



History under our feet



Mediaeval (left) and post-mediaeval bronze belt buckles

There's one man in Stonesfield who knows more than most about our history. For the last 14 years, Clive Parsons, who you probably have seen working in the village shop, has been out and about with his metal detector, searching for the often tiny artefacts that tell so much about who has lived and worked here over the centuries.

Clive has always been keen on finding things and started as a child, collecting clay pipes and fossils. In recent years his collection has expanded to include a wide range of coins and tokens, clothing ornaments, toys and arrowheads, in bronze, copper, silver, lead and flint. He can identify most of them from his own knowledge, with reference books and magazines, or consulting friends with the same interests, and also has regular contact with experts in the Ashmolean Museum.

Clive's earliest finds were a polished flint Neolithic axehead and arrowheads, some 4,000 years old. What he would really love to find is a Bronze Age axehead.

The most common finds are buttons and coins, especially Roman coins. The period of the Roman empire is Clive's favourite as the Romans produced so many beautiful and varied things.

His favourite coin – bronze, about 1600 years old – shows a Roman soldier on horseback spearing a foot soldier. Another silver wash coin, bearing the name of Emperor Probus, shows a god figure with a staff and the Emperor's head on the reverse.

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History under our feet

Continued from front page

There are also decorative pins for fastening a cloak. Many clothes fastenings and ornaments like belt studs and buckles also survive from the mediaeval period.



Silver Georgian seal

Hammered silver coins were often cut in half or quarters to be given as wages – possible evidence that there were some wealthy employers in the area at that time.

Searches can often take four or five hours with no result, but the effort is well worth it for the insights into the past that come from finds.

Clive would like to record his thanks to the local landowners and farmers for permission to search their land.

Viv Kendall

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Dates for your diary

June

29	Carers' Café	St James' Centre	10am-12noon
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July

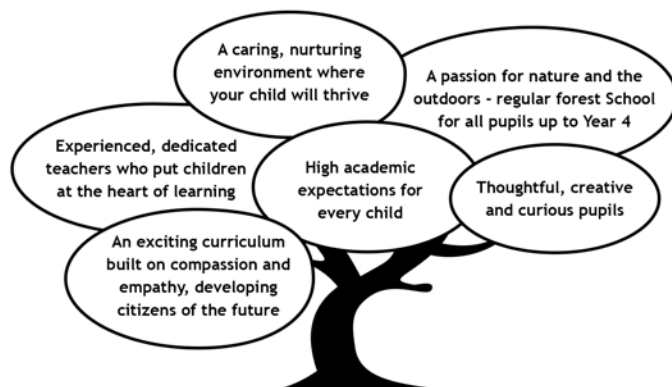
1,8,15,22	Book Break	St James' Centre	12.30-2pm
3	Gift Day	St James's Church	9.30-12.30
3	Community Lunch and cricket match	Playing Field	12noon onward
4	Stonesfield SSC AGM	SSSC	7.00pm
6	Carers' Café	St James' Centre	10am-12noon
9,16,23	Andrew Crawford Cup cricket	Playing Field	6.15pm
10	Summer Reading Challenge starts	Library	10am-12 noon
13	Sew & Chat Group	St James' Centre	10am-12 noon
19	Gardening Club meeting	St James' Centre	7.30pm

Stonesfield Primary School

Learning together to achieve our best.



Looking for a friendly, inclusive, local school for your child?
Stonesfield Primary School has places in all year groups - we would love to show you around.



To arrange a tour with the headteacher, Mr Ben Trevail, please contact the school office.

Tel: 01993 891687

Office email: office.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk
Headteacher email: head.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk

Notices & news

Doreen Martin

Stephen, Christopher and Jane would like to thank everyone for their kind messages, letters and sympathy cards following the sad loss of our mum Doreen. Mum and Dad moved to Stonesfield in 1952 and they both loved living in this very special village.

We would like to thank Rev Roy for a lovely and uplifting service at the North Oxfordshire Crematorium. Also our thanks go to Nicholas at Jerrams Funeral Directors, for his kindness and care during this sad time, and thanks to everyone for all the kind donations to the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association.

Jane Aldridge

Carers' Cafe...

...at the St James' Centre, Stonesfield,
Tuesdays 29 June and 6 July,
10am-12noon.

Calling all carers; do you provide help for someone – a child or an adult – who couldn't manage otherwise?

Whether you care for them full-time, do their shopping or chat with them over a cup of tea, you're invited to the Carers' Cafe. And if you've cared for someone in the past, you're also welcome.

For more information, get in touch with Georgie on georgie@thesteales.org or 898889, or Lauren on laurennormanton@hotmail.com or 891509. Or just join us on the 29th or the 6th for tea or coffee. See you there!

The Carers' Café is funded by Stonesfield Mutual Aid and observes COVID restrictions.

Ian Hudspeth

The Parish Council would like to congratulate Ian Hudspeth, the former leader of Oxfordshire County Council, who has been awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for services to Local Government.

Ian Hudspeth, who became a county councillor in 2005 and served as leader of the council from 2012 to earlier this year, was also a former chairman of the Community Wellbeing Board, Local Government Association.

He has supported Stonesfield Parish Council during his time as leader for OCC but has also done much work for the county as a whole, we congratulate him on his well-deserved OBE.

Karen East

Stonesfield Parish Council - Clerk

Stonesfield Community Lunch

Stonesfield Playing Fields Association would like to invite the whole of Stonesfield for a community lunch from 12pm on 3 July.

