

# STEEPLE ASHTON NEWSLETTER

GREAT HINTON  
MARCH 2024



## **St Mary's Church Organ Pipes**

Robert Woodland and Debra Miller working on the organ pipes and finding the original faded decoration on some of the facade pipes.

There will be a talk about this project on March 22nd. (See p32)



## **Steeple Ashton Village Shop**

**Opening Hours** - please see page 6 for the current shop opening hours.

**Shop telephone:** 01380 871 211

# CONTENTS

March 2024

33-38	Bryan writes...	18	SAGE
13	Catholic News	6-7	Shop
38-39	Keevil School	14-15	St Mary's Church
11-12	Methodist Church	8-9, 16	Village Hall
22	Natural History	10	WI
32	Oil Scheme		
5	Parish Council		
5, 32	Preservation Trust		

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## Editorial

Hello everyone -

The front cover image was one of many photos taken by Kathryn Faulkner when Robert and Debra were working on the church organ pipes. There is going to be a talk about this work - by me - at the AGM of the Preservation Trust on 22nd March in the Village Hall. Please do come.

Bryan writes again about Thomas Seymour and his wife Catherine Parr who was previously the sixth wife of Henry VIII - who 'survived'. Bryan is also going to give a talk in the Village Hall which he has called a Visual Tour through Steeple Ashton History - again, all are welcome.

Many other events are scheduled for the coming weeks and months.

Again, many thanks for all your generous contributions to this newsletter. You can contribute anytime throughout the year! (Please see p17)

**Helen**

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## Newsletter Deadlines for 2024

**March 19th; April 23rd; May 21st**

Items for the **next** newsletter should be received by **Tuesday 19th March**. They should be sent to Mrs Helen Montague-Smith, 1A Butts Lane, Steeple Ashton or by email to **[helenmontaguesmith8@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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

The Parish Council did not meet in February and will next meet in March.

### Planning Decisions

The following planning decision notifications have been received from Wiltshire Council:

**PL/2023/10701** – The Manor, Church Street, Steeple Ashton, BA14 6EW - T1 - Leylandii tree – fell – No Objection

**PL/2023/11039** – Tylers Cottage, 7 High Street, Steeple Ashton, BA14 6EL - 1 x Conifer tree and 1 x Ash tree – fell – No Objection

**PL/2023/09803** - The Sanctuary, 9 Dark Lane North, Steeple Ashton, Trowbridge, Wilts, BA14 6EY - Proposed single storey oak framed building to provide garaging and Home Office/Gym. Conversion of mobile 3 bay stables into permanent 2 bay stable & log store – Approve with conditions

### Parish Council meeting dates 2024

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

Wednesday 3rd April – Planning Only/Neighbourhood Planning

Wednesday 24th April – Annual Parish Meeting

Wednesday 1st May – Annual Council Meeting

Monday 3rd June – Planning Only/Neighbourhood Planning

Monday 1st July – Full Council

### Parish Council Contact:

The Clerk can be contacted on 01373 864127 / 07971 987806 or email [clerk@steeple-ashton.co.uk](mailto:clerk@steeple-ashton.co.uk). All Councillors have live [@steeple-ashton.co.uk](mailto:@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](mailto: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) ~~~

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

Snowdrops, followed by crocus and daffodils are a sure sign that winter is giving way to spring. We have had a difficult winter for our roads with serious damage caused by alternating heavy rain and freezing conditions. Wiltshire Council has struggled with basic maintenance however because the Council has managed its finances pretty well it was able to divert an extra £1million into road repairs and then add this to further significant government help for further road repairs. It will take time to see the full effects of this highways funding but every little helps.

The political climate has not been good for the Party that I represent and I am not proud of some of the antics in Westminster. However as a local Councillor I have the freedom to put national politics to one side and concentrate on representing local residents. I have always found that local people value local solutions to local problems and that is what I have tried to deliver. I have also started a round of spring door knocking and have been heartened by the reaction of local residents who are seeing and appreciating the difference between local and national politics and what they deliver.

In one of my larger villages I recently joined the MP in an afternoon of talking and listening to people in the village. Together with a great group of local helpers we knocked on virtually every door. Whilst clearly not everyone agrees with our politics almost everyone was appreciative of our visit and recognised the fact that we are trying our best in difficult times. This is encouraging.

Real local issues like unacceptable traffic diversions, local flooding, local pothole repairs and worries about unauthorised development are being addressed. Your Parish Council keeps a very close eye on these problems and I am always available to help. In addition we work closely together to maximise available grant funding for village projects. Residents can help by reporting problems, in particular every single pothole on the Wiltshire Council MY WILTS APP.

In summary local problems are being addressed and I will continue to work with your Parish Council to resolve as many local issues as we can.

Jonathon.seed@wiltshire.gov.uk Tel.07770774463

**Jonathon Seed**

07770774463

**THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION**  
**Steeple Ashton**

**101st Annual Dinner**

Friday 12th April 2024  
6.30 for 7.00pm

Steeple Ashton Village Hall

Dinner will consist of three courses including a choice of puddings and coffee.

Please bring your own wine or other drinks - glasses provided.

There will be a Raffle with all proceeds going to the RBL.  
Tables will be for eight people and the number of tickets is restricted to 60.

