and we would like to say a big thank you. We now need to double this and more! Details on where to donate can be seen on posters in the village. Thank you in advance for your help.

We are a small working group but are happy to accept help and ideas from every villager. Please feel free to attend our planning meetings and workshops for the event or email any questions, offers, comments to [Sandielewis@live.co.uk](mailto:Sandielewis@live.co.uk).

Thank you

**Sandie, Gill, Caroline, Bel, Justine.**



# **Steeple Ashton Coronation Picnic**

**1.30-4.30pm Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May  
St Mary's Playing Field**

Pack up your picnics and join us for an afternoon of music and fun!

🎵 Live music from Adrienne & Paul  
and The Miller Brothers 🎵

👑 Children's homemade crown parade

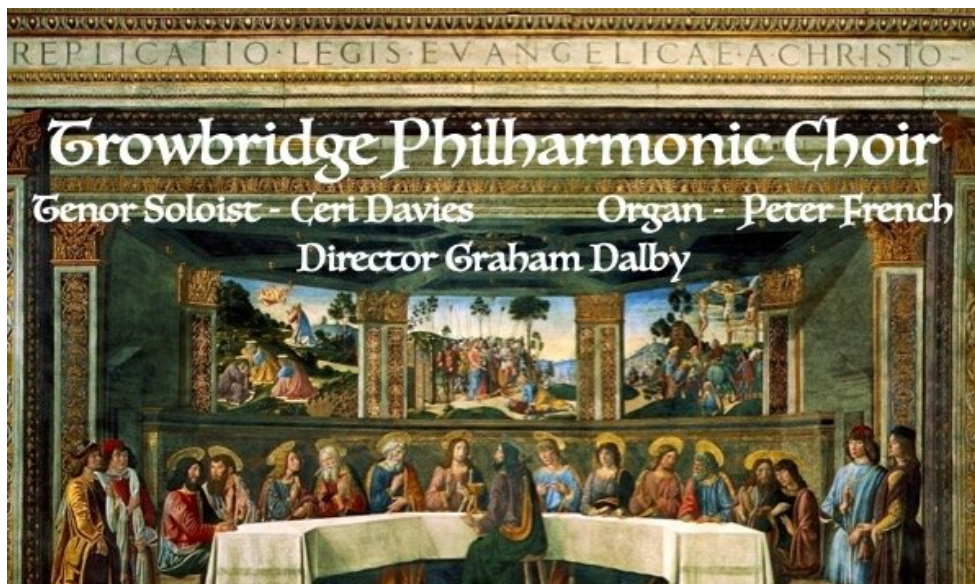
🏊 Tug of War Competition

⚽ 5-a-side Football Tournament (TBC)

**All under 16's receive a free Coronation Gift!\***

\*to obtain your child's gift please pre-register by emailing: [SandieLewis@live.co.uk](mailto:SandieLewis@live.co.uk)

Please note: This event will only proceed as weather permits  
No glasses are permitted on the field. Please use plastic or paper versions.