Please bring your family, a blanket and lunch and enjoy the home cricket match against our closest neighbours, Combe. We expect to have a great afternoon of

fantastic company and, hopefully, splendid weather.

Please check the village website www.stonesfield.online/ and the notice boards for updates. We hope to have a BBQ, Chrissie's Owls and many other community groups, all keen to show their work in our village. The social club will be open to provide refreshment.

For any enquiries or suggestions please email d.baldwin@stonesfieldpc.uk or call 07957 497513.

Free transport for vaccinations

From now on, lifts given by our volunteer drivers will be FREE for people travelling to receive COVID vaccinations. Stonesfield Voluntary Transport Scheme, like other transport schemes in the area, is benefiting from a government Contain Outbreak Management Fund grant provided by West Oxfordshire District Council.

While many people have already received their vaccinations without this benefit, the new fund aims to help younger people, many of whom have yet to be vaccinated and may not have access to other transport.

Viv Kendall (891803)

Stonesfield Voluntary Transport Scheme

Village Hall News

As the easing of lockdown continues, we are happy to report that we have been really lucky to reopen the hall and get weekly clubs back up and running.

Taekwondo has changed days, so it is now running on Monday and Thursday from 5.30-6.30pm. For more details, please contact James Kumar on 07788 583965.

We are hoping to be able to hold a committee meeting and AGM in July to announce our new co-chairs and re-establish roles, but are still awaiting dates to be confirmed. Please keep an eye on the Facebook page and Nextdoor announcements for more information.

As always, if anyone would like to use the hall, please do contact me on 01993 898919 or stonesfieldvh@gmail.com.

Jacqueline Carthew

Secretary & Booking Clerk for Stonesfield Village Hall

www.facebook.com/stonesfieldvillagehall

STONESFIELD VOLUNTARY TRANSPORT SCHEME

Volunteer drivers are available to take you for vaccination, other medical appointments and also to the hospitals in Oxford and Banbury.

We can usually provide a lift at short notice (for an appointment the same day), but this cannot be guaranteed.

Full COVID-19 precautions are in place to ensure your safety.

There is no charge but we do welcome a donation for expenses except for vaccination trips (see separate news item).

Please call **Viv Kendall 01993 891803** to book a lift in July.

Long Hanborough's new GP surgery

The state-of-the-art new Long Hanborough surgery opened in March. It is twice the size of the old surgery and was built by Pye Homes Blenheim as part of the Hanborough Gate development. Its new layout was adapted during development to enable patients to receive their COVID vaccinations and leave without returning to reception. This contributed to the new surgery being able to vaccinate large numbers of people and to be among the sites vaccinating the most people in the county.



The new Long Hanborough surgery

The surgery includes its own pharmacy with robotic storage, dispensing, return, restocking and crediting of medications.

Move Together

Move Together is a government-backed initiative designed to help people who have been shielding or who feel that their physical or mental health and wellbeing has been negatively affected by COVID-19. It stresses that starting to move more, in a way that works for each individual person is hugely beneficial, and can help with mood, energy level, sleep and weight management, and in coping with long-term conditions.

It recognises that it's not always easy to move more – not having been able to carry out usual activities, see loved ones and in many cases even leave the house has had a massive impact. Some people are keen to be more active, but many feel anxious about how to start.



Move Together offers friendly support on the phone or on your doorstep, with ideas on ways to get back strength, mobility and confidence about going out. It can also offer home activity packs and exercise classes for specific conditions. All advice is given by physical activity experts in line with COVID safety guidance.

For more information or to get started, call your local Move Together coordinator on 01993 861564 or ask your GP to refer you. Then you can decide what sort of activities you would like and what sort of support would be helpful.

Wychwood Forest Fair

The Wychwood Forest Fair will take place on Sunday 22 August at Foxbarrow Wood, Witney from 11am to 5pm. The Fair is a great way to enjoy a summer Sunday while supporting the Wychwood Project, which is dedicated to restoring habitats across the historic Wychwood Forest area.

The Wychwood Forest Fair was founded in 1796 by three Wesleyan Methodists living in Finstock, as a calmer counterpart to the annual Witney Feast. However in the 19th century it became rowdy and a chance to settle grievances by fighting, and it was eventually banned in 1853. The Wychwood Project revived the Forest Fair in 2000 to celebrate the area's rural traditions, arts and crafts, and conservation work.

This year's Fair will be largely open-air and will use more space than previous years. Advance bookings are encouraged to help monitor numbers: tickets bought in advance cost £8, while tickets on the door cost £10. Under-16s can enter free.

Tickets are available from www.wychwood-project.mitingu.com/wychwood-forest-fair-2021 or www.wychwoodproject.org, or 07584 262437. To apply to host a stall at the Fair, use this number or contact info@wychwoodproject.org.uk.

The Wychwood Project would welcome donations of second-hand books in good condition for the Fair's thriving second-hand bookstall, or offers to volunteer for a few hours at the Fair. Please email miranda@wychwoodproject.org.uk or call the number above.

Family cycle training and Bikeability level 3 courses

Witney-based Windrush Bike Project is offering free family cycling lessons to give you confidence to ride with your children. For details contact admin@windrushbikeproject.uk.

