

The Messenger

August 2026

The Parish Of Dursley



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and**

the parish of Uley with Owlpen and Nympsfield

Web Site – www.ewelmebenefice.co.uk

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A Message from the Editors

Dear Readers

Welcome to our August edition, of the Messenger. The hot weather is carrying on, so here is some light reading for you, while you stay in the shade.

Please note views and opinions expressed within these pages are the writers own personal observations.

From Valerie and Judith
(editors)

Front Cover: theme for 2026
'In and around Dursley Parish'

*Photo this month is of
Highfields from Smallpox Hill.
A View of Dursley from
by ©Steve White*



AUGUST 2026

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DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER 2026 ISSUE

IS SUNDAY 16th AUGUST 2026

Revd Dr Juliet writes...



Dear Friends,

Well, the Summer Holidays are upon us, and there is absolutely no need to travel away from Dursley to enjoy glorious walks, fascinating history, fun community events and the delights of nature – all for free!

Hopefully for many the holidays bring a change in the rhythm of life, a slowing of pace, perhaps a change of scene or even a chance to rest. I don't know about you, but it can be surprisingly difficult to rest, to switch off, to stop doing, to be creative, to simply sit still, to be.

There are some words of Jesus that I have found helpful to reflect on in relation to how I live and serve in my role as Rector, and I offer them to you:

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Jesus offers an invitation using an agricultural picture of oxen yoked together, keeping in step, sharing the burden. Our burdens come in all sorts of shapes and sizes, burdens of care and responsibility, burdens of loss and pain, burdens of abundance and calling. I find this a helpful picture in ministry. These words recall me to a healthy place of trust in Jesus when I am anxious or 'driven', seeking to be in control or weighed down by the weight of responsibility, sorrow or pain. I am recalled to a place of steadiness, obedience and willingness to learn (in other words to accept I am wrong!) when I become bullish.

I wonder what is steadying you? Where your restful place is? Where the learning and the movement is?

I know that religion isn't always good for people, Jesus struggled with the religious of his day and another translation of the verse from Matthew's gospel highlights the easy company that we are invited to keep with Jesus, the closeness that forms us in the ways of Christ:

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

I hope and pray that, whatever situation you find yourself in, you will experience and go on experiencing something of the grace and closeness to Jesus that brings lightness and freedom.

With love

Revd Juliet

PASTORAL CARE

If people are in need,
unwell,
at home or in hospital
Please contact the
Revd Dr Juliet Jensen.

Tel: 01453 350810 or 07776 910890



SAFEGUARDING

Heather Arnold is the
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for the
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August Thoughts from The Benefice Office.... *by Clare White*

Our beautiful Benefice, *photo by Steve White*



Holidays and enforced recuperation time is the perfect space for reflection on life and faith.

It is necessary in life to give yourself a chance to be still and switch off, as important as always being on the go and filling life with chores, work, leisure activities, volunteering etc. etc.

We are always hearing the buzz words "Mindfulness Moment". Modern jargon but caring for your mind is vital.

Recently at our staff meeting we read the passage from Revelation 22: 1-5, the passage draws on the vision of the river of life, the tree of healing, the removal of the curse, and the eternal light of God's presence.

We started with a comment about being shown the river of life by an angel, the remark was made that sometimes we need to be shown or re-introduced to something to see it for it's worth or JUST see it. This cannot happen when we are rushing around or living in chaos.

The "Angels" we meet along the way come in all sorts of guises and we are never sure when they will pop up.

Revelation 22: 1-5 is a beautiful passage with visualisation of nature with rivers and trees and reference to light and sun. It's where I personally feel closest to God.

A quote from the charity Mind - *"Spending time in green space or bringing nature into your everyday life can benefit your mental health. It can benefit your physical wellbeing too."*

As I've said many times on this page, we are very lucky living in and around Dursley because we have so much nature on our doorsteps.

The Ewelme river meanders through our Benefice and we are surrounded by woods, they bring life giving spirit and healing to us all, even if we can only look at them from afar.

Looking towards the light given from God will draw us up to a more positive mindset, trusting in God's actions and hope with faith.

But we must stop to be able to see and hear.

A prayer reflecting Revelation 22 - Lord, we thank You for the tree of life, bringing healing and restoration to the nations. We hold onto the glorious promise that the curse of sin and pain will one day be no more. Until that day comes, we pray for Your healing touch—physically, emotionally, and spiritually—over our broken world and in our own lives.

Stop Press: Clare has had her thyroid operation and is now recovering at home. Prayers were answered, thanks to the NHS.
Judith



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ST JAMES FREE BOOK STALL

Another very successful month has passed and, at the end of July we had a party to celebrate raising over £4,500 this year already, and over £40,500 in total.

Thanks to your generosity the Tiny Toads playgroup were able to completely refurbish their reading area with folding bookcases, interlocking floor mats plus bean bags for sitting.

Here is the 'Thank You' card we received.



The bookstall is being very well received in Dursley. Here is a response sent in reply to a 'thank you for your books' message sent to someone who left us books

"Thank you kindly to you and all the other generous volunteers who do such a fantastic job in the local community! It's such a great asset for Dursley, we have lost the car boot sale this year as well which was another good event for the town in terms of getting people together to share and talk. You are all champions!

I just think it's such a wonderful asset for Dursley.
Long may it continue!"

We really could do with more volunteers to help us on a Friday afternoon or Saturday lunchtime.

It's not a chore. Some quite enjoy the social occasion. Why not give it a try.

