

SEPTEMBER 2025

The Benefice Magazine
for the Parishes of
St Peter & St Paul,
St Peter and St Luke



*St Peter and St Paul's,
Wem*



*St Peter's,
Lee Brockhurst*



*St Luke's,
Weston-under-Redcastle*

**THE BENEFICE OF
ST PETER & ST PAUL, WEM
ST PETER, LEE BROCKHURST
ST LUKE, WESTON-UNDER-REDCASTLE**

Rector

The Reverend John Christopher Jukes BTh (Hons) MA
The Rectory Ellesmere Road, Wem SY4 5TU
01939 235343
revjohnjukes@gmail.com

Retired Clergy

Canon Dr William Price
The Reverend Edith Quirey
Reverend Mike Cotterell
Prebendary Rob Haarhoff

Further details are available on our website:

www.wemcofe.co.uk

and on

[Facebook@Wemparishchurch](https://www.facebook.com/Wemparishchurch)

ST PETER AND ST PAUL'S CHURCH, WEM

Churchwardens

Sybil Farmer 01939 232568 and David Murray 01939 236134

Parish Reader

Katharine Murray

PCC Lay Chair

Sybil Farmer 01939 232568

PCC Treasurer

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Organist

Glyn Williams 01939 234954

Sacristan

June Powell 01939 234412

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Sybil Farmer 01939 232568

Church Hall Bookings – Via website/Facebook

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Roger Ashton 01939 232425

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Roger Ashton 01939 232425

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Phoebe Ashton 07858 123669

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Helen O'Neill 01939 200663

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Colin Holloway 01939 200682

Church Warden Emeritus

Arthur Fox 01630 685180



LEE



WEM



WESTON

SERVICES IN THE BENEFICE IN SEPTEMBER

DAY	DATE	SEASON	WEM	WESTON	LEE
THURSDAY	4th		09:30 HE		
SUNDAY	7th	TRINITY 12	08:00 HE 09:45 HE	09:30 MP	11:15 HE
THURSDAY	11th		09:30 HE		
SUNDAY	14th	HOLY CROSS	08:00 HE 09:45 HE	09:30 HE	11:15 HE
THURSDAY	18th		09:30 HE		
SUNDAY	21st	ST MATTHEW	08:00 HE 09:45 HE	09:30 HE	11:15 HE
THURSDAY	25th		09:30 HE		
SUNDAY	28th	TRINITY 15	08:00 HE 09:45 HE 17:00 P&P	11:00 HE	11:15 MP

HE—Holy Eucharist MP—Morning Prayer P&P—Praise & Prayer





Notes from the Editor

SEPTEMBER 2025

Dear Readers,

Editorial for September

September's magazine is a bumper edition covering two months of very successful summer activities. Reports and photos of these events such as the Lee Brockhurst Strawberry Tea and the Weston Show indicate how much the parishes work hard to raise funds not only for their churches but in the case of Weston, local Charities as well. We also have two month's worth of articles from the Diocese.

Fund raising and other events do not stop when summer comes to an end and we look forward to Harvest Thanksgiving services and Suppers towards the end of September and the beginning of October.

Lee Brockhurst decided to have a Church Cleaning session in early August which proved to be very worthwhile.

August also saw the start of the Praying Together course taking place on Tuesdays at 2.00pm in the Choir Vestry. The first session proved to be very enlightening.

I am sure the weather has been on many folks' minds during the past two months and the lovely sunny days have become almost the norm this year with very high temperatures which do not suit many people. The occasional rain shower mostly disappearing before it could do any good as the wind dried the ground almost instantaneously. This weather has been beneficial to outdoor events and holiday makers but not so good for the elderly and housebound in insufficiently insulated properties. (*See Rector John's Ramblings!*)

I suppose next month we will be looking forward to Christmas! How the year flies.

Phoebe

Rector's Ramblings

The Weather

Georgina Rannard, the climate and science correspondent for the BBC, recently wrote:

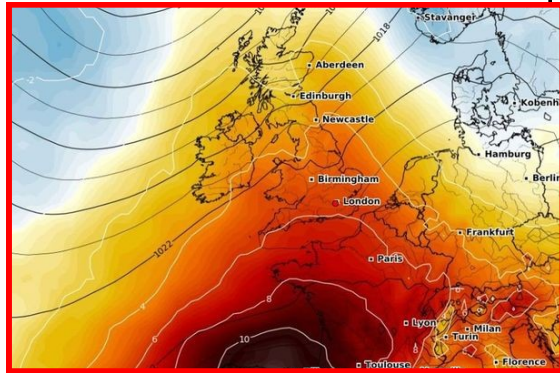
It's still hot in many parts of the UK, but some tree leaves are turning yellow and blackberries are so ripe in hedges that they're tasting alcoholic.

