

The Parish Magazine

St Mary's, Alveley ♦ St Andrew's, Quatt



JULY 2025

60p

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The Rector writes

Dear Friends,

In my less-wise moments, I would like to think that I am indispensable, but thankfully I am aware that I am not. Of course, if I did think that I would have plenty of company. Many of us like to think that our work/home/group of friends/etc (delete as applicable) would grind to a shuddering halt and collapse into chaos the moment we were absent. Thankfully this is usually not the case, and when it is it is often a result of bad management.

Wendy and I have just returned from a wonderful two weeks in North Devon. In my role as a Rector I am responsible to ensure there's someone there to take the services on any Sunday I am away. It isn't always easy to find clergy who are available to lead a Communion service. Fortunately we have a number of very willing capable people who can lead the non-Communion services. Clergy are often not very good at taking time off, and I know of colleagues who would have stayed around if a problem cropped up. However we might cloak our reasons in humility, it is actually pride that prevents people from letting go. We think we are too important to absent ourselves and so we treat ourselves as unimportant.

We all need holidays. Holidays are about much more than recreation. They serve an important role in our re-creation. This role was at the heart of the foundation of the first National Parks (the first national park in England was the Peak District, designated on April 17th 1951) the realisation that people need spaces which allow them to be re-created, remade. These spaces help repair the "wear and tear" of daily living; recognising that just as our bodies are continually replacing worn and damaged cells, so we need to repair our tired minds, emotions and souls.

Christians see this in a God who was not only at the heart of creation as a one-off event, but who goes on creating and re-creating; "Behold, I make all things new," as the Good Book says. Maybe that's because God did not view us as some clockwork machine to be set loose and allowed to run about until our spring ran out, but as a more fragile vessel to be nurtured and re-formed as we live and grow. So, if like me you find it difficult to take time off, throw away that "Protestant Work Ethic" (it's neither Protestant nor Christian anyway) and enjoy a bit of re-creation with your recreation. Happy holidays!

Every blessing,

Rev Jon

United Benefices of Alveley and Quatt

Rector	Rev. Jon Aldwinckle , The Rectory, Alveley (email: revjonaldwinckle@outlook.com)	01746 562159
Retired Clergy	Rev. Dr. Wendy Rylance , Roughton Farmhouse	01746 716399
Reader	Sue Chidwick , 28 Greenway Avenue, Alveley	01746 781786
Lay Pastoral Worker	Wendy Aldwinckle , The Rectory, Alveley	01746 562159
Safeguarding Officer	Jackie Hampson , South View, 23 Daddlebrook Rd	01746 780034

Contact for Alveley & Quatt Methodists

Deacon Becky Lovatt	01299 826641
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St. Mary The Virgin, Alveley, WV15 6ND

Churchwarden	Penny Jenkins , 34 Birch Grove, Alveley	01746 780660
Deputy Warden	Alison Pearson , Brookfield, Daddlebrook Rd, Alveley	07882 888875
Treasurer	Anne Simms , Willowell House, Quattford	01746 768955

St. Andrew's Quatt

Churchwarden	Ann Lee , 7 Brook Hollow, Bridgnorth	01746 761138
Treasurer	Steve Jones , 72 Manor Road South, Kidderminster	01562 753828

From the Parish Register

Funeral	<i>Jesus said: 'I am the resurrection and the life.'</i>	
June 14	Bill Scriven	St. Mary's
Interment of Ashes		
June 16	June Kathleen Lowe	St. Mary's

For all church enquiries please visit our website

<https://www.alveleyandquattchurches>. In an emergency please call Rev Jon Aldwinckle (01746 562159)

For Alveley burial ground enquiries call Jenny Sirrell 780369

COVER PICTURE

Heron at Severn Valley Country Park

Photo by Don Bannister B.E.M.

Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Rector, PCCs, retired clergy, Hereford Diocese, the editor or the Church of England.

JULY SERVICES

Duty rotas for St. Mary's are on page 20.

Sunday July 6

10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion	St. Mary's
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Sunday July 13

10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion	St. Andrew's
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10.30 a.m.	Worship 4 All Ages	St. Mary's
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Sunday July 20

10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion	St. Mary's
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Wednesday July 23

10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion	St. Mary's
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Sunday July 27

8.00 a.m.	Holy Communion	St. Mary's
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10.30 a.m.	20/20/20	St. Mary's
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4.00 p.m.	Teatime Praise	St. Andrew's
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ALVELEY AND ROMSLEY PARISH COUNCIL

The July council meeting has had to be brought forward to the 24th June for technical reasons. As we generally don't hold a meeting in August, the next meeting will be held on Tuesday 2nd September in The Pavilion, starting at 7.30pm with Open Forum. Open Forum is your opportunity to raise village issues which may be of concern to you.