St James the Great, Dursley

Coffee, Cake and Music 2026



10.30am coffee,
tea and cake
11-11.40am
Recital

There is no charge, but a retiring
collection will be taken, the proceeds of
which go to the work of
St James' Church

August 29th William Reynolds
(Minster Church of
St Mary, Swansea)

September 26th Andrew Millington
(Former DoM at Exeter Cathedral)

October 31st Bernard West
(Oxford)

*Nigel says.....*For the August **"Coffee, Cake and Music"** on **Saturday 29th**, we are pleased to welcome Dr William Reynolds from the Minster Church of St Mary, Swansea. William has been the Director of Music at St Mary's for a considerable amount of time and it is the only parish church in the whole of Wales to have a term-time midweek choral evensong. He has played for us on many occasions in the past, and we look forward to his programme.



Where do you go to My Lovely?

Recently, I have been thinking about moths and butterflies. They all belong to the insect order Lepidoptera. They do have many similar traits, but they have quite different physical characteristics, as well as in their behaviour. Moths tend to feed on nectar during the nighttime, and butterflies during the day. One thing that got me thinking was why don't you see moths flying about in the day, and where do butterflies go at night?

I understand that moths are masters of hiding in plain sight from us as well as their predators during the day (birds and spiders). As the daytime temperature goes up, they carefully position themselves, so they are hidden and protected from strong sunlight. They seek crevasses, piles of leaf litter, the underside of cool leaves and trees. Lighter coloured moths prefer fresh vegetation, and those darker ones seek tree bark or even the ground.



Buff-Tip Moth hiding on a
Silver Birch branch

Some can resemble pieces of twig or leaf and so become 'invisible' to the untrained eye like mine! According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, moths are clever at constantly repositioning themselves, so that their outline and colouring blends into their background. They are sensitive to surface irregularities, pressing their bodies, and even using their legs to work out the optimum location. It seems that they are more than just fidgeting and flitting about.

Butterflies are diurnal and tend to be active during the day, feeding on nectar and searching for mate. Their wings are often more colourful than moths although there are some exceptions such as the Tiger Moth. Bright colours and patterns, such as the Peacock butterfly help warn predators off.



According to the Butterfly Conservation organisation, there are more moths that fly by day than butterflies which surprised me to learn, and some butterflies such as the Red Admiral can fly by

night for migration purposes. Butterflies tend to rest during the night, folding their wings and roosting in a safe position such as under leaves or in crevasses, away from predators such as owls and spiders.

The Encyclopaedia says that generally, butterflies tend to have more slender bodies and more proboscis type mouth parts, whereas moths tend to have fuzzier, even furry bodies and mouth parts.

Recently I have learned about the December Moth who has a very fluffy looking appearance which I find endearing 😊

They are highly sensitive indicators of the health of the environment and play crucial roles in the food chain as well as being pollinators of plants, says the Butterfly Conservation organisation. Unfortunately, climate change is affecting population of these insects and there is a decline occurring.

Ways we can help include growing butterfly and moth friendly plants and flowers, not over-manicuring our gardens, leaving areas of leaf litter and similar, avoid using pesticides, creating a bog garden or leaving out dishes of water, supporting the charity Butterfly Conservation.



A December Moth resting and blending into an oak twig



Pen and wash drawing of a Tortoiseshell butterfly by fellow St James Eco Church team member Elizabeth Oakley

If you have any ideas and thoughts around supporting St James to be an Eco Church and would like to get involved with this friendly group, please speak to Gill Mather or Jan Vonberg. It would be great to have more help towards making the small changes needed to make a sustainable world

References

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Whats-the-difference-between-moths-and-butterflies> Butterfly Conservation.Org

MY NAUGHTY DRAWER.....by Jennifer Kendrick



I have reached a time in my life (89 years old in case anyone is asking!) when I can please myself! I don't care any more - which does not mean an absence of feelings or selfish introspection. It simply means I am aware of my blessings, know my limits, hope for the best and deal with inevitable change the best I can, always giving thanks for God's guidance and mercy.

A few months ago it felt like standing on the edge of a cliff, aware of the relentless erosion caused by exposure to a long life!

I accepted aging as inevitable, restricting, daunting but not confining or defining!

I reluctantly, but hopefully with grace, accepted some help and plodded on until the day I could not breathe and was forced to get urgent medical help! It was no surprise to be diagnosed with severe heart failure. Huge advances in medicine over my lifetime, mean I can choose between accepting a permanent safe place in the crawler lane or listen and gently gather strength to find another way to find fulfillment with varying support. The conversation is continuous. The final decision is mine.

It is not easy as there are huge gaps in my comfort blanket left by close relations and allies dying, but my life goes on. I am learning every day to be positive without pretence: to be understanding without compromise: to retire without redress: to tackle molehills with enthusiasm, whilst most mountains still remain challenging!

Recently, I established a naughty drawer for sweet treats! A selection of 'no-nos' alongside mixed nuts and raisins. Easy access and slow deliberation of small, carefully chosen, snacks seems more acceptable and less tempting as cakes, pastries and biscuits stay in a pretty tin in a cupboard! Seems contrary but it works for me!

Last week I had cataracts removed from both my eyes. Immediately the world is full of amazing colour, promise and purpose. I am now making a bucket list of possibilities to celebrate 2027.

Watch this space!





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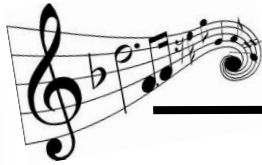
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MUSIC NOTES FOR AUGUST.



We were saddened to hear of the death of long-serving chorister Joyce Lombarde which coincided with the death of

Patricia Green (Jill Archer) and the murder of Ann Widdicombe; who, each in their own way, touched the lives of many.