Councils in London have issued "do not sit under trees" warnings because of the dangers of dying branches suddenly falling.

What's going on? Is it still summer, or has autumn started already?

There is no formal definition of "early autumn" but experts say signs of the season, like leaves falling or apples being ready to pick, are actually nature becoming stressed by the long hot and dry summer.

And a potentially historic one at that - the Met Office says this summer is on track to be one of the warmest since records began in 1884.



In 2025, England may experience a "false autumn" phenomenon due to the ongoing effects of climate change, particularly prolonged heat waves and droughts. This could cause

trees to prematurely shed their leaves and fruits and berries to ripen earlier than usual, impacting wildlife that relies on these resources. Early ripening and availability of food sources can disrupt the feeding and hibernation patterns of wildlife like dormice,



who need to build up fat reserves in late autumn. A potentially thinner or less juicy wild harvest can pose further challenges.

While it's difficult to predict the exact extent of false autumn in England for the remaining part of 2025 (given it's currently August), experts have warned about the increasing frequency and intensity of drought and heat wave events due to climate change. Experts agree, and it is commonly held, that this time of climate change is exacerbated by human activity.

What is perhaps easier to predict is the effect of human activity on other humans. What we do and say can have a profound effect on the wellbeing of those around us. With one word we can help people to feel happier, or with a careless word we can bring their world crashing down. Jesus calls us to love our neighbours as ourselves, so we should be careful of what we do and what we say.

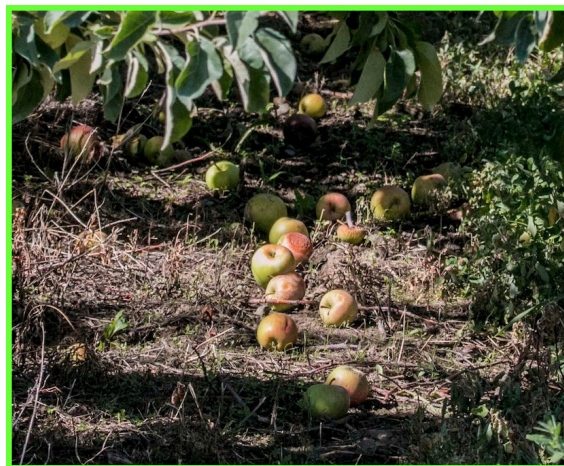


A helpful way to remind us to be considerate of others was very popular some years ago with people wearing WWJD bracelets. The idea being we see the bracelet and ask ourselves "What

Would Jesus Do?" Another way of saying this is "Capture every thought for Christ!" Both sayings ask us, before we say or do anything, to stop and think of the results on another in this situation or conversation. And if we ask that and do what we believe He would want us to do, then we are empowered to have a bigger immediate effect on our world than we would believe possible.

Another effect of WWJD may be that we may wish to help influence those who have the power to mitigate the effects of climate change!

Yours in Christ,
Reverend John.



THE CHURCHES OF WEM AND WHITCHURCH RURAL DEANERY

This is the sixth instalment of my account of the churches
in this Rural Deanery in alphabetical order.

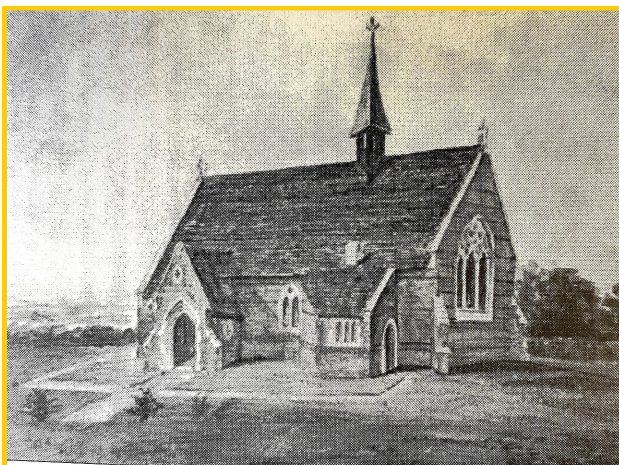


THE CHURCH OF HOLY EMMANUEL, **FAULS**

The small church of Holy Immanuel – a unique dedication in England as far as I know – is set on the lane between Darliston and Wollerton in the north-east of the Rural Deanery.