The agenda for the September meeting will be on the notice boards nearer the time.

Garden Hedges.

At this time of year our gardens are growing and in particular our hedges. Please be mindful of your hedges and if they are over hanging or crowding footpaths, street lights or road signs please cut them back.

Isley Jakeman, Chair, Alveley and Romsley Parish Council.

If you can't shine, at least twinkle! - Alistair Begg

NEWS FROM ST. ANDREW'S, QUATT

My favourite month of the year has arrived at last. What do you enjoy most about this month? Strawberries and cream, fresh runner beans from your own garden, cherries and raspberries, a glass of Pimms maybe or an ice cream on a hot sunny day? It's also the month when we can enjoy watching Wimbledon or take ourselves off to Edgbaston to enjoy the Test match, oh and I nearly forgot to mention golf (sorry Ian!) It's the time when the school summer term ends and holidays beckon whether at home or abroad. However we choose to spend our days, time with family or friends is so important and a time when memories are made. I was looking back at some old photographs recently and seeing my family change over the years is always interesting. Each photo has its own story to tell - family members who are sadly no longer with us, grey hair and wrinkles appearing as we get older, grandchildren growing up too fast - I'm afraid mine are now taller than me, but that's not difficult these days as I'm shrinking as the years progress. By the time you read this we will have held our Summer Fete and hopefully the weather will have been kind to us, but even if it is not it will have been a day when we spent time together in good company.

Enjoy the month however you choose to spend your time !

Ann Lee

DUTY ROTA AT ST. ANDREW'S (ST. MARY'S ROTA IS ON PAGE 20)

Please let Ann know if you cannot be there. 01746 761138

Date	1st Reading	2nd reading	Intercessions
July 13	Amos 7.7-17 Steve Jones	Luke 10.25-37 Paula Tristham	Ann Lee
July 27	Luke 11.1-13 Yvonne Miles		Wendy Aldwinckle

The vicar was ill in hospital and so the churchwarden went to visit. Trying to cheer him up, the churchwarden said: "We missed you at PCC last night. We even put forward a resolution to wish you a speedy recovery. It was passed by 14 votes to 12."

ALVELEY VILLAGE HALL

The summer months tend to be a bit quieter in the hall with the Squirrel Bowlers enjoying the sunshine and showers of the outdoor season. However, the Art Group, Village Band and Ladies Guild still meet in the village hall over the summer months and the Entertainers continue to hold their popular Film Nights. Traditionally the June committee meeting consists of tending to any urgent matters arising and then splitting up into groups to do a bit of extra cleaning and tidying both inside and out. Along with the excellent work of our cleaner this helps to keep the hall in a pleasant and suitable state for hire.

Arts Alive have just held their annual Menu Launch at the lovely Clungunford village hall, with taster acts for some of the shows on offer for Autumn 2025 and Spring 2026. This was followed by two evenings of videos for some of the other shows. What an amazing collection of creativity, energy and high performing standards. Una, Carol and I have put in our requests for one show in October and one in March next year. Fingers crossed we are lucky enough to get our first choices, although there are several that we'd be happy to host. I'll let you know which shows we can look forward to plus all the relevant information when I receive it.

Norma Crabtree

Music in Saint Mary's

A Celebration of Hymns

with organist, Andrew Crabtree

3.00pm Sunday 6th July

admission **FREE** includes tea and cake

The vicar announced that an additional font would soon be placed in the church, so that babies could be baptised at both ends.

ALVELEY CRICKET CLUB - SUMMER UPDATE

There's something for everyone at **Alveley Cricket Club** this summer!

Women's Softball Cricket – Still Going Strong!

Our *Women's Softball Coaching* sessions continue to grow in popularity — and it's easy to see why! It's a fun, friendly, and relaxed way to **get active, meet new people, and boost your fitness**. Every **Thursday evening at 6:30pm**. Open to **all ages and abilities** — no experience needed! Come along and give it a try!

Family Fridays – Your Weekly Summer Treat!

Bring the whole family down to **Four Oaks** for *Family Fridays* — a real highlight of the week: **Street food van** every Friday. **Kids' activities & games**

Fully stocked **bar**. Plenty of **open space** to run and play.

And when the weather's hot... yes, we bring out the **slip and slide!**

Planning a Party? Hire Four Oaks as the venue

Our beautiful ground is available to **hire for parties, events, and family celebrations**. It's the perfect venue — and **free to hire** when you use our bar.

Come and join the fun this summer — whether you're playing, watching, celebrating, or just soaking up the sunshine!

Live music: Friday July 4th: The Follicles 7.30pm. Free entry.

Six-a-side: Sunday 20th July, 10am:all day.