Joyce Lombarde was in church on 5th July to hear us sing one of her favourites; the first chorus from Bach's wonderful Ascensiontide cantata (no 11) Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen. She left us an answerphone message on Tuesday 6th July to say she was going into hospital the following day for a diagnosis of the spread of the cancer from which she had suffered since last year, but on Friday 10th I received an email saying that Joyce had died in Gloucester Royal Hospital that morning.

Naturally her sudden death came as a shock to her fellow choristers, but we all knew that Joyce was aware of the seriousness of her condition and its recent deterioration.

It is often the case that in death a person suddenly becomes a "saint", making those who knew him/her wondering if they really knew that particular person. (I remember attending the funeral of a former Headmaster and, like all the assembled ex colleagues, was absolutely amazed to hear how he was constantly telling jokes.....who would have known?) However, Joyce was very much "what you saw" with no airs and graces. A genuinely good and kind person with a lovely impish sense of humour and a heart of gold, I never heard her complain, even in the last few weeks when she must have been in great pain, yet still managed to come to church; she really was a "saint".

Her membership of the choir (Alto Second Class as she called herself) was more than just singing alto as she really entered into the spirit of what we do. This was proven when she graciously accepted the infamous "Tambourine Award" at the annual choir lunch. Her poems, resulting from her unique observational skills, were much appreciated as were her "diaries of church life" displayed at the back of church.

In the rather dim and distant past, Joyce had been a member of DODS, and her acting skills were once again given an airing in just about all the productions Barbie produced; "Our Town"; "Cider with Lionel"; Live Nativity; "Lark Rise"; the Music Hall; "Twelve Dames of Christmas" etc.

Joyce was looking forward to being part of "A Hardy Christmas" in December 2025, but had to withdraw as she was tiring very easily and didn't think she'd cope. Needless to say, she was in the audience!

As Barbie would tell you, I am not a great cake eater, but for "Coffee, Cake and Music" organ recitals, Joyce would make a really fine fruit loaf which I really enjoyed! Sometimes I'd be given a whole loaf to "put in the freezer", and I'm pretty sure there's one waiting to be consumed with a glass or two of wine when we will remember Joyce as someone whose upbeat presence was so much a part of our choir. Thank-you Joyce for your 23 years' service, and may you rest in peace in the knowledge that, posthumously, you have been promoted to Alto First Class.

From the editors... Joyce could always be relied upon to produce a poem, to suit the occasion, or she would write on her experience on holiday or visits she had made. The last time she wrote for the Messenger, she was just going into hospital for her final operation. She wrote about the first attempt which was aborted by the hospital because the Consultant had a health crisis of his own. We will miss your cheery face and your wit, but I'm sure we can resurrect quite a few of your writings over the next few months.

Rest in Peace Joyce, from Valerie and Judith.

Here's just one of her shorter poems.

A Chorister's Plea.

To save us from the shiv'ring shakes
A small donation do I make.
In choir we sit, 'neath organ loft,
Which blesseth us with music soft
AND LOUD, (windy draught as well
As Nigel presses button "SWELL")
Please help us in our hour of need
For a working boiler I do plead.

Stop Press:

**Joyce's Memorial service will be held
at St James' at 2pm on 10th August**



**Jill Crossland
Piano Recital**

works by J. S. Bach, Mozart
Beethoven "Moonlight" Sonata

**St James the Great
Dursley**

Sunday 13th September 4 p.m

'magnetic, delightful'
American Record Guide

Admission free
Retiring collection



Jill Crossland pursues an active concert and recording career and gives over fifty concerts a year. Jill has given many recitals on the South Bank and at the Wigmore Hall in London, and her other appearances have also included Cadogan, Bridgewater and Fairfield Halls, St George's Bristol, the Leipzig Gewandhaus, Vienna Musikverein, Vienna Konzerthaus, the National Concert Hall, Dublin and the Sage Gateshead. Jill has featured in the Classic FM Hall of Fame and her Bach's Well Tempered Clavier, recorded in West Road Concert Hall, has received high praise, described by the *Penguin Guide* as 'a remarkable achievement, ranking with the finest' Jill has appeared on radio and TV, including live and recorded broadcasts on BBC Radios 3 and 4. Jill's recordings of Bach, Rameau, Mozart, Beethoven and other composers for Warner, Signum and other labels have all received critical acclaim. Her new recording of Chopin has had half a million streams.

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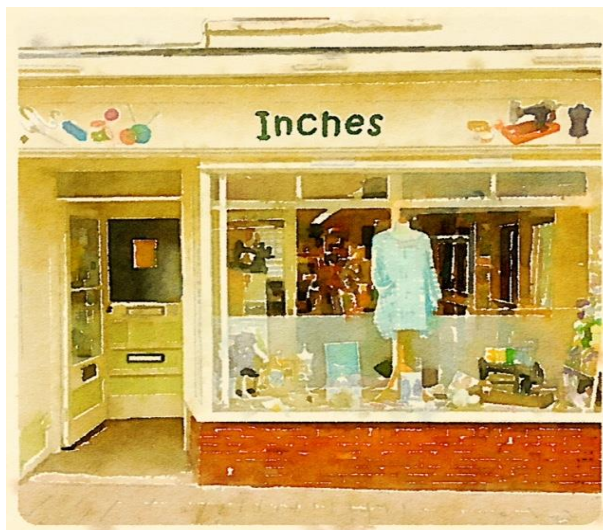
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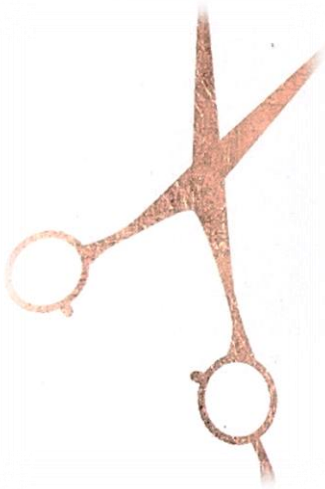
Nigel also writes....