Also on offer are 3-hour Bikeability Level 3 courses, ideal for year 6 and 7 students and especially those planning to cycle to secondary school. The courses include

negotiating traffic lights, roundabouts and town centres, and run from 26 July to 10 August; the cost is £5. To book a place, please contact www.bookwhen.com/windrushbikeproject?tag=level-3.

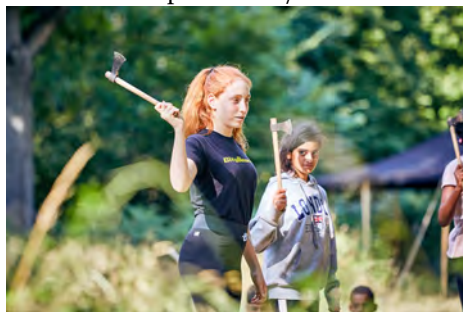
Both are available to Stonesfield people – not just Witney!

Blenheim Palace

Archery and tomahawk throwing



Under the eye of the Bushcraft Company, sessions in both ancient skills are available at Blenheim, historically the site of jousting tournaments, through the summer. Originally planned for young people, both are also proving popular with adults. For more information and booking go to www.blenheimpalace.com/.



Blenheim apprenticeships

Blenheim is offering 12 new apprenticeship opportunities in a wide range of roles including bricklaying, carpentry, property maintenance, retail and guest services and

social media. The apprenticeships start throughout the year and are open to anyone who is over the age of 16 and has completed secondary education.

The apprenticeship programme is part of Blenheim's 10-year plan to train more than 100 apprentices by 2027. For further information and to apply, go to www.blenheim.org/careers/vacancies/.

Art – you may meet it in the park...

Blenheim is staging a major exhibition by Tino Seghal between 9 July and 15 August – the first exhibition designed specifically for Blenheim's park and gardens. Seghal is presenting a 'roaming choreography' with more than 30 local participants who will move throughout the park, coming together and moving apart, interacting with visitors and the surroundings. So it might be worth considering on your next visit whether you are talking to a visitor or an art form...

Police and community support

For information or advice on security concerns, please contact woodstockNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk or call 101.

Let's have more!

The *Slate* welcomes articles on village history, local people and places, things of general rural interest, poems... pictures too (photos or drawings).

We'll do our best to include them but space is limited so sometimes decisions are needed.

Remember that images will only appear in black and white.

See page 2 for details of how and when to supply contributions for inclusion in the *Slate*.



Politics & local affairs

Stonesfield Parish Council (SPC)

From the meeting held 9 June 2021

At the meeting, Andy Graham was welcomed by Stonesfield Parish Council as the new Oxfordshire County Councillor for the next 4 years. Part of his remit is to promote smaller communities. There will be weekly bulletins from Cllr Graham, which can be found on www.stonesfield.online/category/parish/.

Also present and welcomed were West Oxfordshire District Councillors Mathew Parkinson and Nathalie Chapple.

Grants and spending:

Stonesfield Parish Council approved a grant request from Stonesfield Primary School for the sum of £1,000.

Councillors unanimously approved the 20mph speed restriction in the village. This is now being moved to the public consultation phase, conducted by Oxfordshire County Council.

The council approved additional SAFER expenditure towards this. We are also grateful to Cllr Graham who granted £1,250 through his Councillor Priority Fund, which topped up the cost of this project and enabled us to proceed.

Finance:

Councillors approved the figures in the Annual Return to 31 March 2021. The internal auditor has signed off the annual audit for the Parish Council.

Planning Applications:

There was no objection to application 21/01897/S73 – Spring Villa, Churchfields, nor to application R3.0074/21 – Oxfordshire County Council, for temporary retention of modular buildings at Stonesfield School. (It had been noted to planning that the temporary cabins have been there for some time.)

Date of next meeting: The next full council meeting will be on 7 July. Agenda items should be submitted to the Clerk, no later than 28 June 2021.

Karen East, Parish Clerk
clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk

News from West Oxfordshire

New WODC team

District Council Leader Michele Mead has appointed the new Cabinet team members with responsibility for specific portfolios.

Cllr David Harvey (Deputy Leader) will retain climate, energy and diversity; Cllr Jane Doughty is responsible for customer delivery, including equality and diversity,



Michele Mead (left) and Jane Doughty

leisure facilities and community grants and Cllr Suzi Coul takes finance. Cllr Jeff Haine is responsible for planning; Cllr Marilyn Davies has housing and communities, including crime and disorder, affordable homes and community and public health. Cllr Norman Macrae remains in charge of environment, waste and recycling, flood alleviation and car parking.

The Chairman of the Council is Cllr Martin McBride and Cllr Alex Postan is Deputy Chairman.

From our County Councillor – Andy Graham

It's been busy! I am delighted with the Stonesfield Parish Council and the great community for reducing the speed to 20mph in the village (SAFER scheme). I am happy to top up the financial contribution from my own priority fund.

There's no more news yet on The White Horse re-opening but I have asked Robert Courts MP to meet me to see if we find ways to help and support re-opening. He has agreed to meet me on 21 June. Hopefully, I can report something positive from that meeting.

I also visited the primary school the other day to set up a meeting to see if I can help in any way.

Stonesfield has set the bar high for getting things done, and other villages look to the great work you have done as a community.

Andy Graham

andy.graham@oxfordshire.gov.uk

From our MP – Robert Courts

Rail improvements

The Government has announced that £68.8m from the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline fund will be invested in rail upgrades in and around Oxford Station to improve capacity and reliability. The funding will enable Network Rail to deliver track works and level crossing closures, to remove pinch points north of Oxford and a new western entrance for Oxford station, a new platform and a new bridge over Botley Road. These improvements are intended as an important precursor to the planned Cotswold Line upgrades.