JULY FIXTURES - all Saturday games at 12.30pm, Wednesday games at 6.30pm

Sat. July 5 1st XI v Bromsgrove (A) 2nd XI v Halesowen 4th XI (H)

Wed. July 9 Midweek XI v Oldswinford Midweek XI (H)

Sat. July 12 1st XI v Claverley 2nd XI (H) 2nd XI v Stone 1st XI (A)

Wed. July 16 Midweek XI v West Hagley Midweek XI (A)

Sat. July 19 1st XI v Stourbridge 3rd XI (A) 2nd XI v Enville 2nd XI (H)

Wed. July 23 Midweek XI v Kinver Midweek XI (A)

Sat July 26 1st XI v Belbroughton 2nd XI (H) 2nd XI v Romsley & Hun. 2nd XI (A)

Richard Twigg

Showing your new parish that you are a forceful preacher may not always be a good idea, as the Revd Sydney Smith found out when he first arrived at All Saints Church in Foston in 1806. "When I began to thump the pulpit cushion on my first coming to Foston, the accumulated dust of 150 years made such a cloud that for some minutes I lost sight of the congregation."



We are back on our planned schedule after May's postponement to June. Our next film night will be on Friday July 18th, in Alveley Village Hall, starting at 7.30pm. For more information please contact Carol Hatfield (780576) or Una Coombs (780568).

£5 to include tea/coffee and cake. We hope to see you.

Ian Maddock

ALVELEY LADIES' GUILD

Our May meeting was enjoyable exercise with Jean. It went really well with lots of loose limbs and smiling faces.

Our June meeting will already have happened when you read this. Lots of you will probably be on holiday around now so we will not have meetings in July and August.

Enjoy the summer everyone. We will meet again on September 22nd at 2.30 pm in Alveley Village Hall for a talk about Loving Your Weeds .

See you all soon. Enjoy.

Kath





MUSIC IN SAINT MARY'S

We have an 'afternoon tea concert' coming up very soon, with free admission. It will be on Sunday 6th July starting at 3.00pm. Tea/coffee and home-made cakes will follow the concert (and any donations to the church will of course be welcome).

I shall play about 40 minutes of music which all includes hymn tunes. I really love hymns, and it's been a joy to research and put together this programme. There is such an interesting history behind hymns we take so much for granted and I look forward to sharing the origin of some of our best loved tunes, many of which are sung at the great church festivals of Christmas, Easter and Harvest. You may also be interested to discover a little of the history of our hymn books which in the early days didn't pair the words of a hymn with any particular tune, that is if printed tunes were included at all!

So please come along and join me in a "Celebration of Hymns", followed by a celebration of cakes!

Andrew Crabtree

APPOINTING THE NEW ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

Last month's Back Page compared the anointing of a new Pope only days after the passing of Pope Francis with wondering when we would see a puff of white smoke, figuratively speaking, announcing a new Archbishop of Canterbury. The following statement gives us an answer as to why it takes so long - but to be honest much of it seems totally unnecessary to me and is more likely to create confusion and obfuscation than resulting in a better outcome:

'More than 11,000 people have so far participated in the consultations for the next Archbishop of Canterbury. It was carried out online, by post and in person between February and March this year.

The public consultation was a unique opportunity to influence the future of leadership within the Church, helping to discern the gifts, skills and qualities that will be required in the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury, to meet the needs of the Church today and in the years to come.

The themes that emerge through this consultation will sit alongside the 'Statement of Needs' produced by the Diocese of Canterbury, as well as other information provided by the National Church and Anglican Communion. This information will inform the Canterbury Crown Nominations Commission of the needs of the mission of the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion'. *Ian Maddock*

SEVERN VALLEY COUNTRY PARK

We are delighted to say that volunteer, Don Bannister has been honoured in The King's Birthday Honours List 2025. Don has been awarded the Medal of the Order of the British Empire (BEM) for services to the environment in Shropshire.

The British Empire Medal is awarded for the contribution of a very "hands-on" service to the community in the form of sustained commitment in support of very local charitable and/or voluntary activity.

Don has been interviewed by the Shropshire Star and the BBC News website. News of the honour was kept under wraps until the official list was released on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website but with numerous phone calls to the visitor centre from news organisations asking to speak to Don, we suspected something was on the cards!

Don was the first person to start volunteering at the park back in the late 1980s. Don helped set up the Severn Valley Country Park Supporters Group and was the chairman for many years. He has worked closely with the rangers and volunteers for over 35 years to help develop, nurture and maintain the beautiful park we have today. This has been not only through hands on effort but also by successfully applying for £30,000 for various grants to fund projects at the park. We would like to offer our congratulations to Don for this well deserved honour.

The summer holidays are here!

We will continue to open Wednesday to Sunday until Wednesday 16th July when we will open daily until Monday 1st September. Opening times will be Monday to Friday 11am-3.30pm, Saturday 9.30am-4pm and Sunday 10.30am - 4pm.