The **"Come and Sing Choral Evensong"** was a thoroughly successful occasion bringing together singers from a wide area. Hopefully next year's event will be rather better supported from within our own benefice! Lynn James was on fine form working with rather limited time to get the singers to give of their best, and it really worked. Charles Wood's "Hail Gladdening Light" for double choir is not the easiest of pieces, but from the organ loft it sounded absolutely splendid. and the decibels generated in "O Thou the Central Orb" were almost off the scale! Thank-you to everyone who sang or helped in any way (superb cakes!) and a special thank-you to the Rev'd David Vonberg for taking the service (as the Rector was singing with the choir!) and preaching an excellent sermon.

The choir is on holiday during August, but we resume in September.

We are very keen to recruit new members, so if you know anyone who may be interested in joining us, please come to the Parish Centre on Friday 4th September for 7.30pm.





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August 2026

(Joining Zoom details on Ewelme Benefice website)

Sunday 2nd August – 9th Sunday after Trinity

10am Parish Holy Communion Service at St James with baptism

Wednesday 5th August

**No Evening Prayer via Zoom in August.
Back in September.**

Thursday 6th August

9am Morning Prayer in St James

10am Holy Communion at St James

Saturday 8th August

10am Klarinets play at St James

Sunday 9th August – 10th Sunday after Trinity

10am Parish Holy Communion

Tuesday 11th August

2.30pm Communion at Holly Oak Care Home

Wednesday 12th August

Thursday 13th August

9am Morning Prayer in St James

10am Holy Communion at St James

11.15am Communion at Henlow Court Care Home

Sunday 16th August – 11th Sunday after Trinity

8am Said Holy Communion at St James

10am Family Service at St James

Tuesday 18th August

6-8pm Staff meeting

Wednesday 19th August

Thursday 20th August

9am Morning Prayer in St James

10am Holy Communion at St James

Friday 21st August

OFFICE CLOSED

Sunday 23rd August – 12th Sunday after Trinity

10am Parish Holy Communion at St James

Tuesday 25th August

2.30pm Holy Communion at The Hollies Care Home

Wednesday 26th August

Thursday 27th August

9am Morning Prayer in St James

10am Holy Communion at St James

Saturday 29th August

10.30am Coffee, Cake and Music at St James

Sunday 30th August – 13th Sunday after Trinity

10am Benefice Service at St Giles, Uley

Monday 31st August – Bank Holiday

Office Closed



August Acrostic Poem....

by Sally Hayward

As the sun continues to shine
Umbrellas and parasols are up in most
Gardens; we all can't get
Used to these
Sunny days; going for a picnic is fun to do
There's no chance of any rain forecast for a while

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COME AND JOIN US

We have interesting speakers and time to socialise.
Most months we organise to go out
to lunch after the meeting.
We have Coffee Mornings most months.
You will in fact find many contacts in
St James on a Sunday.

**OUR NEXT MEETING IS ON
Wednesday 19th August**

**Speaker: Diana Humphrey and Fred Ward
(Whisper an Shout) The stars and songs of Old
Time Music Hall.**

Contacts:

President:

Glenys Muir 01453 543391

Secretaries:

Val Sheen 07842 427452

Judith Staddon 01453 544312

Bellringing *by Frank & Elizabeth Byrne*

National 12 Bell Final 2026 for the Taylor Trophy

Not relevant for us, perhaps, because we don't have any towers with 12 bells in the Branch and don't make full use of our 10. However, the 12 Bell National Striking Competition has become a national event with 108 ringers taking part in the final this year, and a total of 27 different 12 bell teams involved in the qualifiers (the word now used in place of 'eliminators' which seems unfriendly) or 324 ringers at least.

This contrasts with the 5 teams competing in the first ever such competition for the Emlyn Hancock Trophy in 1975 on the 50 cwt ring of 12 at St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol. The competition was held in memory of the man who had been tower captain at Redcliffe for many years. Bands were by invitation only and rang a test piece of 255 Stedman Cinqes with just 4 minutes practice. The winning order was: Leicester, The Ancient Society of College Youths, Birmingham, Reading, Bristol. The success of this one-off competition resulted in a National Competition being established which has taken place every year since except in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid 19 pandemic. John Taylor's of Loughborough has provided the trophy.

This year it was the turn of York to host the final on Saturday 20 June in their superb Minster and on their 59+ cwt ring of 12. These are truly magnificent bells, vying for the best sounding 12 in the country. The competition piece was a prescribed 252 changes of Stedman Cinqes composed by Christopher J. Poole. On heavy bells the test piece chosen to be rung seems to be Cinqes (changes on 11) while Maximus (changes on 12) is chosen for lighter bells. Nine teams make it to the final with the hosts given a free pass, the other 8 teams having to win through the qualifiers. This free pass idea has varied over the years but it is back in favour now, perhaps to keep the local band interested.

The organisation involved is impressive, all by volunteers and, mostly, local ringers. The order of ringing is determined by drawing team names out of a hat. There are favoured slots, some like to get it over and done with while others prefer to hear how two or three teams ring before it's their turn. Since each team has 30 minutes for their practice and test piece, being drawn toward the back end of proceedings is seldom popular. What do you do for 3 or 4 hours until it's your turn? Invitingly, the pub booked for the whole day, solely for the event, beckons but might not be the best preparation before taking part in a striking competition. The free pass for the local band can be a double-edged sword. If drawn toward the end, the local ringers have



spent many hours on their feet as stewards before the long climb up to the ringing room to perform. Timing is very disciplined, watches are synchronised and each band must be in changes by 15 or 45 minutes past the hour (dependent on their draw position). Failure to do this will attract penalties. Teams have to be waiting outside the ringing room, ready to enter, immediately the previous team finishes – it's a long climb. On a hot day, the teams ringing last have the benefit of accumulated heat and 'atmosphere'. Air conditioning has not yet found its way into our ringing rooms.