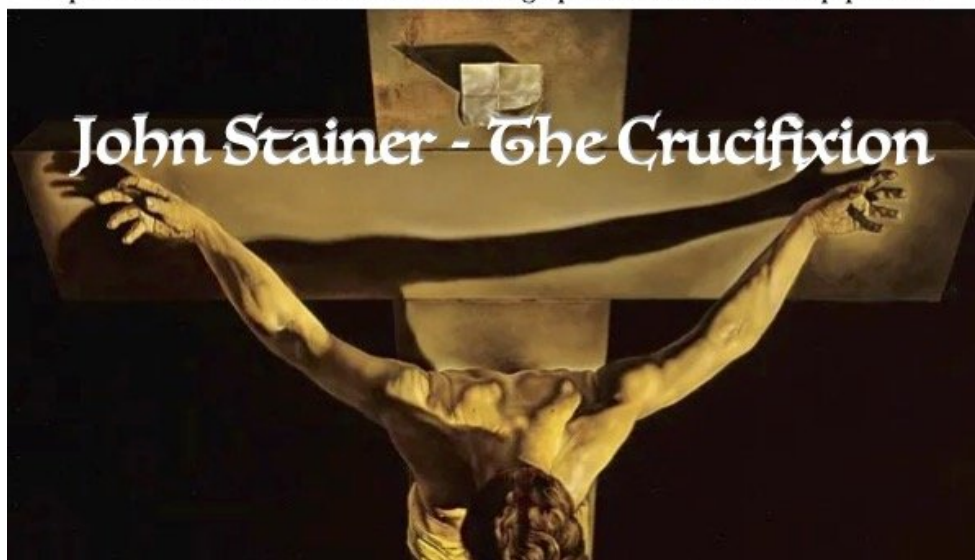
## Reflective Music For Holy Week

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Holy Saturday 8th April 2023 7:30pm

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<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/trowbridge-philharmonic-choir/t-pqmveka>









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**CORONATION CROWN WORKSHOP**

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SATURDAY 29th APRIL 2023

10.30 TILL 12.30

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**Crayons/gems/glitter/glue etc supplied**

**Parents** - There will be some adult helpers but children must be accompanied by an adult.  
Please let me know if you would like to come along  
(just so we have an idea of numbers)

Marian Little - 01380 871161 or email: [secretary@steepleashtonvh.org.uk](mailto:secretary@steepleashtonvh.org.uk)

**Keevil School - see pages 8-9**



**Lasagne Supper - March 11th**



militarywives  
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**Concert**



*Friday 19th May 2023*

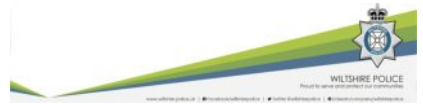
*7.30 pm*

*Tickets £10 from the Village Shop  
or £12 on the door*

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STEEPLE ASHTON  
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## Local Police Report



The Melksham Neighbourhood Policing Team were delighted to meet a number of Steeple Ashton residents at a recent drop-in session we held at the Village shop. It proved to be a good opportunity to re-forge some old working relationships that had been lost over the preceding years of austerity. This is something we're also doing with our Parish Councils, to make sure that we're ahead of any local concerns as they arise.

We're working hard to get into the rural communities as best we can and be visible, but we're having to be clever about how we do this. Our staffing still isn't what it once was, so we try to make best use of technology to do our jobs effectively. Part of this involves being data-driven in how we set our Priorities; the other part of this involves using Social Media to talk about what we're working on as a team.

Steeple Ashton is a beautiful village, which is fortunate enough to experience near-unparalleled low rates of crime and anti-social behaviour. In fact, we've only seen four organic reports from the Village over the last 12 months; of those, only one was a recordable crime. This is against a backdrop of 21,000 Crimes and Incidents for the wider Trowbridge, Melksham and Bradford on Avon area that's serviced by our 5 Response Teams and Neighbourhood Team. Now, we know that's not a reason to abandon the Village, but hopefully it goes some of the way towards explaining why a lot of our engagement will be online.

So, what can you expect from us over the next 12 months or so?

With some renewed investment into Neighbourhood Policing, we have named colleagues who are specifically responsible for dealing with longer-term problems in "Melksham Rural South", which Steeple Ashton is a part of. Your Melksham Team consists of PC Jen Miller, PC Ben Coombs; PCSO Mel Culliford; PCSO Vic Rolph and myself, Sgt James Twyford. We all cover the entire Melksham area, but we're gradually introducing extra capacity, which in the fullness of time will open up more opportunities for face-to-face engagements.

The Force have re-invested heavily in Roads Policing lately. We've recruited a mixture of Speed Enforcement Officers with the powers to prosecute offenders; plus Road Safety Officers, who are charged with looking at road safety more holistically. Their focus is on the "Fatal Five" – Drink / Drug Driving, Mobile Phone use, Excess Speed and Seatbelt

offences. The Road Safety Officers also look at ways to promote a number of road safety initiatives and work with other agencies to reduce the capacity for offences to be committed on the roads.