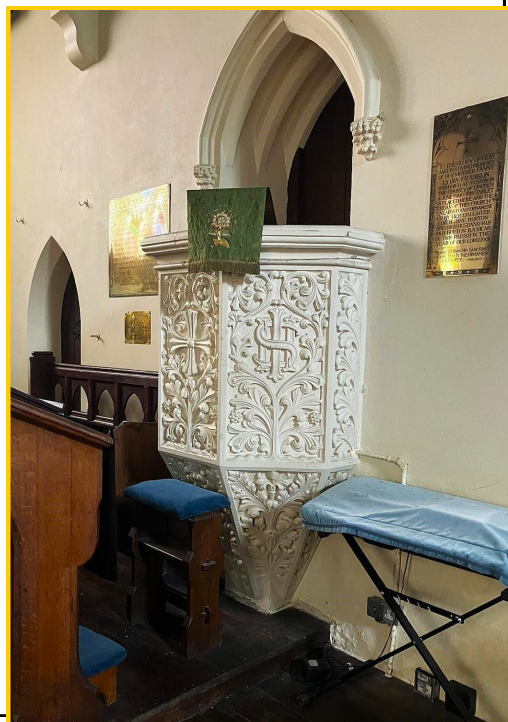
Its origins go back to the 1850s when the Vicar of Prees, Archdeacon John Allen, was concerned that over 500 people living in the area of Fauls Green, Sandford, and Darliston were a long way from the Parish Church in Prees. They needed a church where they lived. The Archdeacon gained the support of Viscount Hill of Hawkstone, the Lord of the Manor. He provided a site and bricks for the church and money was raised. The whole venture was tied up with the coming-of-age of Viscount Hill's eldest son. A large historical scrapbook in the church vestry provides a great deal of information on the origins and history of Fauls church.



"A Painting of the completed Fauls Church"

The church was consecrated by the Bishop of Lichfield on 20 May 1856. The architect was Benjamin Ferrey of London, who also designed Chetwynd church. Fauls church is of brick with black bands. It has a west gallery. The church cost almost £800. For many

years there was a fleche, a small spire, on the roof where nave and chancel meet, but in 1981 it was replaced by the present west bellcote. In 1898 the north transept was added, as a memorial to the third Viscount Hill, to house the large two-manual organ by Whiteley of Chester. In 1904 the vestry was extended and the pulpit built. The pulpit, based on the refectory pulpit at Beaulieu Abbey in Hampshire and the gift of the Revd and Mrs H G Burton, is entered from the vestry and so the preacher has to go out of the church, perhaps having a quick swig of, say, orangeade, before appearing again to preach. The font has inscriptions in Latin, Hebrew, and Greek; the Greek words are a palindrome: 'Wash the sins, not only the face'.



The east window behind the altar has recently been restored and the colours really stand out. It was partly designed and donated by the Revd Henry Meynell, the first Vicar. The windows on the north side were painted by the Revd J B Lennard, the second Vicar, and his wife, Isabella, in memory of their daughter, Emily Isabella, who died at the age of six. They show Christ blessing children, Christ setting a child in the midst of the disciples, the



Good Shepherd and Christ's charge to Peter. The window on the south side is in memory of George Robinson, the 'first contributor to Fauls Church'. It depicts the sower and the seed, the separation of tares from the wheat.

Fauls Church is a delightful building and is open every day. It is part of the 'FTW Benefice': Fauls, Tilstock, and Whitchurch. Much information in this account has been derived from Roger West's booklet 'An Abridged History of Fauls Church and Parish'.

William Price

Notes from The Diocese for August 2025



New every morning



SAM RUSHTON

Living back in Lichfield for the first time since leaving for university some time in the last century is a slightly bizarre experience. I am currently living fifty yards down the road from where I went to primary school and cross paths, while cycling to work, with pupils on the way to my old secondary.

Sometimes I feel tempted to put the old red crimplene blazer back on and follow them in through the gates...

Although we think of September as the time when we 'go back' to school or to work after the holidays, the reality of course is that we can never go back. Life only moves in one direction. Even if we find ourselves in a place which feels like somewhere we've been before, we have changed – we've grown older, hopefully wiser, hopefully not too much less able to engage physically with the challenges of living. The people around us are different, some new friends and family, some are missing. The web of love and relationship from within which we engage with the world is different. The world changes but sometimes it's we who change more.

The same is also true with how we interact with our faith: how we read the Bible, how we engage with worship, how we pray, how we think about God. Many would say that becoming a parent, for

example, changes their understanding of the Father's love radically. Everything changes because we change. And that is nothing to be anxious about. God is always revealing new things to us about who he is and how much and in what ways he loves us.

'The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.' These words in the book of Lamentations in the Bible encourage us to see God as a faithful and never-ending source of love and mercy but that love and that mercy is new every morning. Because we are new every morning: a new me – older, wiser, creakier – with a new opportunity today to see my life afresh, through God's eyes. 'New every morning is the love' – why not go and look this hymn up on that new-fangled Google thing and be encouraged and uplifted by it? And then, what new road will you travel as you grow nearer to God today?