Minster Hedgies

As part of Volunteer's Week, Robert Courts visited Minster Hedgies in Minster Lovell. The charity is dedicated to helping the UK's native hedgehogs through rescue, rehabilitation and release. The team will take in sick or injured hedgehogs from the local area, rehabilitate them with whatever treatments they need and then release them back where they were found or in a suitable location. They also microchip the hedgehogs so they have a map of rescues.

This local charity welcomes new volunteers and donations; further information is on www.minsterhedgies.co.uk/.

Robert Courts MP (0207 219 5638)

robert.courts.mp@parliament.uk

Education, culture & more

Cake and plant sale school fundraiser

Following another tumultuous period of lockdowns and home-schooling, the academic year at Stonesfield Primary School is coming to an end. In any other non-COVID year the Year Six pupils would have enjoyed a residential trip away, numerous field trips, and a special event to mark their graduation.

Sadly, the unpredictability of the rules and regulation changes throughout the year made planning and executing the students' special events impossible.

Happily, the Year Six teacher Mrs Merritt came up with the wonderful idea to celebrate with a mini festival at the school. This will involve a sleepover at school, DJ, axe-throwing(!), mocktail tent, bouncy slide, festival wrist bands, wood-fired pizza, campfire and a high tea.

In order to fundraise for this event, we decided to throw a cake and plant sale and

we couldn't have been more pleased with the results. So many from the village and surrounds came out to support the event, both in donations, volunteering and buying the wares.

As my family is fairly new to the village, it felt lovely to get involved in a village event, and the atmosphere was wonderful, especially after the dark days of winter, and the seemingly endless cold and rain of spring. Big thanks go out to Stonesfield Horticultural Services, Bunkers Hill Nursery, Stonesfield Gardening Club, the allotmenters and all those who helped make it such a special morning. We managed to raise just under £500, which is an incredible feat and will go a long way in helping the kids celebrate the end of their primary school era.

Melissa Stuart

Stonesfield Pre School

As you all receive your new copy of the *Stonesfield Slate*, Stonesfield Pre School will be heading towards the end of another School year. Where has it gone? We have had a great time as always; plenty of fun learning and exciting activities. We have also welcomed new children and their families and new staff members.

This year there have been many changes and restrictions but we are so proud of the way our children and their families have coped. So, a big thank you to you all.

We would also like to thank our community which has supported our



fundraising events and donated resources, and various organisations which have kindly given us grants to be able to purchase many much-needed items. Our new sun canopy is just one and has given us much needed shade and even protection from the rain showers. And, there is still time to join our 100 club and have a little flutter!

We know that in September our numbers will be quite low so therefore we have plenty of spaces for Pre School, Breakfast Club and After School Club. If you would like to enquire about any of these sessions, please contact our administrator.

This year we are pleased to be able to run our Summer Holiday Club from Mon 26 July – Friday 6 August. If you are interested in full or half days, please contact our administrator by 18 July.

Zena Rozee (898012)

Stonesfield Pre School Administrator
Stonesfieldpsad@outlook.com

Stonesfield Primary School

When Ofsted visited Stonesfield in December 2017, maths was an area identified for improvement. Since then, improving the quality of maths teaching has been a key priority and I am delighted to say that standards have risen considerably. This academic year ends with our current cohort of Year 6 pupils achieving our aspirational target to be in the top 20% of all schools, with 92% meeting the expected national standard and 33% achieving greater depth.

The school is committed to Maths Mastery – in essence, children acquiring a deep, long-term, secure understanding. This is done through:

- Using manipulatives and images to develop conceptual understanding;
- Children acquiring quick recall of number facts, including bonds and times tables;
- Having high expectations for all children, including expecting all children to reason and problem-solve.

Teamwork and collaboration are skills we admire at Stonesfield and over the last few months our teachers have been collaborating with staff at Wychwood C of E Primary School to refine our maths teaching further. In small schools, teachers have the added challenge of teaching mixed age classes with a wide attainment range. Collaborating with Wychwood gave our staff the opportunity to see maths in action at a similar school, to take away some new strategies and reaffirm that our day-to-day approach is sound and our pupils are developing into confident mathematicians.

In other news, on behalf of our staff I would like to thank our Parish Council for the grant awarded to us for the refurbishment of our staff room. Our dedicated staff have had such a challenging and stressful year – putting themselves at risk of infection while the school was partially open, adapting to remote learning, and working within tight COVID guidance. A spruced-up staff room will go a long way to boosting their morale and wellbeing.

The Governing Body are still actively recruiting a governor with financial expertise. If you are interested, or know someone who is, please get in touch.

If you are new to the village or local area and looking for primary school places,

please get in touch to arrange a tour and see our wonderful school for yourself.

Ben Trevail, Head teacher

head.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk

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National Children's Summer Reading Challenge – Wild World Heroes

We're back! This year the Challenge is to help save the environment of Wilderville, and you'll find it at Stonesfield Library, next to the Village Hall.

Summer Reading Challenge 2021

**WILD WORLD
Heroes**

Presented by The Reading Agency.
Delivered in partnership with libraries.