As Steeple Ashton has always featured on the list of locations where Speeding has been a problem; it will doubtlessly feature in the rotation of sites used by all of these colleagues.

We've also started a Monthly Report to our Parish Councils. This is aimed at giving everyone a more detailed breakdown of what we've been up to, whilst promoting two-way conversations.

The last thing I wanted to write about, was how best to report things to us and how to communicate with us in the easiest way possible. Truth be told; we're probably guilty of having too many ways of getting in touch, but it can be simplified:

In an Emergency, where there's a risk to life or property, dial 999.

For anything else, the phone number is 101; or you can report concerns online at [wiltshire.police.uk](http://wiltshire.police.uk) if it's non-urgent. Incidents are prioritised based on threat, harm and risk; not the method by which they're reported.

As I mentioned above, we're becoming increasingly data-driven, so reporting of incidents is key. All too often we hear anecdotal evidence coming in from our partner agencies, which isn't substantiated by crime data.

It's really important that when you experience an issue, it gets reported to us directly. Even if there's nothing that can be done about an incident in isolation; we'd still rather know about it, so we can better inform our Priorities. It's also important not to believe online comments like "we've reported this to the Police"; experience tells me that more often than not, they haven't.

If you're interested, you can follow our activities online here:

For Crime Data in your area, you can visit **[www.police.uk/pu/your-area/wiltshire-police](http://www.police.uk/pu/your-area/wiltshire-police)**

For our Facebook Page, visit **[www.facebook.com/MelkshamPolice](http://www.facebook.com/MelkshamPolice)**

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That can be found at **[www.wiltsmessaging.co.uk](http://www.wiltsmessaging.co.uk)**

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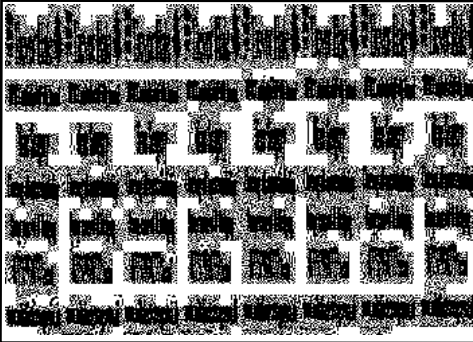
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### **Friends of Steeple Ashton Oil Scheme**

We are changing arrangements for the oil scheme!

It will take a few months to get acclimatised I'm sure so don't worry about getting it wrong for a month or two.

There is a new email address **sahtonfoil@gmail.com** – the nearest available to S. Ashton oil, I'm afraid. The telephone number is the same 01380 870119 and, of course, a note through the door at 9, Church St gets the same result. Please can you order the week you receive your newsletter for delivery the following Thursday. This will make it easier for those of us who forget until the last week!

The scheme was begun to reduce lorry deliveries to the village, to be a member of the scheme (£2pa) you must be a member of the Friends of Steeple Ashton – also a gift at £2pa – subs due now.

If you'd like the job of being secretary for the scheme get in touch as above.

**Rosie and Colin**

## **A Tribute to Richard Matthews, 21st Dec 1939 – 19th Feb 2023**



When I was asked to contribute my recollections of Richard's early years to his eulogy in the church, the memories came flooding back, so his family decided it would be better if I were to present them as a separate tribute here.

### **Memories of Richard**

Richard and I always had a great relationship, and when I think of him it is with great fondness. Whether he was in the shop having coffee, on his bike, or in his car, he would always stop to say hello and discuss the topic of the day, or ask about my aging aunt Louisa, or my cousin Pat who had been his playmate as a child. His knowledge of the village was legendary, and he would often correct me if I had written something wrong in the newsletter. I would retort: "I put that in there just so I know you have read it Richard." He would laugh and go on his way.

Richard was born in the farmhouse at Bartletts Farm, Steeple Ashton, on 21st December 1939.