This year there were 4 judges and the first time a mother and daughter had officiated together. The judges were: Katherine Town (chief), Jennifer Town, Jennifer Earis, Joanne Holden. Was it also the first time that all the judges were ladies? Before letters are sent to the Editor, I realise this question would not have been asked if all the judges were men. Over several years now, the judges have had the option of using a Stikeometer named HawkEar to assist with their assessment. Use of this, or not, is at the discretion of the Chief Judge. When used it is to assist with and not to determine the result. Over the years HawkEar has been developed and improved. Technical people are on hand to help with its use, to set it up to show what's wanted from it and to interpret the results. It also shows if the judge's assessment matches HawkEar's.

The judges were in a separate building and they hear the same live feed that was broadcast. The sound is captured by a microphone placed carefully directly above the bells. The test piece, rung by each team and transmitted via the live feed, is recorded. The ringers in the tower will hear a different sound from what the judges hear. While the judges will hear a pristine electronically balanced audio feed, the ringers have to contend with some additional acoustic challenges that we all have to cope with as sound makes its way to the ringing room. Not everybody is in favour of using these Hawkear devices, might we rely too much on technology? Human ears, judgement and experience are thought to be a far superior way of deciding who is most worthy of the top accolade.

These observations were from the excellent live feed broadcast on YouTube. We weren't there in person, the TV went on at about 10.30 and didn't go off until after 6 when the results were announced. It was watched from many parts of the world via the live feed. Matthew Tosh was excellent, as usual, in master-minding the live and conducting the interviews. These included the judges, two members of each band, post ringing, and some university students as well as Andrew Wilby from Taylors who informed us that the first Taylor 12 Bell trophy had to be finished by his dad in his garage. All through the day York

Minster had its normal hundreds of visitors who must have wondered what was going on.

The complexity and excellence of the ringing mean that the results take a very long time to sort out, typically well over an hour adding to the already considerable suspense. The judges didn't elaborate on how many times they had to relisten to pieces of ringing to satisfy themselves they had the correct result. As with last year, the home team can have a distinct advantage if they have a band capable. Last year Bristol won on Redcliffe bells and this year York won on their own bells but they had some very formidable competition.

Results:

Position	Band	Score	Order	Peal Speed
1	York	95%	(rang 4th)	3h59
2	Birmingham	92%	(rang 5th)	3h55
3	Bristol	91%	(rang 9th)	3h46
4	ASCY	86%	(rang 7th)	4h00
5	SRCY	85%	(rang 1st)	4h00
6	Cambridge	84%	(rang 3rd)	4h03
7	St Pauls	75%	(rang 6th)	4h01
8	Leeds	74%	(rang 8th)	3h56
9	Guildford	70%	(rang 2nd)	3h56

Over the total of 50 12 bell competitions rung to date, the following are the number of times each of the winning teams have won:

Birmingham	26
Ancient Society of College Youths	5
St Paul's Cathedral	4
Cambridge	4
Royal Society of Cumberland Youths	4
York	3
Bristol	1
Exeter	1
Leicester	2

Clearly, over this time Birmingham have dominated with their consistently high standard of ringing.



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LAMMASby Canon Richard Morgan

In the Book of Common Prayer calendar, August 1st was called Lammas Day. Lammas is just a contraction of Loaf Mass. August 1st marked the beginning of the grain harvest, and an initial loaf was offered in the Church, and maybe used in the Communion. That was very Biblical. We celebrate harvest at the end of harvesting. The Law of Moses instructed that there should be a feast of the First Fruits as well as one at the end of harvest. The latter and our harvest festivals are a thanksgiving celebration. In fact, the Christian harvest festival was only introduced in the Victorian period, being initiated by Parson Robert Hawker. I suppose it has displaced Lammas tide, which was both an initial thanksgiving and a prayer for a good harvesting. Lammas does not appear in our modern calendar.

This seems to me to be a pity. Of course, we still have Rogationtide, at the end of Easter, when we pray for good crops. [Rogation means asking.] Traditionally, Rogation ceremonies included beating the bounds, walking round and marking the boundaries of parishes. And we have harvest festival, when we give thanks for the crops. In a more urban Church, maybe that seemed enough. But a combination of thanking and asking, and a dedication of the harvest to God seem to add something. The Church having largely dropped Lammas, the neo-pagans have adopted it, with somewhat different meaning, of course.