TO MAKE A RESERVATION PLEASE RING GEOFF HYATT  
ON 01380 871319  
Tickets £22.00 - Please Pay on the Door



OPEN GARDENS 2024

**Sunday 2nd June 11- 6pm**



Advance tickets available from the Village Shop and  
TicketSource online from 1st May.



The Plant Stall would be grateful for any seedlings,  
cuttings, garden or house plants that you can spare.

# STEEPLE ASHTON VILLAGE SHOP

## Normal Opening times:

**Monday – Friday: 7.30am to 4.30pm**

**Saturday: 8.30am – 4pm**

**Sunday: 9am to 12noon**



## Update February 2024

- Sales have started to show growth since Sept 23– which is thanks to those who are supporting the shop. This is a turnaround from the months prior to Sept 23.
- Our margins on sales have started to recover following our work on stock reviews and reducing waste. Logging and managing the ‘waste’ (products out of date or past their best) has helped identify where we are losing money.
- As part of our stock review we undertook a full stock take on 31st Jan and thanks to a kind volunteer, we now have a full inventory of the total stock, its value and how long we have had it on the shelves. We can now make some informed decisions about what the product range should be going forward. Some products will disappear off the shelves (as you may have noticed) based on the logic that if it’s been there over a year and we aren’t selling it, and it will go out of date in the near future, there’s an argument not to stock it again.
- Coffee shop; We are accounting for the products that are used in the coffee shop now, which means we can see the true cost/benefit of the coffee shop.
- New Products; We’ve introduced a new brownie to complement the cakes on offer. A new variety of sliced bread is now being sold.
- We are now set up for online banking which adds efficiency to paying suppliers and managing the finances.
- Procedures; We’re reviewing procedures and writing up a procedures manual to help volunteers. We know that some volunteers have wanted a reference manual for problem solving, and for dealing with areas that are new to them. This is an ongoing task, and will take some time.....

\*\*\*\*\* HELP NEEDED \*\*\*\*\*

Calling any early birds that would like to help in the shop but want to keep the majority of the day free! We need some early starters to do the morning

baking (baked snacks and some bread). This doesn't involve making from scratch. All products are frozen and baked freshly that day.

Please let Julie know if you would like more information.

Anyone handy at odd jobs? We need a bit of ongoing maintenance work; monitoring the ice build-up in freezers and defrosting, cleaning the water out of the chillers, disposal of unwanted items to the tip. It's not onerous but it is an essential part of keeping the shop going, and a way to help. Again, please let Julie know if you would like more information.

## **A BIG THANK YOU.....**

We want to acknowledge the loyal contribution of many Committee Members who during the past year have decided to retire and take a well-earned rest from keeping the shop running and from being part of the Committee.

### **These are;**

Guy Bagnall, Cindy Bullen, Caren Felton, Ron Plum, Jane Rivers, and Alison Wilson.

Thank you all for your many years of dedicated service.

And not to forget Diana Hunter, who took over the role of Treasurer in 2009 and has managed the shop finances for the 14 years. Diana resigned at the end of 2023 (but has been helping us with a handover for the last 2 months) and we would like to recognise the diligence and commitment that she has always given during her many years as Treasurer.

We are glad that she will have more time to follow her other interests and we wish her all the best for the future

Regards

**STASH;** Steeple Ashton Village Shop Committee

BOOKINGS: Sandra Stevens 07827 291945 email:  
[steepleashtonvh@hotmail.com](mailto:steepleashtonvh@hotmail.com)

GEN. ENQ: Marian Little (Sec) 01380 871161 email:  
[secretary@steepleashtonvh.org.uk](mailto:secretary@steepleashtonvh.org.uk)

TREASURER: Francesca Buffery-King email:  
[treasurer@steepleashtonvh.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@steepleashtonvh.org.uk)

Website: [www.steepleashtonvh.org.uk](http://www.steepleashtonvh.org.uk)



Steeple Ashton Village Hall



## Steeple Ashton Village Hall

### FEBRUARY/MARCH 2024

Huge thanks to everyone who came along to enjoy the American Brunch on 3rd February! Jukebox music was playing, an American Flag was hanging from the ceiling (thanks go to Ed!) and the hall was buzzing with chatter. Everyone seemed to enjoy the food and catching up with family and friends and we raised over £600 towards our Kitchen & Bar upgrade. Thank you so much for your support.

I'd also like to give a big shout out to all those who helped make it work: Sandie Lewis, Justine Grace, Sandra Stevens, Bett Horrox, Avril Lye, Alison Monk, Clive Little - and me!!

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Fish and Chip Quiz Night:** Saturday 23rd March 2024. 6:30 for 7pm. Tickets £12 - available in the Village Shop or from Marian Little on the number below.

**PLEASE NOTE:** It is **not** necessary to get a team of 6 together in order to buy a ticket! Individuals can buy tickets and come along - tables will be for 6 and anyone can be part of a team on a table. If however you do have 6 of you who want to form a team, simply contact Marian, pay for 6 tickets and give a team name (silly as you like!!). A table will then be allocated with your team name. But please don't be shy, come along and join it - it will be a good evening! Sorry for any confusion!

Cash or card will be accepted at the bar.