Throughout the holidays, we will have ranger-led events every Wednesday and Friday at the park. Full details of these events can be found on our website at www.shropshiresgreatoutdoors.co.uk. You'll be able to join in with pond dipping, mini beast hunts, rock and fossil hunts, dinosaur fun as well as a number of free drop-in craft sessions.

Rain or Shine Theatre Company are returning to us on Friday 8 August with The Rivals. Parkrun continues on Saturdays, Chat About Books continues every 2nd Friday of the month at 1.30pm and Nordic Walking continues every Wednesday - but they do take a pause during August so keep a look-out on our website.

Susie Comaish, Severn Valley Country Park Visitor Centre Manager 781192

ALVELEY TENNIS CLUB

This month we are featuring JACK FLETCHER our professional tennis coach at Alveley Tennis Club.

Jack was born in Shrewsbury on February 13th 1994, he's now 31 years old and lives in Muxton, Telford.

Jack started playing tennis aged 4. His favourite tennis player is Roger Federer and his best memory was having the privilege to attend Centre Court when Andy Murray won his first Wimbledon tennis match.

TENNIS ACHIEVEMENTS

Jack played at 2 National School Championships (Quarter Finals) with Idsall School.

He was the first male to win the Singles, Doubles & Mixed Doubles in the same year at his childhood club, Albrighton Tennis Club, in 2015. Also in 2015 he was unbeaten in the BABOLAT Summer League Doubles.

COACHING EXPERIENCE - LEVEL 3

Assisting / Coaching since 12 Years Old .

Started coaching full time in October 2013 .

COACHING JACK DOES NOW

RUSTY RACQUETS at Alveley Tennis Club every Wednesday at 12-12.45 pm.

A normal week consists of coaching tactical, technical & cardio tennis at schools and tennis clubs.

He offers one to one coaching as well as group coaching for adults & children . Recently Jack coached 40 children from Alveley School at Alveley Tennis Club for over an hour for 6 weeks. At the first session Jack went over the basic technique of the underarm serve, making sure that the children followed the drop, bounce, hit sequence. The children who attended left with smiles on their faces .

Jack said “ I coach people who have never picked up a racquet before from the age of 3 to people who are returning to the sport after decades off, as well as everyone else in between. No matter the ability or age, tennis is for absolutely everyone“. So if you want to go to Rusty Racquets, Junior Sessions or want one to one coaching, please phone Jack on 07496 177385 or email jack.fletcher.1302@gmail.com .

TENNIS CLUB HAS NEW FACEBOOK SITE !

Please join our FaceBook site which we started on June 1st - ALVELEY VILLAGE TENNIS CLUB. It's new with photos from the past & recent, features, events and all about the club.

WE HAVE 4 WEEKLY TENNIS MIXING SESSIONS!

MONDAYS (Evenings for Gents) 7-9pm, under floodlights if needed .

TUESDAYS (Afternoons Ladies & Gents) 1 to 3 pm.

THURSDAYS (Evenings, Ladies & Gents) 7-9 pm, under floodlights if needed.

SATURDAYS (Mornings , Ladies & Gents) 10am to 12 mid day.

For further Information or for new membership enquires contact Roger Whitworth on 079460 94488 or Ron Whitfield on 07816 322469.

Brian Davies

JULY 15th - ST. SWITHIN (or SWITHUN) - SAINT FOR A RAINY DAY

St Swithun is apparently the saint you can blame for rainy summers. It is said that if it rains on his special day, 15th July, it will then rain for 40 days after that. It all began when Swithun was made Bishop of Winchester in 852 by King Ethelwulf of Wessex. It was an important posting: Winchester was the capital of Wessex, and during the 10 years Swithun was there, Wessex became the most important kingdom of England.

During his life, instead of washing out people's summer holidays and damping down their spirits, Swithun seems to have done a lot of good. He was famous for his charitable gifts and for his energy in getting churches built. When he was dying in 862, he asked that he be buried in the cemetery of the Old Minster, just outside the west door.

If he had been left there in peace, who knows how many rainy summers the English may have been spared over the last 1000 years. But, no, it was decided to move Swithun. By now, the 960s, Winchester had become the first monastic cathedral chapter in England, and the newly installed monks wanted Swithun in the cathedral with them. So finally, on 15 July 971, his bones were dug up and Swithun was translated into the cathedral.

That same day many people claimed to have had miraculous cures. Certainly everyone got wet, for the heavens opened. The unusually heavy rain that day, and on the days following, was attributed to the power of St Swithun. Swithun was moved again in 1093, into the new Winchester cathedral. His shrine was a popular place of pilgrimage throughout the Middle Ages. The shrine was destroyed during the Reformation and restored in 1962. There are 58 ancient dedications to Swithun in England.

A lady was very nervous about her appointment at the dentist. She sought courage from her Bible. The verse her finger landed on was Psalm 81:10: 'Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it.'