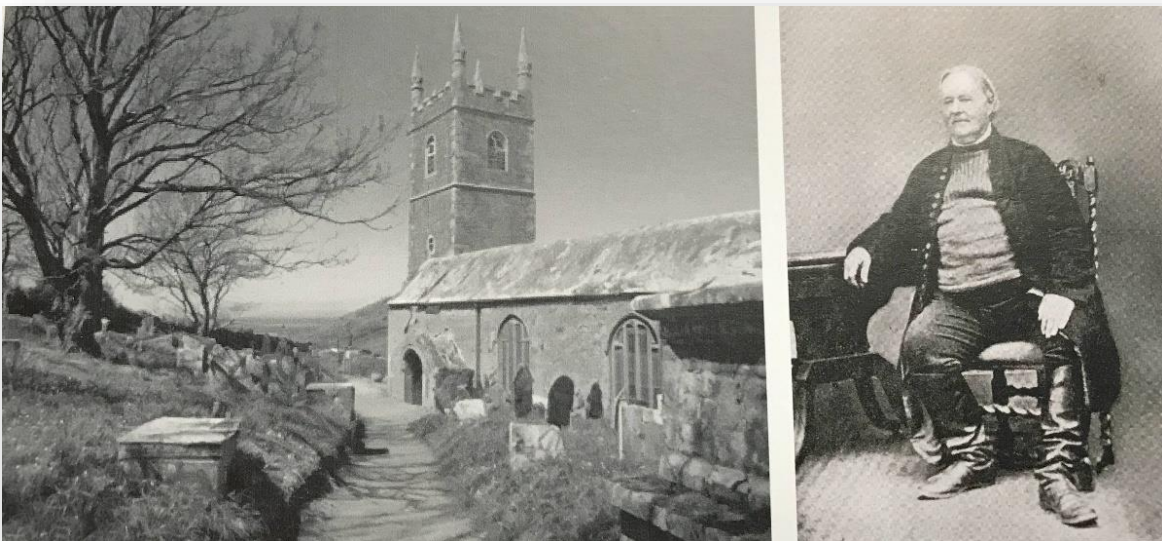
But both the deification of nature and a neglect of nature will not do. Nature is not God; it is incomplete; on its own, it does not serve as a basis for good and evil – being often 'red in tooth and claw.' Yet it is marvellous, full of beauties, and our dependence on it means we need to learn to care for it, as the ecological movement stresses.

August now is for most a time of holidays. Schools have their long break then. But originally, I think the break was given then so that children could get involved in the harvest. In our less rural world, Rogation, Lammas and harvest festivals can remind us of our dependence on nature and on the farmers and others who work it, and remind us to give thanks and to pray for nature, for farmers and for all people in their work. The combination of thanks and asking are important to our prayers.

Here are some asking prayers for this time.

For our local farmers and all farmers,
and for all who all who look after our countryside;
for fishermen and foresters,
for miners and manufacturers,
for those who work in transport and in trade,
for retailers and financiers,
for leaders and governments,
for all people in their work,
and for the unemployed:
God our Creator, we pray to you.

That we may enjoy our work,
and that our work may be good for other people and our earth:
For all who cook and prepare food, and for us all who eat it;
For all who do not have enough to eat:
for those whose harvests have failed,
for victims of natural disasters,
for victims of human made disasters like war,
and for those who are just desperately poor and oppressed:
In this time, when we know more than ever about how our planet
works, and yet scientists warn that we are creating dangers for its
life by our exploitation of it, we pray that we will have the wisdom
to meet people's needs while caring for our environment:



Rev Robert Stephen Hawker

Pictured is St Morwenna Church, Morwenstow, and
Parson Hawker wearing a seaman's jersey and sea boots

Rev Robert Stephen Hawker....*Judith Staddon*

As Richard has mentioned Rev Hawker I was reminded that last year we visited Morwenstow Church, we had come mainly to sample a cream tea at the Old Vicarage. The church is just across the road from the Vicarage and as we always like to visit churches and it was near Harvest I thought aha I will get some information on Rev Hawker and this is what was written in their guide and history. Since Can Richard has mentioned this I thought it was an opportunity to write further. Also a reminder that Harvest this year will be on Sunday 11th October. Hawker has been credited with introducing the Harvest Festival. And there are good grounds for this assertion. The year 1842 was a particularly hungry period, in what were to be known as the Hungry 40s. But the harvest turned out to be good and special Thanksgiving prayers were decreed by the authorities. On September the 13th, 1843, Hawker issued a summons to the parishioners of Morwenstow to meet him in the chancel of the church on the 1st Sunday in October for a service of Harvest Thanksgiving. This idea was soon taken up by others, and so the modern Harvest Festival began. Hawker wrote more than once of Lammas Day, the ancient Celtic feast of Lughnasa, but he felt, as does the modern farmer, that August 1st, though an appropriate celebration of the first fruits, was too early a date for observing the gathering in of the harvest. Hawker also introduced the regular offertory, which brought him into conflict with the times, when people especially in country parishes were very poor and it also upset the rural synods.

Previous page picture is St Morwenna Church, Morwenstow, and Hawker wearing a seaman's jersey and sea boots, and he often had to conduct services for sailors who washed up on the shore after a shipwreck and, known only unto God and were then buried in the churchyard, instead of on the beach as had been the custom.

He's pictured here a few days before he died and had moved to the Roman Church.



WORD OF THE MONTH FOR JULY WAS MERITORIOUS.

Isn't it glorious
to be meritorious,
to earn by hard work
and refusing to shirk
All the credit you gain
by much labour and pain,
and by effort unswerving
being good and deserving?

Here's another - but serious:

It's good to be meritorious,
but so hard to be fully so,
that it's by God's love and grace,
not earning our place,
that, saved and victorious,
into God's reign we go.

Can Richard Morgan

The SARA Lifeboat based in Sharpness (Severn Area Rescue Assistants) are called out over 100 times a year. The entire crew work on a voluntary basis and should be celebrated for their meritorious lifesaving efforts operating on one of the most dangerous rivers in the world, our own River Severn.

Roland Swift

When we were all growing up, my mother did without everything. She never had a new dress or shoes.

I think my mother truly deserved to be called meritorious.

Paul Prodger.

Superheroes are acknowledged for meritorious acts and achievements. My personal Superheroes are the neighbours who look out for me and without being asked, help with tasks I can no longer manage. Also my Family and Friends who offer love and support.

Then there are the many volunteers in our community who enable me and many others, to leave the house and socialise. They are so committed and show great patience.

These are the meritorious people deserving of the highest accolades.

Jean Gardiner.

And the Winner is.....