**"From Victorian Squire to Laser Spire":** Friday 19th April 2024. 7pm for 7:30 start. a talk by Bryan Berrett. A visual tour through Steeple Ashton history. Cheese and wine to follow the talk. Tickets £10 (including 1 glass of wine and delicious cheeses).

This will be a great opportunity for new residents to learn about the history of our lovely village and enjoy meeting people over a glass of wine.

**Garden Fair:** Saturday 18th May 2024. Sandie Lewis is organising her popular event again this year and the VH committee will be providing the teas and cakes, all proceeds to the Village Hall.



**DD80:** Saturday June 8th. We are thinking of providing tea and cake in the Village Hall for those who wish to join us in celebrating the 80th Anniversary of the D Day landings. Keevil village are holding many events during that week/weekend, which we can all attend, but we are hoping to 'do our bit' by offering teas. This still has to be confirmed, so watch this space.

**Night for the Ladies:** Friday 27th September 2024. From 7:30pm. After last year's success, we thought we'd risk it again! Let's Go Girls!!



Steeple Ashton Village Hall



Fish  Chips

Quiz Night!





**Saturday 23rd March 2024**

6.30 for 7pm food  
7.30 Quiz starts



Bar with Beer, wine & soft drinks on sale



(Card or Cash)

**Tickets: £12 pp**

Come and enjoy an informal, fun and social evening with friends & family

Teams will be of 6 (but you can buy individual tickets!)

CALL MARIAN (01380 871161) or SANDIE (07764 576106)  
for tickets



### **You are what you write - WI's February Meeting**

The February WI meeting was well attended; no doubt many members were eager to gain insight into how to hide from correspondence a deep set, wicked personality.

Before the meeting could start a screen had to be collected from the church and other unexpected muddles sorted, so that good humour was the order of the day. During the business part of the evening several WI procedures were explained, and excursions discussed.

The speaker, John Jameson Davis, had come to speak about how our handwriting betrays characteristic traits. John is a handwriting expert who has worked with police prosecutions on forgery cases. He fascinated many of us with his analysis of the handwriting of letters and notes of some well-known women- from Meghan Markle to Moira Hindley to Queen Elizabeth. Loops, tails and closeness of lines all showed our various dispositions. Wide margins indicated generosity, forward sloping writing hinted at a positive look to the future, flourishes suggested a cry to be noticed and overly large capital letters self-importance – now that I'd query! Meghan Markle's writing suggested a breakdown in a relationship with a parent while Her Majesty's showed that she didn't suffer fools gladly!

The competition was a 'Dear John' letter. There was a pleasing number of entries – sad to say, more than one wickedly confessing to the need of returning to spouse and an awful lot of children! One entry stated an end to the affair in several languages, another that the attraction of wealth had a greater pull. All were amusing. The well-deserved winner was Bet Horrox.

The March meeting has changed from the AGM to an ordinary meeting. Since the subject is basket weaving the competition is 'Weave a ...' – members can use their imaginations and their skills to come up with a woven product. If you'd care to join in, we'll see you at 7:30pm on Wednesday March 13th.

**Rosie**

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**Please note:** The Parish Council of Great Hinton will meet on 7th March 2024 at 7pm in the Memorial Hall in Great Hinton.

**Parish Clerk**

## METHODIST CHURCH

*“...Blessed is the king  
who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Peace in heaven,  
and glory in the highest heaven!”  
(Luke 19:38)*



As we grapple with continued injustices around the world and recognize that little is changing in the world, we might feel helpless and discouraged. But when we focus on our perseverance in our witness, we recognize hope. As people of faith, we live in hope and trust that the Lord will continue to send us as a community ready to act wherever it hurts, wherever the dignity of God's people is stepped on, and where people are far from living in peace. The world is surrounded by worries, anxiety, uncertainties, and the language of war, division, and hatred. We wonder how we will be able to walk in this Lent period this year with all the challenges and troubles.

Today, we see and hear the news of violence, conflicts, wars, and deaths everywhere. Jesus came to this world as the prince of peace and invited us to be part of the pilgrimage of peace. When we walk the path, carrying Jesus on us, we become part of Jesus' peace-making mission. Waging war, perpetuating division, and instigating conflicts are not the ways how Jesus works. Sometimes, it might be easy to close our eyes and live our lives in our comfort zones. Carrying Jesus' cross, proclaiming peace and walking in solidarity with the poor and oppressed is the peace-making mission of God. Here and now. In this time of lent, is the invitation from the Peace of Prince. Despite being weak and feeble, we are called to walk the path of Jesus, proclaiming peace in this world of wars and conflicts. Peace-making is the message that we need to draw from the pilgrimage of Lent season.

### ***Prayer:***

*God of life, we give praises and thanks for the call to peace. Lord, the author of salvation, help us to be in solidarity with the broken and vulnerable. We praise Jesus with all our hearts, who embraces our weaknesses and expands the kingdom of God through us. Though we are broken, help us to look at the cross, which fills us with the courage to stand against all odds of life. Amen!*

*“From Steeple Ashton Methodist Church”*

### **Church Diary**

All services are at 9.15 am unless otherwise stated. Please come along and

join us. You can be assured of a warm welcome, and a time to chat, plus a cup of tea or coffee after the service. If there is anyone for whom you would like prayers to be said, please leave details in the post box at the front door, and they will be included in the Intercessory Prayers on Sunday.