MAKE YOUR MARK

In this modern age of computers, internet and social media there are a few old superstitious practices that people still use to bring good luck or prevent bad luck. Not walking under ladders, hanging a horseshoe on a door, not crossing on the stairs, not putting shoes on the table, crossing your fingers. Believing that breaking a mirror brings seven years bad luck. Not tempting fate by saying "touch wood" after a statement such as "I've never had a day's trouble with this car in all the years I've owned it." These beliefs or practices came from a time when people simply didn't understand how things happen.

Evolution, weather patterns, eclipses of the sun or moon, diseases, bacteria, viruses and crop failures were all a mystery and appeared to be random or inflicted by the gods or demons and whether you had appeased them or not. There are other similar traditions that go back to medieval times and beyond. Dressing a well with flowers, petals, seeds and berries to give thanks for the gift of water. Harvest festivals to celebrate gathering in the crops successfully, meaning you should have enough food to last until the next year. Corn dollies, which are bundles of straw twisted into human shapes, were believed to be the home of the 'corn spirit' and symbolised the earth's fertility. The famous Abbots Bromley horn dance, which is believed to date back to the 12th century and celebrates hunting practices, harvest connections and the changing of the seasons. The concept of cunning men and wise women or witches goes back well before Christianity.

In Ancient Greece or Rome people who practised magic were featured in mythology. In Ancient Egypt priest-magicians were employed to maintain order and perform rituals. In this country the Druids were the priests and intellectual leaders of the Celts and were so highly respected they served as judges and medical professionals and were exempted from fighting.

In the days before doctors or midwives a woman who could help another at the dangerous time of giving birth or could mix up some herbs to help heal or sooth some ailment would be valued and her advice may also be sought to help with the positioning of a house to avoid fairy pathways (Ireland) or to help clear perceived evil spirits from buildings or people, which was the ancient equivalent of a placebo when the problem was in the person's mind. Of course if you crossed one of these women and then encountered some bad luck or other misfortune they could get blamed for putting a spell on you or your livestock or your crops, and so the woman could become feared by some.

During the Dark Ages and into the medieval times as Christianity spread across the country priests tried to discourage these pagan ways and encouraged people to come to them for advice or help but they tolerated some of these older beliefs and I think this is why we get pagan symbols carved on churches such as demons, green men and mythical beasts.

St Mary's has a rather poor green man. Eyton-under-Heywood on Wenlock Edge

has quite a few carvings and Kilpeck church in Herefordshire is covered in them! But the church authorities and Parliament were increasingly unhappy and between 1563 and 1736 witchcraft was a statutory offence punishable by death. England only experienced one real witch hunt worthy of the name and during the civil war of the 1640's two minor gentlemen, Matthew Hopkins and John Stearne interrogated perhaps 300 witches of whom about 100 were hanged, 60 of them in one year. In America in Salem, Massachusetts more than 200 people were accused between 1692 and 1693 and nineteen were hanged, (14 women and 5 men) and another five died in disease ridden jails. To try to prevent witches or demons getting into buildings and causing mischief people put marks on or near the openings - windows, doors or chimneys. These are normally called witches' marks but more properly Apotropaic marks from the Greek 'Apotropaia' meaning something designed or intended to ward off evil or bad luck.

In the vestry at St Mary's, on a ledge just above head height, are three pieces of lead with marks on them that were found on the old lead roof when it was replaced in 2007/8. One of them has the outline of a shoe. Many years ago when shoes were all leather they would be re-soled re-heeled and repaired endlessly becoming very personal to the owner. It was believed that a demon looking for a human to infest would find a shoe or an outline and settle on that, thereby sparing someone. Actual shoes have been found buried within church walls with the same purpose in mind. The other pieces of lead have the outline of a hand on them. At a time when many people were illiterate a handprint was their signature. It could also have been thought to ward off the 'evil eye' or the malevolent gaze of someone that wished you harm. Within one of the handprints is what appears to be two V's slightly overlapping not unlike the symbol found on the front of Volkswagen vehicles. Known as the 'Marion' Mark this symbol abbreviates the Latin for 'Virgin of Virgins' (Virgo Virginum) and calls on the Virgin Mary for protection. Turned upside-down the 'VV' symbol also looks like Mary's capital 'M'. On the outside of St Mary's and St Peter's at Upper Arley are similar marks, also near windows.

And finally. On the huge cracked lintel or mantel piece over the fire in the Three Horseshoes pub are a row of small black marks. These are also witches' marks and made with either a red hot poker or a candle held against the wood. They cannot be from candles in a holder or from an over vigorous fire and it is no coincidence they are near the fire. Windows and doors can be closed against witches. A chimney cannot.

With many thanks to Lauren Collier (head of interpretation at Ironbridge Gorge museums (and a bellringer!) for help with this article.