As some of you know, I tend to 'go on a bit' about my family history here in Steeple Ashton. Richard would soon cut me down to size by saying: "Ah, but you weren't born here, were you Bryan" – which is quite true.

Like Richard, I was born in a farmhouse; not here in Steeple Ashton, but on a cider farm in Thornbury, Gloucestershire, where my parents were lodging after their house was damaged in the worst of the Bristol bombing during the early part of WWII. When I was five years old in 1947, we joined my grandfather here, at Moorfield in Church Street, the family farm.



Consequently, in recent years, if I wanted to learn more about life in the village during the war, I would ask Richard; and if on a rare occasion he couldn't help, there was always his aunty – dear old Mary Ashby.

When Richard's daughter Sally asked me if I could write some of my recollections of events from Richard's youth, I was reminded of how different things were in Steeple Ashton 60 or 70 years ago. In those far-off days, the village was surrounded by elm trees bordering green fields populated by herds of grazing dairy cows, plus a limited amount of arable land. Between Sandpits Lane and Silver Street there were nine individual dairy farms, mostly situated in the High Street. A few of these were still milking cows by hand. The herds were varied: Shorthorn, Ayrshire, Friesian, and Jersey, and often a mixture of breeds in a herd.

Richard and I grew up on our family farms. We learned to hand-milk cows and we both left school at the age of 15 to start a seven-day working week, getting up before 6am to begin the milking. (This came naturally to us, as from the age of 14 we had been getting up early to do it before school.)

In those days, during haymaking and harvest time, some of the farmers would group together to help each other out by providing labour, or machines, or both. No money changed hands as I recall, and things usually balanced out. If not, goods or cattle-feed would usually be exchanged. Our two families got on well together, and my father Ken considered Richard's father Bill to be one of his very best friends – so we always enjoyed working with them on Bartletts Farm at harvest time. I well remember Richard's granny, old Mrs Matthews, walking across the fields with a full basket to bring us bread and cheese and a flask of tea.

When my grandfather was alive, we would host a Harvest Supper at Moorfield to repay casual helpers and extended family members who had turned up to help during haymaking. There was always plenty of cider, cooked ham, cheese, pickles, and lots of merriment!

This idyllic lifestyle was not to last, as things changed dramatically for both Richard and I during 1958 – but more of that later.

I could never catch up with Richard. He beat me in every way; not only was he two years older than me – he was two years and one day older than me!

During our early years Richard was one of the 'bigger boys'. Those two years meant a lot when we were young. I remember that Richard was amongst some of those older naughty boys who would often creep down Butts Lane where there was an old car parked in the farmyard belonging to Thorn House Farm (later the farmyard housed Graham Chappell's

Butcher's Shop; it's now the home of Helen Montague-Smith). One of those older boys would then creep behind the car, open the driver's door, and keep his hand on the horn until old 'Poley' White would come out and chase them with his stick, but never catch them.

I followed them one day, and when old 'Poley' came out I tried to run away – but I couldn't run fast enough as I was wearing my grandfather's Wellington boots! (Don't ask me why). I didn't think he would really hit me; but when I got home it was difficult explaining to my mother the red marks on the backs of my legs. Needless to say, Richard and the rest got well away.

As I said, Richard always seemed to beat me in every way. He even had a special milking stool with one leg instead of three. Apparently, he could stick it in the ground when milking in the open fields – or was he kidding me?!!

As young teenagers Richard and I drove tractors on our family farms. These were not the cosy-cabbed monsters of today; if it rained you got wet! His was bigger – a Fordson Major, with a facility to brake either of the back wheels and turn 180 degrees on the spot (useful for ploughing). My family's tractor was an old Fordson Standard with a combined clutch and brake, neither of which worked properly!

His farm was about 70 acres supporting around 20 or 30 cows. We had 16 cows and just 32 acres!

Not only that – the Matthews family had two farmhouses! (10 and 12 High Street.)