## **MARCH**

|                      |             |                 |                                          |
|----------------------|-------------|-----------------|------------------------------------------|
| Friday               | 1st         | 2.00 pm         | World Day of Prayer – All are invited    |
| Sunday               | 3rd         | 9.15 am         | Rev. Peggy Kabonde                       |
| Tuesday              | 5th         | 7.30 pm         | Housegroup                               |
| Thursday             | 7th         | 2.30 pm         | CAMEO                                    |
| Mothering Sunday     | 10th        | 9.15 am         | Rev. Gary Gotham – Holy Communion        |
| Wednesday            | 13th        | 10.30 am        | Reflections & Fellowship                 |
| Thursday             | 14th        | 2.30 pm         | CAMEO                                    |
| Sunday               | 17th        | 9.15 am         | Rev. Jane Knowles                        |
| Tuesday              | 19th        | 7.30 pm         | Housegroup                               |
| Thursday             | 21st        | 2.30 pm         | CAMEO                                    |
| Sunday               | 24th        | 9.15 am         | Eric Clifford                            |
| Wednesday            | 27th        | 10.30 am        | Reflections & Fellowship                 |
| Thursday             | 28th        | 2.30 pm         | CAMEO                                    |
| <b>Good Friday</b>   | <b>29th</b> | <b>11.00 am</b> | <b>Reflective Service – Izzie Smears</b> |
| <b>Easter Sunday</b> | <b>31st</b> | <b>9.15 am</b>  | <b>Rev. Peggy Kabonde</b>                |

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

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

## **REFLECTIONS & FELLOWSHIP**

A group who meet on the 2nd & 4th Wednesday mornings of the month, to have a cup of coffee, and look at parts of the Bible to see how it affects our lives. This is an informal group led by our own Izzie Smears. Feel free to come along, and try it. Any queries speak to Izzie on 01380 870538.

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## **STEEPLE ASHTON CHRISTIANS TOGETHER**

Once again our team of ladies were able to work together and we held a Soup and Pancake Lunch for Shrove Tuesday. It was lovely to welcome over 30 people who enjoyed a time of chat and food. The sum of £120 has been given to the Children's Society from the donations.

Our next planned joint meal will be Harvest Supper, probably in October. We hope to see you there.

## **CATHOLIC NEWS**

**Saint John the Baptist, Saint Bernadette & Saint Thomas More  
Working in Communion for Mission**

**Parish Priest: Canon Thomas Finnegan**

TELEPHONE: 01225 752152

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

Diocese of Clifton Registered Charity No 1170168

Diocesan Re-Structure: There is to be a diocesan restructure of Deaneries. At present there are 13 Deaneries in the Diocese. As from September, this will reduce to nine. New Deans have been appointed by Bishop Declan to lead these 'local areas'. What was the Trowbridge Deanery, is now Deanery 6 renamed as The Pastoral Area of St. Oliver Plunkett. Canon Tom has been appointed as the new Dean. We thank Fr. Martin Queenan, former Dean of Trowbridge Deanery and wish Canon Tom all the best in his new role. We send condolences to him on the death of both his parents within three months. RIP.

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

**St John the Baptist - Trowbridge**

***Sunday & Weekday Masses:***

Saturday 6pm

Sunday 10.30pm

Monday 9am

Tuesday 6pm

Friday 9am

**St Bernadette's - Westbury.**

***Mass times will be:***

Sunday 9am

Thursday 10am

**St Thomas More, Bradford-on-Avon**

***Mass times will be:***

Saturday 4pm

Wednesday 9am

**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)

# St Mary's Church, Steeple Ashton

## Services in March

### Sunday 3rd March

11 am Holy Communion Rev. David Hart

### Sunday 10th March

8 am Holy Communion Rev. Tony Longdon

10.30 am Family Service Richard Havergal

### Sunday 17th March

11 am Holy Communion Ven Dr Sue Groom

### Sunday 24th March

8 am Holy Communion Palm Sunday, Rev Tony Longdon

### Wednesday 27th March

7 pm Compline Rev Tony Longdon

### Thursday 28th March

7 pm Maundy Thursday, Richard Havergal

### Fri 29 March

2 pm Good Friday, Richard Havergal

### Sunday 31st March

11 am Easter Day, Holy Communion, Rev Tony Longdon

During the vicar's leave of absence, the PCC is working with Sue Groom and Jane Palmer to ensure that as many services as possible will take place in St Mary's Church. We are hoping to use visiting priests but they do have other commitments especially at festivals.

### Occasional offices

For baptisms, marriage services and funeral services in church,

*please contact the Rural Dean, Jane Palmer.*

*email: revjanepalmer@gmail.com*

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### ***Now the green blade riseth***

A century ago, the great journalist and Catholic provocateur G.K.Chesterton wrote a wonderful essay entitled 'The Priest of Spring' in which he considered the integration of the Christian seasons with the natural year – and referred to the “armies of the intellect who will fight to the end on whether Easter is to be congratulated on fitting in with the spring or the spring on fitting in with Easter”.