Come and collect a free pack in which you meet the six Wild World Heroes, unfold a map of Wilderville, and set out on an adventure through six areas, solving environmental problems as you go. Choose any six books from the Library, and as you read them you will win transformation stickers (some are smelly!) which solve the problems and make Wilderville a better, greener space.

The Challenge, designed for children aged four to eleven years, starts on Saturday 10 July and continues through the holidays to 11 September. There's a certificate and keyring for everyone who completes the Challenge and you will be entered into an exciting prize draw. Those under four will have a mini-pack with their own special

card and stickers, and everyone who enters will receive a Wild World Heroes medal.

Look forward to a Celebration in the Village Hall in September with refreshments, creative activities, and of course the presentation of medals. More details will be in the August *Slate*.

Find out more from the Library, and visit summerreadingchallenge.org.uk for the fun to carry on at home.

Val Phillips (891455)

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Stonesfield Library

Opening hours: Monday 2 - 4pm;
Wednesday and Thursday 10am – 12noon.

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Nature Notes: Oak leaves

Blenheim's High Park was created by Henry I in the 12th century as a deer park. Around 90% of the woodland is made up of oak trees, and it is thought that at least 60 of these oaks date back to the Middle Ages. One of them, aged about 500 years, fell in recent strong winds and has been left in place as it is a perfect habitat for insects and small mammals.



Matthew Crabb starts work on the oak tree

As it was close to a footpath, prizewinning chainsaw artist Matthew Crabb was commissioned to make it into a woodland bench for walkers surrounded by giant oak leaves, while the rest of the tree has been



The finished oak tree bench

left untouched for the wildlife. The bench took about 50 hours to complete.

The area has been recognised as one of the most biodiverse habitats in the UK. More than 60 different types of birds including goshawks, peregrine falcons, spotted flycatchers and redstarts have been recorded, along with 19 mammals – stoats, field voles, fallow deer, badgers and nine different bat species.

The site is also home to at least 243 different beetles; over 600 species of moth and more than 20 butterfly species have also been identified, along with 35 species of spiders, mites and ticks, and 161 different ants, wasps and bees. Reptiles and amphibians present include common lizards, slow worms, grass snakes, great crested newts and toads.

Brown hares

Many local people have commented that they have seen more hares than usual in the fields this spring. It has been lovely to see them and at times I have counted more than a dozen in just one field.

I'm sure that including the infield hedges in the Stewardship schemes, as they are only cut one in three years, has helped the biodiversity and given the hares extra cover in the winter. Certainly when we are combining, we see a lot more leverets,

which is a nice surprise considering the number of red kites which are resident here. The last count of those was 16 at one time.



The increased abundance of hares is also helped by us being more vigilant in respect of hare coursers (yes, they still do it). On our farm we have blocked a lot of the field access with concrete blocks and tree trunks, to stop the coursers running their vehicles across the crops.

Ollie Stobo

Meadow Clary on Stonesfield Common and in the local area

Meadow Clary (*Salvia pratensis*) is now in flower on Stonesfield Common. The distinctive tall purple/blue spikes are surrounded by visiting bees and other pollinators. Meadow Clary is a rare native plant, found in fewer than approximately 20 UK sites, mainly in Oxfordshire, the North and South Downs and the Chilterns. It was already regarded as rare in the 19th century, when much of the downlands was ploughed up.

It grows on calcareous soils within a wide range of habitats including hay meadows, pastures, green lanes, road verges, scrub and woodland clearings; preferring south, southwest or west-facing slopes. Locally, you can also find Meadow Clary along the Salt Way near Charlbury – an ancient

track, so called as it was formerly used for transporting salt from salt mines at Droitwich, and later as a drover's road. It is now a wide bridleway, part of the Wychwood Way, with many points of botanical interest. From early times, professional drovers brought livestock along wide tracks, which carried plenty of feed to support the cattle, from Wales and the Marches across the Cotswolds and on to London.

On Stonesfield Common, there is a project to increase the numbers of Meadow Clary, aided by the overall management of the Common. Winter cattle grazing maintains the open meadow conditions, resulting in conditions to support a wide diversity of plant species, which in turn support the variety of butterflies, other insects, birds, reptiles and small mammals. Look closely and you may find pyramidal and bee orchids, wild basil, lady's bedstraw, the delicate tiny flowers of fairy flax, birds foot trefoil, and later on the knapweeds and scabious covered in butterflies, and pale blue harebells within the sward.

Please do get in touch if you would like to be involved in the Wychwood Flora Group, monitoring and looking after rare plants in the local area.

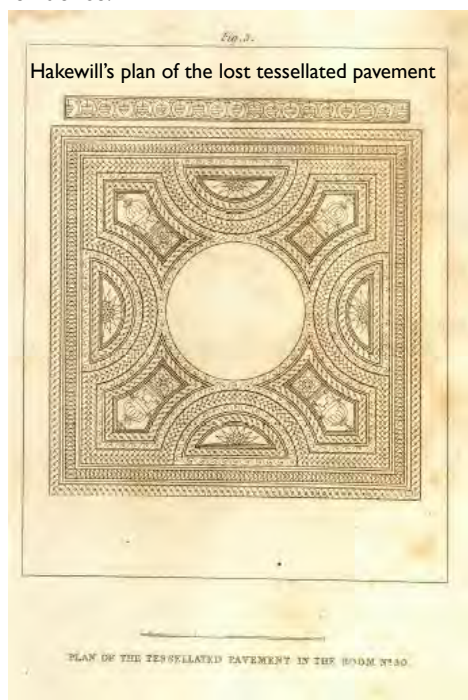
Genny Early, Wychwood Flora Group
Wychwoodfloragroup@gmail.com

Local history: North Leigh Roman Villa

A 200-year-old guide discovered in Blenheim Palace's archives has revealed the results of the excavation of the Roman Villa excavation by Henry Hakewill carried out in 1813. It had remained buried for almost 1,500 years. Hakewill worked on the site for four years and his guide details

his finds: 60 rooms including three bath suites, 16 rooms containing mosaics and 11 more with under-floor heating.