Well this month we couldn't choose and you all deserve top marks. So pat yourselves on the back and we think you are all meritorious!! We will try and make it more difficult next month.



WORD OF THE MONTH COMPETITION

Each Month there will be a new word which we need you to fit into a sentence. The sentence, which best conveys the meaning of the word and will be judged by the editors and Benefice Administrator, will be the winner.

The word for August is **Perambulate**.

Send entries to the Office, Valerie or Judith
by 20th of the month.



Archdeacon arrangements

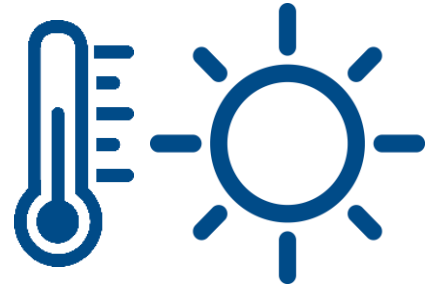
Susan Cooke has finished her time as Assistant Archdeacon and we want to acknowledge with deep thanks all that she has given over these past months as she has supported Archdeacon Katrina. Susan has now kindly taken on the role of Area Dean for Severn Vale.

We look forward to welcoming John Whittaker as our new Archdeacon of Gloucester. He will be licensed and installed at the Cathedral on Sunday 6 September at 3pm. Please do put this date in your diary to come and welcome John.

Citizens Advice Column:

How to stay cool in the heat

While summer can be enjoyable, heatwaves can make your home uncomfortable and even affect your health. Here are **five simple ways to keep cool**:



- **Let cool air in:** Open windows on opposite sides overnight or early morning to create airflow. If you only have one window, open internal doors. Opening a loft hatch can also release heat.
- **Keep heat out:** Close curtains or blinds where the sun hits. When it's hotter outside (late morning to evening), keep windows shut and use fans instead.
- **Use a fan:** Fans are cheap to run and help air circulate. Place it in front of a bowl of ice (at a safe distance) for extra cooling. When it's cooler outside than inside, use it near an open window to help draw in fresh air.
- **Take a break from the heat:** Spend time in air-conditioned public spaces like libraries or leisure centres.
- **Improve insulation:** Better insulation, shading, ventilation and efficient windows can help all year round. Check the Citizens Advice website for information about schemes and grants that are available.



Citizens Advice helps with a range of issues.

For information and self-help guidance, visit **citizensadvice.org.uk**.

To speak to a local adviser in the Stroud and Cotswold Districts, visit

citizensadvice-stroudandcotswold.org.uk to complete our **webform** or call us on **0808 800 0510**.

GERALD IVOR HALFORD. 1930 – 2026 RIP.

From the Eulogy at his funeral in St James on 17th July.

What a friendly person Gerald was! What a good companion! A life well spent and well lived.

The eulogy prepared by his daughter, Beverly. (with edits for the magazine).

Gerald was born in Draycott, Cam on 12th December 1930, son of Raymond and Alice Holford. He was baptised soon after birth as he had rheumatic fever and was not expected to live long, so to reach the age of 95, and a half was some achievement.

Growing up he lived in a row of cottages in the Slade, roughly where the Tyndale Centre is situated today. Gerald's father fought in the Second World War, after which the family moved to Woodfields, to a prefab at the Crapen, where Gerald lived until his marriage to Barbara in 1956.



He was educated, first at Dursley Church School and then at the Grammar School, he completed his National Service before commencing work at Listers where he worked for 40 years. Gerald had a little black book. It didn't contain names or jokes but useful information he acquired over the forty years of working as a Cost Clerk.

Gerald met Barbara Wardle at a youth club. She was a Birmingham girl, but was in Dursley staying with an aunt in Laurence Grove. In 1956 Gerald married Barbara at Selly Oak in Birmingham and they then moved into Dursley in Rosebery Park.

In 1958 Beverly was born followed by Roland in 1962.

Their next home was in Ferney where they lived until the early 1990's. Gerald, was a soccer player and distance runner. He loved working on his allotment, and after the allotments were used for building Gerald got up early and dug up two halves of the back lawn at Ferney, this was not a popular move, but the family were never short of fresh veg.

Gerald was also a member of the Loyal Order of the Moose for many years and became Treasurer. He, together with Barbara, took up playing bowls which they enjoyed greatly.

Roland was a keen rugby player, and Gerald went to as many matches as possible to watch him play and occasionally get into some altercations with the opposing team.

Beverly and Roland both married and had four children between them. Gerald enjoyed time with his grandchildren, watching them grow, move onto their own careers and marry. He had six great grandchildren the last great grandchild he didn't get to meet.

In the early 1990's Barbara and Gerald moved to a cottage in Stinchcombe a home they had always dreamt of owning. Living in Stinchcombe meant he could watch the rugby on the field opposite; he marked the pitches for many years, which helped keep him fit. He always watched Roland play rugby at home, then gave his advice and analysis of the game – this was from a footballer!

He tried his hand quite successfully at cooking. Another black book appeared in which Gerald wrote down the recipes he had cooked. He had the most beautiful handwriting. One triumph, helped by Beverly, was a gluten free, steak and kidney pudding.

As time passed the cottage became impracticable for them to live in so they moved for the last time to Woodlands, a building Gerald recalled from his days of working at Listers.