It's a familiar theme, often replayed in the media at this time of year – if (to my mind) a fairly pointless one. For the authenticity of the Christian celebration of Easter does not pivot on its historical priority to pagan or other celebrations of the natural year, but rather on its - far bolder - claim to fulfil them.

The Biblical account of resurrection is not that Easter merely recapitulates a universal theme, but that it marks an entirely new creative act, pointing to nature's ultimate liberation from the cycle of growth and decay. We can believe it or not, but the New Testament appears to claim nothing less, St Paul concluding that: 'if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation'.

The eggs and lambs and green blades that now rise to greet the spring are no less joyous in that light, but – I suggest – even more so, and I pray you will share in their praise.

**+Andrew Ramsbury**

## **Reflection for Steeple Ashton Village Newsletter – March 2024**

### **Richard writes -**

In Mark's Gospel, Chapter 8, we read that Peter gets angry with Jesus because Jesus talks about undergoing great suffering and being killed. We might be angry too. Now as then, there is no shortage of suffering, so if the Saviour of the world must suffer, and those who follow him must suffer, too – in other words, suffering following more suffering - we have every reason to feel angry and cheated.

But getting angry may actually be more positive than doing nothing, and the question is – 'what are we going to do about it'. It may be futile for us to try to solve the problems of the Middle East single-handed, but maybe someone closer to home could do with a helping hand. I once read that if we go to God, hand over a large spiritual cheque and say 'there you are God, that's all I have, I'm giving my life to you', God might gently hand it back, tell us to go to the bank and cash it for lots of small change. We then go through life handing over one coin here, another coin there, as situations require.

So, giving our lives to the Lord isn't one big act. It's done in little acts of love, a penny at a time. That's how we live God's life in the world, and in that way, Jesus will not be ashamed of us and will not have died in vain for us.

**Richard Havergal**



Steeple Ashton  
Village Hall

## “FROM VICTORIAN SQUIRE TO LASER SPIRE”



A visual tour through Steeple Ashton history  
by

Bryan Berrett

Friday, 19th April 2024

7pm for 7.30pm start

followed by

**Cheese & Wine**

**Tickets: £10** (Available from the village shop)  
(to include 1 glass of wine & cheese buffet)

A CHANCE FOR NEW RESIDENTS TO HEAR SOME FASCINATING STORIES ABOUT OUR LOVELY VILLAGE  
FROM OUR LOCAL HISTORIAN

**FUNDS RAISED IN AID OF VILLAGE HALL FUND**



## **LAST FEW TICKETS REMAINING FOR EDINGTON ARTS' CONCERT**

There is still time to buy tickets for the Edington Arts concert on Saturday 23rd March, but fewer than 50 seats remain. The opportunity of hearing one of the world's greatest tenors performing in one of the great musical works of all time, with some of the most exciting interpreters of the music, in Edington Priory Church, is proving very exciting.

Tickets for the Bach St John Passion, with soloists Mark Padmore, Florian Störtz and Ben Davies, and accompanied by the Oxford Bach Soloists and orchestra have been selling steadily since they went on sale at the beginning of January. There are still seats available from £12.50.

The Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire, Mrs Sarah Troughton, will be attending the concert, which is also a celebration of Edington Arts' first ten years promoting live classical music concerts in Edington Priory Church.

Choose your seats, book and pay online from [www.edintonarts.org](http://www.edintonarts.org), or phone Chrissy on 01380 81256 – but don't delay!

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### **More Useful Information**

St Mary's Church PCC supports the newsletter - which used to be the Parish Magazine - and there is a separate account for the newsletter which is used to pay printing costs.

Please put the word NEWSLETTER in the box marked Reference.

**LloydsBank: Sort Code 30 98 75.**

**Account Name: PCC of Steeple Ashton.**

**Account Number: 00320207**

Should you wish to contribute to the Church by direct debit or donation you can use these details and indicate where your money should go. **Ed**

### **Useful Information**

#### **Postal Collections:**

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

**Newleaze** - Weekdays - 9am; Saturday - 7am

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

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

Ashton Common Bus Stop - 3.35pm - 4.00pm

March 6th; March 20th; April 3rd.



Our **'Spring 2024'** meeting will be held on  
**Thursday March 7<sup>th</sup>**  
from **7:30pm** in **the Village Hall.**  
our speaker - **Dave Moon**

David Moon has been giving illustrated talks to gardening groups in Wiltshire and Somerset for many years and comes highly recommended. He asks for a donation as his fee, and gives it to a Cancer Charity organisation. SAGE are delighted that he will be presenting a talk entitled: .....

## ***'Gardens of the Rich and Famous'***

Of course, it will include the usual social, refreshments & raffle.



**Entry £2** (no club to join)

**SAGE outings for 2024:** - Please save the dates for our two garden outings:  
***Thursday 9th May***, a visit to Heale Gardens at Lower Woodford which will include a tour of the gardens.

***Wednesday 19th June***, today we will visit Derry Watkins "Special Plants Garden" at Cold Ashton. A tour of the gardens and refreshments are included.  
Both outings are self-drive, timings and costs will be confirmed at our meeting on 7th March.