In our later teenage years, I had an old 350cc Velocette motorcycle with pneumatic front forks and no rear suspension – probably cool now, but not then.

Richard had a brand-new powder-blue 350cc twin-cylinder Triumph Twenty-One with the rear suspension encased in an all-round fairing. They became known as the 'Bathtub' model – state of the art in the late 1950s and early 60s. His friend Johnnie Jelfs had exactly the same model in the same colour. They would park them side-by-side outside the Longs Arms, before roaring off together – to wherever the action was – I never knew where, probably to the next group of girls.

I said that both our lives changed in 1958. For me it was the sale of our farm in the September. Moorfield Farm had always been difficult to manage, with its fields laying scattered west of the village, and the farmhouse, yard and cowsheds isolated in Church Street. So, my parents sold the farmhouse and land separately, and purchased the grocery shop at

the entrance to Acreshort Lane from Victor Ashby – Richard’s uncle (and Mary’s father) – following his retirement.

Earlier that year it had been far more dramatic for Richard and his family – with the loss of their father Bill at the age of 44. He had passed away after a long and progressive illness. Richard’s brother and sister Bill junior and Rene were still at school. This left 18-year-old Richard as head of the grieving family with his mother, and no one else apart from his Grampy Hugh Matthews, Grampy George Austin, and Uncle Charlie Orchard to turn to for help and advice.

I can remember my mother coming home in tears after meeting Richard in the Post Office (now The Old Merchants Hall) and worrying how on earth he was going to manage. I have only learned now, in the past week, that it was there in the Post Office with my mother present that Richard heard of his father’s death – and was told to go straight home.

The local famers did what they could to help, especially the Pike family of East Town Farm, West Ashton, who gave unforgettable assistance. With this support Richard managed to make his family farm survive – and eventually prosper.

A very young Derek Jefferies was taken on straight from school to help, which later proved to be a very wise decision. Subsequently, Rene and Derek married in 1964.

In 1970, Richard’s younger brother Bill, having previously worked for six years on his Uncle Charlie’s farm in Keevil, joined the business aged 21.

Richard had met Moira while she was living at Steeple Ashton Manor as nanny for the children of Lord and Lady Long (the 4th Viscount Richard and Margaret), and they married in 1971. Moira was a loving partner and a tremendous support to Richard for the rest of her life. He missed her terribly following her passing in 2021.

After meeting at a barn dance, Bill and Sandra were married at St John’s Church West Ashton in 1978, with Richard as best man.

Bartletts Farm was now supporting three families. Eventually these growing families had to change their business plan; they decided to give up milking in 1979 and diversify by expanding the contracting side of the business, which was beginning to grow – and the Matthews & Jefferies Agricultural Contracting Partnership was formed.

They quickly built a reputation for the quality of their work. The partnership continued to flourish for many years and through difficult times, until 2008 – when Derek decided to retire at the age of 65. Richard was then approaching 69, and he decided to join Derek in retirement – which happened to be 50 years after taking over the farm on the death of

his father.

Richard's brother Bill and his wife Sandra took over the farm and contracting business, in partnership with their son Peter, renaming it WG & PW Matthews. Both Derek and Richard could still be seen helping out from time to time, during busy periods.

In 2018, very sadly, Derek died, aged 74. Richard carried on helping for a few more years as and when he was needed, particularly at hedge cutting time, which he always enjoyed. He was renowned for the neatness of his work, and if a farmer asked him to "just give it a quick whizz over", Richard would refuse: it was his way or no way!

For many years, Richard, Moira and other members of the family, kept a watchful eye on Richard's ageing aunts – Mary Ashby and Dorothy Rogers – both of whom were living independently in Acreshort Lane. With more time on his hands following retirement, and the health of both aunts deteriorating, Richard continued to look out for them for the rest of their lives. His bike could often be seen left near, or propped against, the wall of either home. Sadly, both Mary and Dorothy died in 2021. Following Dorothy's death, Richard continued to look after the stray cat that she had provided food and shelter for at her bungalow, and Moira had also cared for.