Among the most spectacular finds was a near-complete mosaic floor, which was almost entirely carried away by local people within a week of having been dug up. The destruction was so complete that the detailed drawing of the mosaic in Hakewill's guidebook is the only surviving evidence.



Many other historic features, described in the guidebook, have been entirely lost in the two centuries since the dig took place. Dr Alexa Frost, Blenheim's archivist, said that it is likely that the guide is the Duke of Marlborough's original copy, which may well have been presented to him by Hakewill himself. Matthew Lee, who helps to organise North Leigh Roman Villa Volunteers, described the guidebook's re-discovery as tremendously exciting – the

guide gives details of colours, patterns on walls, floors and ceilings, that were one and a half thousand years old when they were discovered; many of which have been entirely lost in the subsequent 200 years.

Lockdown has seen further damage occur to the site in the present day. Exposed stonework, especially in rooms with stone piers for underfloor heating, is in a fragile state and needs repair. Visitors are being urged to respect the barriers and signs indicating where it is currently unsafe to go, in order to help protect the site for generations to come.



Asthall Manor

8 miles south west of Stonesfield

Asthall Manor is a gabled Jacobean manor house surrounded by a garden, woodland and meadows which overlooks the swans and willows of the Windrush Valley.

In 1086 the estate of approx. 350 acres at Asthall belonged to Roger d'Ivri, who died in the mid 1090s. His widow Adeline died in 1110 leaving a daughter, Adelize, who died childless, and the estates passed to the Crown.

In 1163 Asthall Manor was held Reynold of St Valery, then by his son Bernard and it descended to the latter's son Thomas whose lands were seized several times by

King John for disloyalty. Asthall Manor passed in 1219 to Robert of Dreux, eldest son of Count Robert II of Dreux. Robert's lands were forfeited in 1226 after he supported the King of France and, the following year, Henry III granted Asthall to his brother Richard, 1st Earl of Cornwall.

There are records of a house on the site since 1272 when Richard owned a house on the site worth 12 pence. Sir Richard's son Sir Edmund held the manor by 1300, when it was apparently seized briefly by the king after Earl Edmund's widow Margaret claimed dower. Sir Edmund Cornwall's widow Elizabeth held the manor until c1355 then it passed through the family including Edmund's brother Sir Brian.

By 1453 the manor had passed to Sir Humphrey Blount of Kinlet and his son Sir Thomas sold the manor in 1494 to Sir Richard Haddon, later Mayor of London. He was succeeded by his widow Dame Katherine and grandson Thomas, who in 1562, sold Asthall Manor to John Andrews. John's heirs sold the manor in 1609 to John Lenthall who sold it 3 years later to Rice Jones.

Jones built a new house, which forms the current manor, on the site of the mediaeval hall. He left it to his son, also called Rice, and it seems to have been improved in the mid 1600s for Rice Jones the younger or his son Henry. In 1662 it was taxed on 14 hearths which suggests that the house had by then achieved its current size.

Henry died in 1673 leaving a daughter, Frances, who married Richard Lumley, Lord Lumley and Earl of Scarbrough. In 1688 they sold the manor to Sir Edmund Fettiplace of Swinbrook. It stayed in branches of the same family for the next 130 years when it was sold to John

Freeman-Mitford, 1st Baron Redesdale in 1810.

Freeman-Mitfords made many alterations to the house including the installation in 1899 of an electric power system powered by a water turbine fed by the River Windrush. During the First World War it was used as a convalescent home for wounded soldiers. The architect Charles Bateman altered and enlarged the house in 1916.

The infamous Mitford sisters moved into the Cotswold manor house in 1919 when their father, the 2nd Baron Redesdale, bought the house to reunite it with the estate, which he had inherited from his own father in 1916. In 1920 a former barn was converted to a ballroom and joined to the main house by a cloister.

Nancy Mitford's childhood at Asthall was her inspiration for 'Love in a Cold Climate' and she immortalised it as Alconleigh in 'The Pursuit of Love'. The latter is a recent BBC1 three-part adaptation starring Lily James and Emily Beecham.



St Nicholas church and Asthall Manor

In 1926 the house was sold to Thomas Hardcastle and on his death his son, Anthony Bruce Hardcastle, became principal beneficiary but never claimed the lordship. In 1997 the house was sold separately to the current owner, Rosie Pearson, who enlisted the help of Julian

and Isabel Bannerman with the garden's design.

Julian and Isabel have been designing gardens and garden buildings together since 1983. They are possibly best known for their work for Prince Charles at Highgrove House. The garden at Asthall Manor has featured in several books and magazine articles.



The garden is open once or twice most years for the National Garden Scheme, and occasionally for other events. The main opportunity to visit is during the acclaimed 'On Form' exhibition of sculpture in stone. www.onformsculpture.co.uk. The first biennial 'On Form' exhibition took place in the summer of 2002 using the grounds and a few of the manor's interiors as a backdrop. Covid prevented the 2020 exhibition, but it was held in May 2021.