### **Barney's garden jobs for the weekends:**

***March:*** \* Prune bush and climbing roses \* Lift and divide overgrown clumps of perennials \* Top dress containers with fresh compost \* Hoe and mulch weeds to keep them under control early.

***April:*** \* Sow new lawns or repair bare patches \* Keep weeds under control \* Feed hungry shrubs and roses \* Increase the water given to houseplants \* Prune fig trees.

Contact us at: [sagecontact851@gmail.com](mailto:sagecontact851@gmail.com)

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## WELL DONE!

After many hours of diligent carpentry, physical exhaustion, and copious cups of coffee, John Tucker, Paul Lenaerts and Mick Abraham of Keevil Shed, are pleased to say the new road sign at the Great Hinton crossroads is in place. Having sought all necessary permission, and adhered to all safety regulations, and having waited for an improvement in the weather conditions, Saturday 6th January was the designated day. It was greatly admired by all who passed by that morning, and has hopefully encouraged others to carry out a similar project Well done lads!!

**Pat Tucker**



---

## Perhaps not so well done...

Trevor Porter took these photographs in North Bradley which then appeared in the Wiltshire Times. They accompanied a long article about the vicar's dangerous dog which locals have named Horrible Hector.



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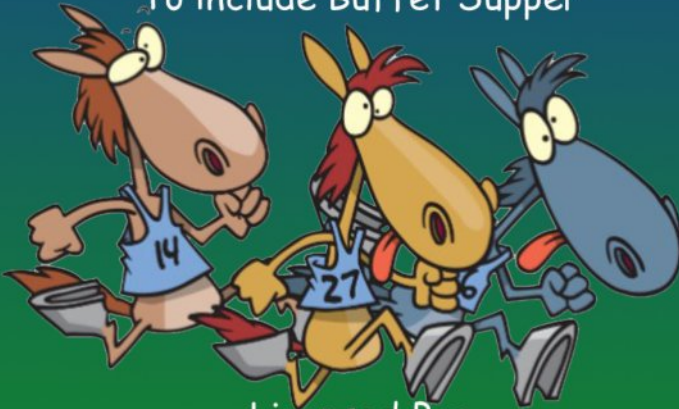
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# NATURAL HISTORY CLUB

## News

As we enter March mild temperatures and plenty of rain seems to be the theme this Winter. Traditional winter visitors such as Fieldfare and Redwing thrushes are still here but not in the numbers we usually see.

Too early perhaps for summer migrants to arrive but not improbable. Start looking out for Swallows later in the month.

Unusually and probably due to the mild weather, there has been reports of Roe deer giving birth to fawns. Normally they delay giving birth until late May or June. This is called embryonic diapause.

But, spring is just around the corner and as well as the birds now seeking out potential nest sites, they are starting to sing! I am waking up now to the sweet songs of a wren, Dunnock and Bluetit. Considering the wren is one of the UK's smallest birds, it has a remarkably loud voice.

The spring flowers are starting to show well and let's hope the wild flower verges on common hill and High street, reproduce as good as last year. Perhaps we will become as well known for our wild flower verges as Keevil is for its snowdrop verges?

It's not too late to put up bird boxes in your garden as the hole nesting birds such as Blue Tit, great Tit and House Sparrow will be searching out potential sites to raise a brood of young. If you want advice on what boxes to put up and where to site them. Please contact us on the email/phone numbers below.

A note to anyone with a pond containing frog spawn. It's early but some has been reported and if you do have spawn, look out for frosts as a layer of ice will kill it. If a frost is forecast, try and protect the spawn with a covering at night.

Our next meeting is on 14th March at the Methodist church hall at 7:30pm. We will have a short talk and photograph show on 'The birds of West Africa' from a member who has recently returned from The Gambia. Not to be missed I think.

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 or Roger Ferguson 01380 870860 r.ferguson550@btinternet.com If we can't answer your question then we probably have a member who can.

**Roger Ferguson**



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## **The Preservation Trust AGM**

will be held on Friday 22nd March 2024 at 7.30pm  
after which (8pm) there will be an illustrated talk about the  
church organ restoration project by Helen Montague-Smith

### **STEEPLE ASHTON OIL SCHEME**

From August the scheme is open to all and there is no fee.

The scheme was begun in order to cut down on the number of lorries coming to the village; an ideal we should continue.

All you have to do is phone or email your order to me the first week of the month for delivery on the second Thursday– you cannot be late – if you miss the date you have to wait till the following month – and you have the first week to think about it! If you wish you can email/ phone Kinch directly and state that you are part of Steeple Ashton Oil Scheme. BUT DON'T MISS THE DEADLINE; the scheme is for one lorry per month.

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**Thomas Seymour, 1st Baron Seymour of Sudeley  
Lord of the Manor of Steeple Ashton from 1539 to 1549**

**Bryan writes...**

Last month, we left off at the breakup of Romsey Abbey following the Act of Suppression under Henry VIII. The abbey had owned Steeple Ashton for 564 years when in January 1539 it was surrendered to the crown, who in turn granted it to Thomas Seymour. At this time Thomas was engaged on diplomatic duties in Europe.

The religious upheaval and political infighting that ensued during the following years proved to be critical for the future of the kingdom – and Thomas Seymour in particular.