Today, there are no milking cows grazing in the fields around the village. Farming practices are also far different from the days of Richard's father and grandfather. But the land of Bartletts Farm is still productive, and the contracting business continues to flourish within the family.

It's almost 65 years since Richard took over Bartletts Farm in tragic circumstances. Over the passing decades, the Matthews and Jefferies extended families have grown to become a wonderful example of country family life. Always helping and looking out for each other while remaining a well-respected and important part of the community. Richard was rightly proud of all of you, and the village will never forget him. **Bryan Berrett**

Notice is given that St Mary's Church

Steeple Ashton Preservation Trust

**Annual General Meeting**

will be on Friday 31st March 2023 7-30pm

Steeple Ashton Village Hall

After the formal business, the meeting will be open for

general discussion, followed by a

short talk by Michael Hodges (Church Historian).


## **Richard Hugh Matthews “Cap”**

Stephanie and I would like to say thank you to all the family, friends and villagers who sent such kind cards and letters after Dad died.

A special thank you to Dad's siblings Bill Matthews and Irene Jefferies for supporting Stephanie and I through this difficult time. Not only have we lost our dear father, they have lost their brother. Thanks also to Geoff Hyatt for the tribute to Dad and all those who took part in the service. Dad would have certainly smiled down at it all!

Also Fit for a King catering (Marie & Sarah) catering for over 200 people who came back to raise a glass and have such wonderful food.

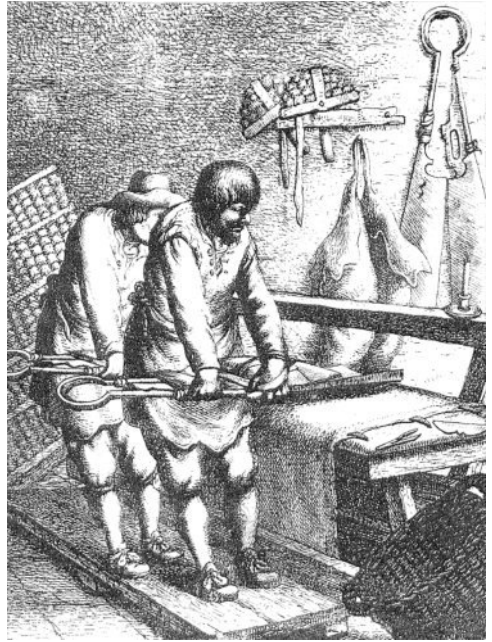
Dad was such a huge part of lots of people's lives here in the village he was born in. We will all miss the farmer on the bike and his tales to tell.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                               |                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                       | <p><b>STEEPLE ASHTON</b></p> <p><b>NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN</b></p> | <p><b>UPDATE: MARCH 2023</b></p> |
| <p>There are no further updates on the Neighbourhood Plan this month as we are awaiting results from the survey analysis which are due early April. Next month we will have more to report. Watch this space.....</p> |                                                               |                                  |
| <p><b>Steeple Ashton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group</b></p>                                                                                                                                                        |                                                               |                                  |

**Sudan Coffee Morning:** is to be held in the Village hall on Saturday 19th August from 10.30am to 12 noon.

## **Shearman's Shears**

Following on from last month's article about Thomas Helliker, I wanted you to see this image of a complete pair of shears. (It is being held by George Lansdown, father of Charles, editor of The Wiltshire Times, the former gave the shears to Trowbridge Museum where they are on display). This amazing tool was used by the shearman to remove the fine wool fibres ( the nap) of woollen cloth which had been raised by brushing with teasels. It was supported on a horizontal bench, on top of which was spread the cloth to be 'sheared'.