Paul Bates

Clubs, societies & sport

Stonesfield Scout Duck Race postponed

It is with a heavy heart that we have decided to postpone the Duck Race. We hope to run it in September, so we won't be gone for long!

Why? We were allowed to hold outdoor events, but we would have had to keep family groups separated down by the river and, while we have a lot of faith in our ability to lead Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, trying to manage whole families seemed a challenge, and a risk too far.

The event is a great one, and one that encourages the village to chat, meet and mix in a small field – and to do that now seems unwise. Please keep thinking about the Scout group, and we look forward to the last few weeks of this term. Keep safe!

The Executive Committee
Stonesfield Scouts

Stonesfield Sports and Social Club

Just a reminder that on Sunday 4 July is the club's AGM, starting at 7.00 pm. All are welcome.

Brian Clarke (891770)
Stonesfield SSC

Stonesfield Gardening Club

As we go to press, restrictions on numbers meeting outdoors have not been lifted as we had hoped, but the members' Village Walk in June went ahead within the guidelines.

The July meeting has been moved on by a week, so will now take place on Monday 19, with Ruth Madder from Bridewell Garden coming to talk to us about the garden and the important work they do there.

Looking round the village, I think many people took part in No Mow May as there seem to be a proliferation of wildflowers.



Certainly in our garden the results are stunning and the lawn now takes half the time to cut – surely a good result!

Diane Bates, Secretary
diane@bateshome.co.uk
www.stonesfieldgardening.info

Church news

Church of England Worship at St James the Great, Stonesfield

(Benefice of Stonesfield with Combe Longa)

www.stonesfieldparishchurch.org

Rector: Rev Ralph Williamson,
rector@scbenefice.org, 01993 891872

Churchwardens: Lindsey Sellar and Rachel Severn
stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org

For any enquiries or help, including pastoral support, please do contact us.

From the Rector

The annual Gift Day for the Parish Church will be held on Saturday 3rd July. I feel slightly embarrassed to be writing to you about money so soon after arriving here. But putting those feelings aside, I am also glad to be able to commend to you the support of the parish church, because it is an institution which lies at the very heart of Stonesfield's life. I sincerely hope that you have benefitted in some way from the presence of the village church in the past, and pray that you will know its care in the future. The Church of England's commitment to the parish system means that St James the Great, Stonesfield, exists to care about all the people of the village, including those who may never come to worship. Our commitment (sometimes lived out inadequately of course) is to the life of the whole community, including its other institutions, churches and groups, as well as to individuals who may or may not

worship here. Important aspects of village life can easily disappear – many villages today lack a school, shop or bus route. But the presence of the village church, supported by a core of parishioners and a wider circle of supporters, helps to knit the community together in mutual support and respect. In Stonesfield we are very fortunate to have a church in which we can worship, the St James' Centre which is available to the wider community at low cost, and the dedication and work of many people connected to the church who are involved in all kinds of village and community activities.

The cost of the church, its activity, its repair, its Rector, its worship – almost everything we do – is paid for by voluntary donations, regular or one-off. We receive no funding from the wider church, nor from government, nor from anyone else, and must raise what we need ourselves. In the year ahead that cost will be over £1,000 every week. Part of this is paid to the Diocese towards the shared funding of clergy pay, housing and pensions, together with essential central support services. The rest is running costs – maintenance, electricity and insurance, and the cost of our activities. We would like to do more, of course.

Jesus said, 'I have come that you may have life, and have it abundantly', and we are very grateful to all who give so generously to support the life of the church, and through it, the abundant life of the village too.

The church is a special place for so many. It is a place to meet with others to worship God, a place for prayer and quiet, and a place to ask for God's blessing on special life and family events, such as baptisms, weddings and funerals. For others, the upkeep of the magnificent 13th-century building, and the living history it represents, is of paramount importance.

Our Gift Day provides everyone for whom the church is special, in whatever way, with an opportunity to show their support, and money we hope it will raise will make up a vital part of our income. Many people have suffered financially through the lockdowns of the last year. But some others of us, having had less opportunity to go away or go out, are not badly off, and a gift to the church can be a way of giving thanks for what we hold dear, or for our health, or an act of faith in the future of the church and the village it serves. All your gifts will be welcome – whether £1 or £1m!

You are warmly invited to bring your gift, large or small, to the church on 3 July, between 9.30am and 12.30pm. When you come, please stay for a cup of coffee or tea. A copy of our accounts will also be available, along with information about leaving a gift to the church in your will, and I will do my best to answer your questions. Gift Aid forms will be available to enable you to enhance your gift by 25% if you are a taxpayer. Donations can be made in cash, by cheque (made payable to 'Stonesfield PCC') or bank transfer (bank details available at the church on 3 July or on our website www.stonesfieldparishchurch.org). If you are unable to come on 3 July, but would like to contribute, you can also drop your gift in to the Rectory in Brook Lane.