Roy Gandalf Page

A little boy was asked in a school exam to explain what 'lying' is. He wrote: "A lie is an abomination unto the Lord, but a very present help in trouble."

NEWS FROM ALVELEY SCHOOL - A SMALL SCHOOL WITH A BIG HEART

As we head into the final few weeks of the academic year, it's a great time to reflect on the many things we have to celebrate at our school.

We were delighted to welcome Ofsted on 8th April, and even more delighted with their feedback. Inspectors described us as *"a small school with a big heart"*, noting that our pupils are *"surrounded by care and high expectations."* It's something we've always known, but it was wonderful to have it recognised. The report even caught the attention of the *Shropshire Star*, who featured our school in a recent article – a proud moment for all involved.

Our pupils continue to rise to every challenge; Year 6 worked incredibly hard in preparation for their SATs tests in May, showing real determination and maturity. The week involved the ever-popular SATS breakfasts and afternoon projects that made sure that the week was as balanced as possible. Meanwhile, our Year 4 pupils have been working equally hard on their Multiplication Tables Check (MTC), and Year 1 have shown off their brilliant reading in the Phonics Screening Check. Across the school, we are very proud of their perseverance and resilience.

This half term is full of exciting opportunities. We've already held our sports day, which this year included a more competitive twist, bringing out great team spirit and a bit of healthy rivalry! Later this term, two of our classes are heading off to the West Midlands Safari Park to bring their learning to life – something that pupils are really looking forward to.

Our Year 6 pupils have already enjoyed an afternoon kayaking down the River Severn – one of their special end-of-year rewards – and are looking forward to a pizza party after school in the coming weeks. Year 5 and Year 6 are also busy rehearsing for their end-of-year performance, which promises to be another Oscar-worthy performance!

In addition to all that, all classes are taking part in a variety of sports competitions this half term – some designed to give everyone a go, others with a more competitive edge. It's brilliant to see so many children getting active, having fun, and cheering each other on.

As always, we would like to thank everyone in the community for their continued support of the school. It really does make a difference – and helps us continue to be that small school with a big heart - see photo on page 17.

Mr. C. Marsh, Head of School

MESSY CHURCH

The theme at Messy Church in June was “Jesus feeds the 5000”, a wonderful miracle story of God’s compassion and generosity. Jesus wouldn’t let His followers go hungry and so, with God’s blessing, He made a very little go a long way.

Before watching a video of the story and singing praise, the children made beautiful crafts based on the five loaves and two fishes. These included a fold-out story book, pyramid fish, baskets to hold five loaves and two fish, as well as their own rainbow smartie fish cakes – most of which were eaten before they got home!



Not surprisingly, tea comprised of fish finger sandwiches, more cakes and lots of fresh fruit.

The next Messy Church will be on Saturday 5th July at 3pm. As always, all children and their carers are welcome.

There will be a short break in August, before we return in September.

Alison Pearson.



SUSTAINABLE BRIDGNORTH

Plastic Free July® is a global initiative focused on reducing plastic pollution, encouraging millions to help create cleaner streets, oceans, and communities. With over 100 million participants in 190 countries, even small changes can lead to significant improvements. This movement invites everyone to refuse single-use plastics, not just in July but as a lifelong habit. Whether you're new to the idea or further along in your plastic-free journey, there are many ways to get involved. Start with simple swaps, like choosing soap bars over liquid soap to avoid plastic packaging, or opting for plastic-free cleaning products. You can also use reusable razors instead of disposables and consider natural fibre products to reduce microplastics. By reflecting on our choices, we can all make a positive impact and lessen our reliance on plastic. <https://www.plasticfreejuly.org/get-involved/>

The UK government plans to ban destructive bottom trawling in 41 offshore marine protected areas, responding to growing concerns highlighted in Sir David Attenborough's film, *Ocean*. At the recent UN World Ocean Conference in Nice, France, Portugal, Colombia, and São Tomé and Príncipe announced new marine reserves to protect their biodiverse waters. Colombia's new marine protected area (MPA) in the Caribbean covers 3,800 square kilometres and includes vital coral reefs. Portugal's MPA, which encompasses the Gorringe Ridge in the Atlantic, increases its protected sea area to 27%, surpassing many European nations. São Tomé and Príncipe introduced eight new MPAs covering 93 square kilometres, featuring no-catch zones and sustainable fishing areas. These initiatives align with the global goal of protecting 30% of international waters by 2030, showcasing the importance of local conservation efforts and sustainable practices in combating species decline. *Kath Norgrove*



A PARLIAMENT

Over the last few days (I write this on 17th June) I have been rising each morning at 4.00am. I've had the privilege and sheer delight of filming a parliament of rooks. Have other people noticed these large flocks of gregarious and raucous birds who for some reason seem to have adopted our village in unprecedented numbers this Spring?