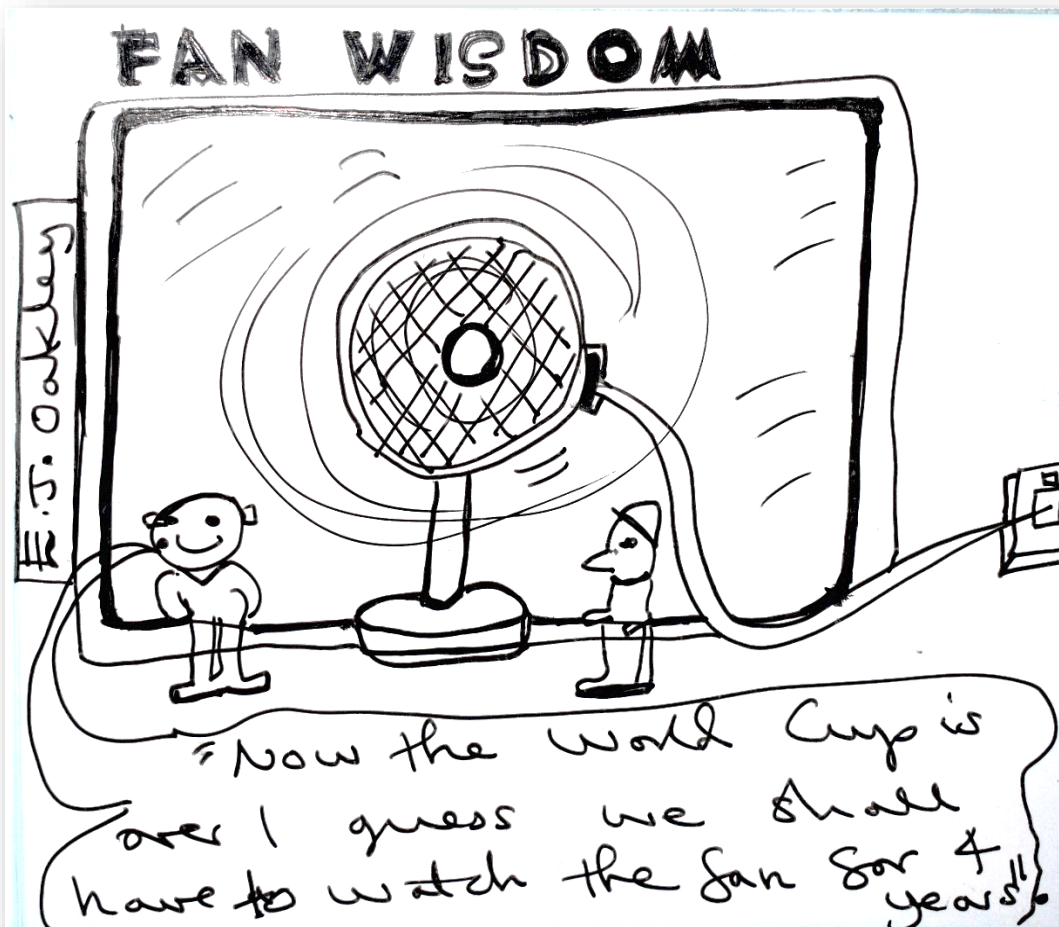
In May 2019 Barbara died and, for the first time in his life, Gerald was living on his own. He was determined to be as independent as possible and with the support of his family he achieved this for a few years. When extra help was needed Donna and team of carers looked after him.

Gerald loved to join the family for any celebrations and being a Dursley man through and through and would happily chat to anyone about the Dursley he remembered: the shops, the pubs and notable people in the community, including Can Richard Morgan's parents. The family tried many times to write all his memories down but he never would let them. And he did have some stories to tell.

Stone cold-warm

It's crowded in here.
Old ghosts warmed to
our new presence have
crawled behind our backs.
Given stone-cold breaths.
Walked up the aisle with
us and tried not to cry.
Their old fold-their only
refuge between stones-
designated as a cold space
for refuge in trying times.
They can see why.

Elizabeth Oakley
A Dursley Poet





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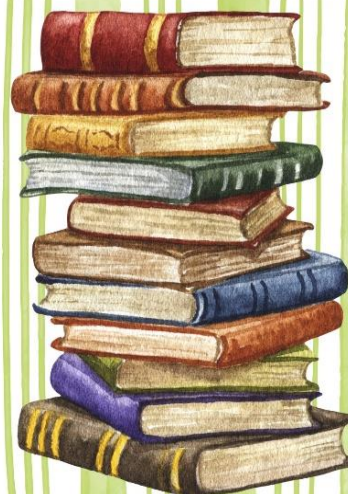
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Gerald Ivor Halford 17th July at St James

FLOWER ROTA

August 2nd

High Altar

Cynthia Martin

Tanner Chapel

tba

Lady Chapel

tba

August 9th & 16th

High Altar

Sarah Hodge

Tanner Chapel

Valerie Meares

Lady Chapel

Anne Shipton

August 23rd & 30th

High Altar

Sandra Longstreth

Tanner Chapel

Margaret Lloyd

Lady Chapel

Clare White.



Years Mind in August

2nd Jesse Edmonds 2005

4th Mary Morgan 2013

5th William Davies 1983, Clive Brain 2023

6th Diana Collins 2001, Harry Kitson 2005

7th Gwyneth Talboys 2016

9th Connie Newman 1998

10th Ronald Jackson 2021

13th Phyllis Phipps 2009, Norman Bullimore 2015

14th Susan Martin 2020

16th Amelia Hopkins 1976, Gladys Jackson, Stan Vaisey 2019

17th Tim Arnold 2019

19th Mavis Billett 2019, John White 2021

20th Joyce Stalker 1999, Peggy Moon 2015, Margaret Parfit 2023

22nd Lilian Lambell 1999

24th Ken Parfit 2020, Douglas England 2025

25th Dan Rutter 2011, Dennis Phillips 2014, Glynis Frost 2017

29th Gertrude Lucy Ethel Kilminster 2007

30th Basil Allen 2002, Peter Bailey 2010



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