**Thomas Seymour's return to court, & his relationship with Catherine Parr**

Following the death during childbirth of Henry VIII's third wife Jane Seymour – Thomas's sister – in 1537 (she was giving birth to the future King Edward VI), Henry dispatched two more wives. Firstly, Anne of Cleves, after just six months of marriage, by annulment in early July 1540. Later that month, he married Catherine Howard. She was then beheaded in February 1542, having been accused of adultery.

Meanwhile, having been engaged on diplomatic duties abroad, Thomas returned to court. There he met Catherine Parr, just before the death of her ailing second husband, Lord Latimer, whom she nursed until his death in early 1543.



## **Catherine Parr**

Even though a “romantic friendship” had developed between Catherine Parr and Thomas Seymour, by February that year Catherine had established herself in the royal household, where she “caught the eye” of the king. When Henry then proposed, she saw it as her duty to accept.

In May 1543 Thomas was posted to Brussels as ambassador to the Habsburg court. It is said he was given this posting to remove him from King Henry’s court. Henry and Catherine were married in July.

Later in 1543 war broke out between England and France. Thomas was made Marshal of the English Army, and he remained engaged with the war, being awarded senior military positions following significant victories near Boulogne. He returned to court just before a momentous event: the death of Henry VIII, on 28 January 1547.

## **Edward Seymour, Lord Protector**

Henry’s last will and testament provided for a Regency Council to be constituted to rule on behalf of his nine-year-old son and heir, King Edward VI, until he came of age. However, by 4 February Thomas’s brother Edward Seymour – a prominent member of the Regency Council – had managed to individually persuade, or bribe, the other members that he alone, as senior uncle to the young king, should become the natural choice for Lord Protector of the Realm, as well as Governor of the King’s Person – guardian of Edward VI.

Consequently, Edward Seymour became the effective ruler of the country, and the only person to have held the positions of Lord Protector and the king’s guardian. However, this served to deepen jealous feelings within his brother Thomas.

The death of Henry VIII in January 1547 had left his widow Catherine Parr as one of the wealthiest women in England. Never one to miss a chance, in the May of that year Thomas married Catherine in a secret ceremony, and moved into her home of Chelsea Manor in London.

Catherine’s household included her stepdaughter, Henry’s daughter by Anne Boleyn: the 14-year-old future Queen Elizabeth I. Also at Chelsea Manor was Elizabeth’s 11-year-old cousin, Lady Jane Grey.

The marriage of Thomas to Catherine Parr deepened even further the rift with his more powerful brother Edward – who had just awarded himself the title of Duke of Somerset (made possible by a clause in Henry’s will). Edward was by now aware that his sibling was in fact working behind the scenes to try and unseat him and take over the guardianship of the young king.

To appease Thomas, Edward attempted to buy him off – giving him the title of 1st Baron Seymour of Sudeley, and a position as Lord High Admiral. Consequently, Thomas became a prominent member of Tudor society. Yet he was still envious of his brother’s incredibly powerful position as Lord Protector and guardian of King Edward VI, and so he continued to work against him.

Early in 1548, Catherine became pregnant, and in June that year Thomas moved his family and household to Sudeley Castle in Gloucestershire, which he had been granted as 1st Baron Seymour of Sudeley.

### **Thomas Seymour & the teenage Princess Elizabeth**

It transpires that early in his marriage to Henry VIII’s widow Catherine Parr, Thomas began to show interest in the 14-year-old Princess Elizabeth. As uncle to her half-brother the young King Edward VI, and new husband of her stepmother, he had plenty of opportunities to spend time with the young princess, who was now a member of his household. Elizabeth’s governess voiced concern regarding his relationship with her charge. While at first Catherine considered her husband’s interest in Elizabeth as innocent, eventually, during Catherine’s pregnancy, Princess Elizabeth and her governess were sent to live with trusted friends in Hertfordshire.

In late August or early September 1548, Catherine gave birth to a daughter: Mary Seymour. Within days of the birth, Catherine developed complications, and she died on 5 September.

Catherine Parr left all her possessions to Thomas, making him one of the richest men in England. His attention again turned to Princess Elizabeth, whom he hoped to marry. Elizabeth turned 15 just two days after the death of Catherine, and Thomas Seymour was around 40 years old. Although rumours of a written proposal remain unproven, Elizabeth was said to hold “some degree of affection” for him, but rejected his approaches and returned to Hatfield House in Hertfordshire, her

childhood home, with her governess.

### **Thomas Seymour & King Edward VI**

All through this period, Thomas Seymour had been trying to draw his nephew, the young King Edward, away from the control of his brother, the Duke of Somerset, to gain the guardianship of the king for himself. To this end, he was aware that although the nine-year-old monarch lived in great splendour, Henry VIII left no provision in his will for his heir to receive “pocket money” – and Thomas’s brother had not corrected this oversight.

Thomas began to visit the king on a regular basis, paying him a generous allowance of coins. This enabled the nine-year-old to appear more king-like, by giving gifts to his servants, tutors, and friends. Edward VI looked forward to these payments – and quickly began to depend upon them.

Thomas tried to use this dependency to persuade the young king that he did not need Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, to be his guardian. He asked the king to sign a parliamentary bill which would make him, Thomas Seymour, his personal governor. Ever aware of the power of the Duke of Somerset as Lord Protector, the young King Edward would not sign.