We live on Cooks Cross, and we became aware sometime in March or April of a number of rooks coming to be fed here each day. We've always had a few jackdaws but this was different. Recently, we noticed that ever larger flocks were gathering as evening approached (around 9.00pm) to wheel through the sky until they found a roosting site for the night. This spectacle has grown and grown---so much so that last night there must have been in excess of a thousand birds.

Between 4.00am and sunrise proper, these spectacular Corvids have been waking us up with their din. Our roof was covered with them! Then they gradually gathered on a particular tree on the Rec before all taking off together and dispersing. As they took to the air, the noise of their wings was overwhelming. If you have been sleeping through all this recently then you really have missed a treat!

Those of you who live in Golden Acres or along Church Road must surely have noticed the gathering last night (Monday 16th June)? We had a "birds' eye view" from our bedroom window as they filled the sky for over half an hour.

What we particularly love is the motion in swirling clouds: first one way, and then the other; all choreographed by some unseen hand. It reminds one of those shoals of fish in tropical oceans that move in concert (think Finding Nemo). Also noteworthy is that the birds seem to have "lookouts". I'm sure this is not being fanciful, but one or two rooks seem to sit on a perch observing all the others and calling out with very different voices. Perhaps we have readers who know more about this than I do. Could you enlighten us?

What a remarkable thing this has been. And this morning? well... no sign of them. All gone. Where have they all moved on to ? Was that a rare treat not to be repeated? I'm so glad I made myself get up in order to film them. This will be something to return to on Winter days if I can get the technology to work .

A Parliament of rooks? Yes, that is their collective name. I'll let you draw your own conclusions!

PS

One further thought:

Each year for ages now I have counted the number of swifts over Daddlebrook. Always arriving on or around 9th May. This year? A grand total of three. Brave and wonderful souls. How long until their numbers pick up...or are they in terminal decline?

Peter Fry

ST. MARY'S CHURCH ROTA JULY 2025

Please ring the churchwarden (see page 4) if you are unable to carry out your duty.

Date	1st Reading	2nd Reading	Intercessions	Chalice	Welcomers	Refreshments
July 6	2 Kings 5.1-14 Kirsty Ritzenthaler	Luke 10.1-11,16-20 Wendy Aldwinckle	Benoit Ritzenthaler	Alison Pearson Carol Wall	Dale Chidwick Colin Taylor	Anne Simms Carol Wall
July 13	Luke 10.25-37 David Hampson				Pat Haw Lynn Madden	David & Jackie Hampson
July 20	Amos 8.1-12 Sue Chidwick	Luke 10.38-42 Penny Jenkins	Jackie Hampson	Jackie Hampson Jenny Sirrell	Jenny Sirrell Carol Wall	Pat Bowyer Irene Orford
July 27	Luke 11.1-13 Keith Pearson				Keith Pearson	Pat Haw Lynn Madden Jenny Sirrell Sally Page

DIARY 2025

July 4	Alveley CC Family Friday, music with The Follicles 7pm (p 8)
5	Messy Church, St Mary's, 3pm (p 17/18)
6	Organ recital with Andrew Crabtree, St Mary's Church 3pm (p 7/10)
11	Chapel Crafters, Alveley Old Chapel 10.30am-12.30pm
18	Alveley Entertainers' Film Night, Village Hall 7.30pm (p 9)
20	Alveley Cricket Club Six-a-side, Four Oaks, 10am onwards (p 8)
21	Be Café, Old Chapel, 2pm-4pm (p 18)
25	Chapel Crafters, Alveley Old Chapel 10.30am-12.30pm
26	Alveley Village Band Concert, St George's, Kidderminster 7.30pm (p 20)
August 8	Chapel Crafters, Alveley Old Chapel 10.30am-12.30pm
8	Rain or Shine Theatre present 'The Rivals', S.V.C.P. (p 11)
22	Chapel Crafters, Alveley Old Chapel 10.30am-12.30pm
September 2	Alveley & Romsley Parish Council meeting/Open Forum, Pavilion 7.30pm (p 5)

ALVELEY VILLAGE BAND

007 - The music of James Bond

Alveley Village Band will be playing the music of James Bond at their next concert on July 26th. The venue is St. George's Church, Radford Avenue, Kidderminster and the concert will start at 7.30pm. Tickets are £10 (under 12s free of charge) and are available at www.ticketsource.co.uk/alveleyvillageband - or you can pay at the door. *Jenny Jarvis*



ALL IN THE MONTH OF JULY

175 years ago, on 2nd July 1850 Robert Peel, Prime Minister (1834-35, 1841-46) died. He founded the Metropolitan Police Service and is seen as the father of modern British policing.