**Photo courtesy of Trowbridge Museum**

The shearman used the wooden handle attached to the back blade to pull this forward to engage with the front blade and thus cut off the nap. His job was considered to be one of the most skilled in the whole process of turning raw wool into finished cloth. For much more information, please see Ken Roger's book - Woollen Cloth Processes. **Ed**

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## **WILTSHIRE COUNCILLOR NEWS FROM JONATHON SEED**

Spring is always a lovely time in England and a particularly pleasant time in Wiltshire. This year we have an Easter in early April and time to enjoy the daffodils, emerging hedgerows, grass, wildlife and all the other signs of our countryside waking up after a long winter of quieter activity.

There is plenty going on in local government both locally and in County Hall. I have also been quite active as your local Wiltshire Councillor in recent weeks. I try to attend as many of the six monthly Parish Council meetings as I can as well as getting involved with local community groups and taking up issues where I feel I can make a difference on your behalf. Recently these issues have included the Semington Bus Gate where we are making real progress with Wiltshire Council commitment to an Automatic Number Plate Recognition camera

to enforce against illegal use of the route. I have also been active on the Common Hill flooding and carriageway repairs issue together with Great Hinton road verge repairs. Just three of many bubbling local issues!

County Hall matters have presented their own challenges. I generally support the administration of my Party and I think we are doing an exceptionally competent job in running the finances of the County, particularly when compared to those of neighbouring authorities. However it is also part of my remit as a senior backbencher to challenge decisions about which I have concerns. One of these issues is the Council campaign to increase recycling rates. I agree that we should be doing all that we can to improve recycling in Wiltshire. However I question and have challenged any rummaging through bins by Council officials and fundamentally disagree with any refusal to empty bins as a result. I take the view that we pay our Council tax to have bins emptied and not to have them left unemptied with red cards put on them. I have made this very clear to the new Cabinet member for Waste. I hope that in future he will consider waste initiatives more carefully alongside the needs and wishes of the Council Tax paying residents of Wiltshire.

Finally I am making an increased effort to communicate with residents via social media. I try to post useful information on village Facebook Pages as well as posting regular updates on my own Facebook page **Councillor Jonathon Seed for Melksham Without West and Rural**. Please feel free to follow my page at [www.Facebook.com/JSforWC](http://www.Facebook.com/JSforWC) Alternatively I am always happy to receive e mails at [Jonathon.seed@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:Jonathon.seed@wiltshire.gov.uk)  
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## **Steeple Ashton Recreation Working Group – March 2023 Update**

Shortly after the COVID lockdowns, a small group of local residents began meeting up once per month with the aim of improving some of the recreational areas around the village, after responding to the Parish Council's request for volunteers. This Rec Group began with a broad remit, looking at what could be done at St Mary's field, the Newleaze playground and Acreshort Park, as well as other areas such as Luffenham field. We spent some time poring over the 2019 village survey, picking out various themes and trends and looking at how we might address them. In very broad terms, we reached the following conclusions:

Acreshort Park does not need too much attention in the immediate future having recently had some excellent additions;

Newleaze park is fit for the age group it is intended for, although requires some TLC and maintenance;

St Mary's is felt by the majority of the population to be an underused space which could benefit from the most improvements.

With the above in mind, we have used the findings of the village survey to come up with 3 broad concepts for better utilisation of St Mary's playing field. We are in the process of putting finishing touches to our proposals, which we'll then present to the village for consultation, beginning at the Annual Parish Meeting on 26 April.

Please put the above date (26 April) in your calendars and look out for the questionnaires which will be circulated thereafter, with both online and paper versions available. We really want to have the opinions of the village so that what we finally set to work on is reflective of the needs and wishes of the community. This is a fantastic opportunity for us to make some considerable upgrades for our residents, both now and into the future.

We are of course always grateful for any assistance! If you can offer any planning or other relevant skills, have experience in applying for grants, or have a business that could help with sponsorship, please get in touch. Alternatively, if you can offer manual help (exact nature and size TBC), we would welcome your assistance when we get to work. If you are able to offer any help, please contact us by email at [sarecgroup@gmail.com](mailto:sarecgroup@gmail.com) or via the Parish Council. We look forward to sharing our thoughts with you.

**Will Greswell**