### **The beginning of the end for Thomas Seymour**

Frustrated at the failure of his plan to unseat his brother, Thomas began to develop an alternative scheme, which he had been preparing since 1547. During the summer of that year the Duke of Somerset was busy invading Scotland, and while he was away Thomas sought support for an open rebellion against him by approaching the English Navy – over which he had control as Lord High Admiral. Also, he negotiated with pirates on the English west coasts, and entered crooked dealings with the vice-treasurer of Bristol Mint.

During 1548 the Regency Council got wind of Thomas Seymour’s unrelenting efforts to gain power. To try and give him the chance to explain himself, his brother, the Lord Protector, called a meeting of the council, but Thomas did not attend. Then, on the night of 16 January 1549, he was caught outside King Edward’s apartments at Hampton Court Palace with a loaded pistol, having shot one of the monarch’s pet spaniels which had barked at him in the garden. Thomas was arrested, and taken to the Tower of London.

It is uncertain what Thomas's plans were. It is just probable that he was trying to remove the king from the control of his brother, rather than harm him. But with religious and political unrest abroad in the country, this dramatic event was seen as a part of a wider plot of treason. The council began an interrogation of Thomas and his associates – including 15-year-old Princess Elizabeth, whose servants were also arrested. The council's agents interrogated her for weeks, and suspected her of having illegally agreed to marry him; but they exonerated her, finding the princess to be skilful in her denials.

The Regency Council accused Thomas Seymour of 33 charges of treason. A clear lack of evidence avoided a trial. Therefore, he was condemned by an Act of Attainder – which gave parliament the power to carry out a judicial execution. His death warrant was duly signed, and at the top of the signatures was that of the Duke of Somerset – his brother Edward, Lord Protector. On 20 March 1549, Thomas Seymour was beheaded on Tower Hill.

Immediately after Thomas's death in March 1549, his property was seized by the crown under the Act of Attainder. The following year, the use of the act to secure his execution was reversed by parliament. This would have then entitled his descendants to inherit his estate – but the property was not returned, as his only child Mary Seymour is believed to have died that year.

### **The aftermath of Thomas Seymour's execution**

The abrupt and dramatic end to the life of the 1st Baron Seymour of Sudeley returned the ownership of Steeple Ashton to the crown, where it would remain for around 80 years.

By 1630 the village had come into the ownership of the Long family of Whaddon and South Wraxall. In the 19th century it passed down the female line to the Longs of Rood Ashton, near West Ashton. Following the death of Viscount Walter Hume Long in 1924, financial difficulties forced the breakup of the estate, and it was sold by auction in 1930.

Having been owned by the Long family for 300 years, the breakup of Rood Ashton Estate ended more than 1000 years of ownership of a substantial part of the Parish of Steeple Ashton by either royal families, religious houses, or titled nobility.

### **A final word on Elizabeth**

In the past, some historical writers interpreted events in a way which

attempted to link the fact that Elizabeth never married, to her association with Thomas Seymour. In ‘The Seymour Family History and Romance’ (1911), A Audry even states:

*“... and is it not possible also that this explains much of her conduct when queen, and answers the well-worn question why did she not marry? Moreover, her after policy of encouraging the piratical raids of John Hastings and Francis Drake had perhaps in it a memory of the good lover of her youth, the pirate Lord Admiral. Whether this is only idle conjecture or has in it some elements of truth, it is certain that Elizabeth maintained a sincere affection for the Admiral, and, at a later date, received and accepted a poem written by Nicholas Throckmorton in his praise—”*

*‘He was hardy, wise, and liberal,*

*His climbing high, disdained by his peers,*

*Was thought the cause he lived not out his years’*

Elizabeth I died on 24 March 1603, bringing the Tudor dynasty to an end.

**Bryan Berrett**





## **Keevil School News - Feb 2024**

This month we have an exciting update from Keevil Primary School. We are thrilled to announce that our beloved **Forest School** will soon be opening up to pre-school children.

A number of pre-school parents were unaware of our beautiful Forest School and recreational space located in the field behind the school. As such, we decided to open our Forest School to pre-school children to ignite their curiosity and give them a taste of our outdoor learning facility that is enjoyed by all Keevil pupils.

Keep your eyes peeled for upcoming dates, as the Forest School prepares to welcome our community's future explorers!

In other news, Keevil Primary School has teamed up with the Bath Rugby Academy to provide our schoolchildren with an extraordinary opportunity for physical and personal development. Rugby coaching sessions have injected energy and enthusiasm into our PE sessions, imparting not only athletic skills but also instilling values of teamwork, discipline, and sportsmanship.

Finally, children from Autumn Class took part in a special initiative for National Read Aloud Day by visiting Goodson Lodge Care Home. In a touching display of community connection, our students spent quality time reading to and engaging with the elderly residents.

Keevil Headteacher Lindsey Hermon said "It was lovely to see meaningful connections between our youngest and oldest community members. Our pupils really loved the experience."

"Initiatives like this help to reinforce our commitment to developing well-rounded individuals and creating a vibrant school spirit."





Catherine Parr and Thomas Seymour