Rev Ralph Williamson - on behalf of the
Parochial Church Council

July Services

Sunday 4 July [Trinity 5]

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion. [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe	All Age Worship
11am	Stonesfield	All Age Worship

Sunday 11 July [Trinity 6]

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe	Parish Communion [said]
11am	Stonesfield	Parish Communion
6pm	Combe	Evensong

Sunday 18 July [Trinity 7]

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe	Parish Communion
11am	Stonesfield	Parish Communion

Sunday 25 July [Trinity 8]

St James the Great Patronal Festival

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe	Parish Communion
11am	Stonesfield	Parish Communion

Wednesdays

9.30am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion (every week)
11am	Combe	Morning Prayer (7th and 21st July)

Stonesfield Methodist Church

Services for July

4 July	10.30am	The Reverend Jason Cooke: Service at High St Methodist Church, Witney
11 July	11am	Mr David Sarbutts
18 July	11am	Mr Keith Crawford
25 July	11am	The Reverend Richard Donoghue

The Church Minister, The Reverend Rose Westwood, can be contacted on 01608 644556. The West Oxfordshire Methodist Circuit website has details of Church Services around the Circuit. All are very welcome.

Kathleen Alb  rt (891733)

Roman Catholic Worship

The Trinity

Back in May we celebrated what used to be called Whitsun – Whit Sunday, a traditional festival marking the seventh Sunday after Easter (50 days after Easter – Pentecost), which commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Christ's disciples.

Pentecost signals the beginning of the Apostles' continuing mission, still with us today. That mission draws on the power of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, with its universal strength and authority of its Gospel message.

The Holy Trinity (Latin: Trinitas, lit. 'triad', from Latin: trinus 'threefold') is the central mystery of Christianity, in which One God exists in the form of three co-eternal and consubstantial (the same substance or essence) persons: the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit. That

means that the attributes of God are not distributed among the Three Persons. The knowledge of God is an attribute of all Three Persons; it is not confined to the Son. The love of God is an attribute of all Three Persons; it is not confined to the Spirit. Of the Three Persons, the Father and the Son are the most easily recognised and understood. The purpose of the Holy Spirit is more elusive, but is made more obvious to us at Pentecost with the granting of a universal understanding of Christ's mission (the 'gift of tongues').

John tells us *'The mission of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father in the name of the Son (John 14:26) and by the Son 'from the Father' (John 15:26). reveals that, with them, the Spirit is the one and the same God'. St. Augustine (the Great) of Hippo further explains 'The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father as the first principle and, by the eternal gift of this to the Son, from the communion of both the Father and the Son' (De Trinitate 410AD).*

Holy Mass

Sunday Mass is at 9.15am.

Please book in advance as places are strictly limited. Social distancing is maintained and masks must be worn.

Weekday Mass times

Monday, Tuesday 9.30am

Wednesday 7pm followed by exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Thursday 9.30am

Friday 9.30am followed by exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

There is no need to book – all are welcome and social distancing is strictly enforced.

Prayers of spiritual communion

O my divine Jesus, how great is my desire to receive your sacred body! Oh, come now into my soul, at least, by a spiritual communion! O Jesus, my divine Saviour, save me. O my God, hiding myself with a humble confidence in your dear wounds, I give up my soul into your divine hands. Oh, receive it into the bosom of your mercy. Amen.

Confession by arrangement with Fr Clive Dytor, who can be contacted on chair. stteresaschurchcharlbury@gmail.com.

Fr Tony Joyce can be contacted on: holytrinityrcchippy@gmail.com or 01608 642703.

For parish updates, any further information and support, go to www.stteresaschurch-charlbury.com/, or contact Fr Clive Dytor on chair. stteresaschurchcharlbury@gmail.com.

Roman Catholic Community in Stonesfield

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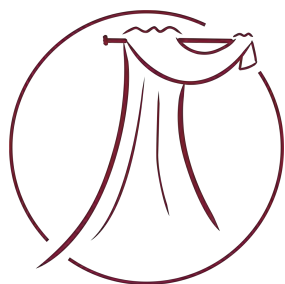
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Jacqui Birks TAX DIRECTOR
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A Fallen Ancient Oak Becomes a Stunning Seat for Visitors

A fallen oak tree in High Park, believed to be around 500 years old, has been given a new lease of life as a bench for guests to enjoy. The stunning new bench was carved by chainsaw champion Matthew Crabb, and took over 50 hours to complete. Find the new bench on your way around the Park perimeter route, near to Combe gate.

Join the Team

Looking to take the next - or first - step in your career? We're hiring! We have some exciting opportunities in our Estate and Palace teams, and a number of apprenticeships in construction and operations. See all current vacancies at blenheim.org/careers

Saplings from our Ancient Oaks are now on Sale at Blenheim Palace

A selection of saplings carefully grown from acorns collected from across the Park have gone on sale for the first time. The saplings are available from the Blenheim Palace East Courtyard Gift Shop and allow you to take a piece of the Blenheim Estate home, and grow a legacy of your own.

Forthcoming Events

Tino Sehgal at Blenheim Park & Gardens 9th July - 15th August
The Luna Open-Air Cinema 12th - 15th August
Blenheim Palace Food Festival 20th - 22nd August 2021

Keep up-to-date with our news and latest events by signing up to our newsletter at blenheimpalace.com

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The Government's travel policy has sadly caused a lot of avoidable confusion and distress for our clients and ourselves.

Please remember, it is not illegal to book a holiday or travel to a lot of amber list countries even for this summer, although there can be some insurance issues which we can explain. You just have to abide by the current testing and quarantine restrictions when you return to the UK.

As your local travel agent we need your support, so if you are feeling desperate for any sort of break, please come in for a chat and we will guide you through all the rules and regulations, and will find you a fantastic deal whether in this country or overseas.

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