125 years ago, on 2nd July 1900 the premiere of Finnish composer Jean Sibelius's tone poem *Finlandia* (*Opus 26*) was given in Helsinki.

100 years ago, on 21st July 1925 racing driver Malcolm Campbell became the first person to travel at over 150 mph. He set a new land speed record of 150.87 mph at Pendine Sands in Wales in a Sunbeam 350HP. He also went on to break the 250 mph and 300 mph records, in 1932 and 1935.

80 years ago, on 5th July 1945 WW2 leader Winston Churchill lost the General Election to Clement Attlee's Labour Party.

75 years ago, on 11th July 1950 the first episode of the BBC children's TV show *Andy Pandy* was broadcast in the UK.

Also 75 years ago, on 24th July 1950 the first rocket was launched from Cape Canaveral in Florida. It reached a height of 25 miles.

70 years ago, on 16th July 1955 Stirling Moss became the first British driver to win the British Grand Prix.

Also 70 years ago, on 23rd July 1955 racing driver Donald Campbell broke the world water speed record and became the first person to break the 200-mph barrier at Ullswater in Cumbria.

65 years ago, on 9th July 1960 US President Dwight D Eisenhower and Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev traded threats over the future of Cuba.

60 years ago, on 8th July 1965 Great Train Robber Ronnie Biggs escaped from Wandsworth Prison in London. He lived in Brazil until 2001, when he returned to London and was re-imprisoned. Released in 2009, he died in 2013.

40 years ago, on 13th July 1985 the two Live Aid concerts were held simultaneously in London and Philadelphia, as well as at other venues such as Sydney and Moscow. They raised millions of pounds for famine relief in Africa.

25 years ago, on 25th July 2000 an Air France Concorde crashed outside of Paris, shortly after taking off for New York. It killed all 109 people on board, along with four people on the ground.

20 years ago, the 7th July (2005) London bombings took place. The coordinated series of four suicide bomb attacks on London's transport system during the morning rush hour killed 56 people and injured more than 700. It was the worst-ever terrorist attack on Britain, and the country's first attack by suicide bombers.



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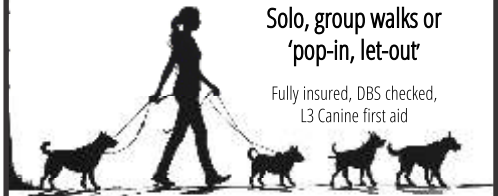


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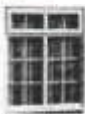
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PLEASE NOTIFY THE EDITOR (780936) OF ANY CHANGES

THE BACK PAGE

Peter's interesting article (page 19) about birds and the parliament of rooks wheeling through the sky before finding their roosts brought back memories of a holiday a couple of years ago on Lake Garda. Across the road from our hotel room balcony was a large stand of trees by the side of the lake.

Unlike Peter my reason for getting up at 4 a.m. focusses not on filming birds but on a different call of nature! However, on this holiday the evenings gave us a stunning view of murmurations of starlings gathering, swooping and rising before roosting in the stand of trees across the road. It was a great start to our evening entertainment. (There was a downside - next morning the ground under the trees was a no-go area until the clean up team arrived).

Peter also refers to the reduction in numbers of swifts in recent years. The Head Gardener and I used to take part in the annual bird count, but eventually came to the conclusion that birds were aware of the count and decided that was a good day to go off on holiday for the weekend. We haven't done the count for several years because it got to the point where there were plenty of birds on days both before and after the count, but virtually none on count days.

One of the most fascinating species I've seen is the weaver bird. In the garden of a hotel we were at in South Africa we watched at close hand as the male skilfully and quickly wove together fantastic hanging nests. Wondering why they made two or three nests each, we were informed that the female inspects the nests and will frequently reject them, hence the need for several.

We've always known that birds are intelligent creatures but one blackbird in our garden was remarkable. He visited us over a number of years. He had a white patch, so we knew he was back again. He became very tame and would regularly join us at the patio table at coffee time and help himself to biscuits. The most remarkable occasion was when my father was visiting. The patio table had been laid for afternoon tea with two plates of sandwiches - one plate of cheese and one plate of tuna. My father, who was sitting at the table, couldn't believe what happened - and I was so mesmerised that I failed to film it. The blackbird arrived as per usual, perched on the back of a chair and surveyed the goodies on offer. He hopped onto the table, looked at the two plates of sandwiches and decided he'd like a tuna sandwich, pulled one from the pile, dragged it to an empty plate on the table, ate his fill (he didn't manage to eat it all) then flew off. Next day he was back for a biscuit. What a bird!

Nature never fails to amaze.

Ian

Please send items for the **August edition by 9 am on Thursday July 17th** to the editor (email ianmaddock@btinternet.com or phone 01746 780936). For advertising please contact David Hampson (telephone 01746 780034 or emaildavid.hampson2025@gmail.com)



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