Sam Rushton returned to Lichfield in April (after spending most of her adult life in Bristol and York) to take up the role of Chief Executive, also known as Diocesan Secretary, for the Diocese of Lichfield, working closely with the bishops and archdeacons to provide all the practical support and training to parishes, schools and chaplaincies that the diocese can offer.

Notes from The Diocese for September 2025



Redefining Rest



Apparently, Summer = Rest and relaxation. Two things most of us need more of. As we enjoy the blue skies and sunshine (obviously alongside the very British moaning about the weather, "it's a bit hot isn't it!") many people start thinking about holidays.

My experience is that holidays don't necessarily equate to rest and/or relaxation! Whether it's the anxiety of travelling, the

cost, the kids (no we're not nearly there yet!) or simply the fact that even on holiday there's so much to do!

There is a wealth of information 'out there' that stresses the importance of rest and relaxation for our mental and physical wellbeing, and Jesus said we would find rest with him (Mt 11v28). But that's not always the easiest. I believe that Jesus was quite a fan of wellbeing – he wanted us to be ourselves, not strive to be someone we're not and he stressed the importance of resting.

I recently read an email that reminded me of the importance of looking after our own wellbeing and a specific line hit me "We are our own responsibility after all". The article continued by suggesting that if we don't look after our own wellbeing then our ability to truly embrace who we are, and to live that out, will reduce.

There is truth in this. Jesus commented that everything rests (excuse the pun!) on two things – Love the Lord your God and love your neighbour as yourself (Mt 22:37-39). If we focus on the last bit of that I believe it means that we need to be able to love ourselves – who we are – and to pay attention to how we look after ourselves; we need holistic rest (mental, physical, emotional, spiritual). Only then are we able to serve and love others.

Rest looks different for everyone, it's not just about stopping and sitting quietly (although that can be good), to me it's something that gives you chance to put aside work/life etc for a few minutes and focus on something that feeds your soul. This could be nature, exercise, art, coffee with friends, dancing, computer games etc etc.



For many of us the summer doesn't automatically equal holiday, rest and relaxation. Life goes on; churches have summer fete's and regular services need to function with various people on holiday; kids are off school and after two days are bored and searching for things to do – often whilst parents and carers are trying to juggle who has the kids whilst they try and juggle work! So yes, rest and relaxation can be a tall order to reach.

Jesus doesn't ask us to be perfect though (phew!) - he simply nudges us to find small nuggets here and there where we can rest – in whatever way helps us.

Helen Scheven works with those at the beginning of their vocational journey and with those interested in lay ministries as part of the diocese's Vocations and Training team. Helen supports those on Reader Training. lichfield.anglican.org/vocations-and-training

Beginning and ending of life concerns

This article is a slightly abridged version of Bishop Michael's Presidential Address to July 2025's Diocesan Synod. As Parliament resumes on 1 September after summer recess,, it is timely to revisit this issue now before the Bills continue their Parliamentary journey and with the Second Reading of the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill imminent on 12 September.

Two Bills await scrutiny in the House of Lords: The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill, providing for 'assisted dying' in some circumstances, and the Crime and Policing Bill, removing criminal liability from women who end their own pregnancies.

Both Bills affect vulnerable groups, who have had a bad few weeks what with these two Bills plus the debate over meaningful yet cost-effective support for people with disabilities. Vulnerable people are Christians' first call for compassion and advocacy, but here I am specifically addressing beginning and ending of life issues.

Increasingly, there are concerns being expressed about the end of life Bill. The Third Reading majority of 23 in a (free) vote in the Commons was significantly lower than the Second Reading majority of 55.

Some of those concerns are shared widely. Following the abortion decriminalisation vote, the Bishop of London helpfully pointed out that, *'Women suffering from coercion, or those who are victims of sexual or domestic abuse, would be the most vulnerable to the proposed change.'* Paradoxically, making those women free from legal sanction could make them more at risk.

In the case of assisted suicide, vulnerable people could, in their last months, feel themselves to be a waste of bed-space or a financial burden on their families, and then avail themselves of this way out. Over the past few weeks, several people who have been in situations of medical, psychological or social vulnerability have written to me to describe thoughts exactly like this. Sadly, in some cases there could be temptations for overburdened hospital

administrators, or for fatigued families, to reinforce those inward feelings by their outward attitudes or words, so that people really do end up feeling coerced. The statutory inquiry into the COVID pandemic has recently heard evidence of the effective abandonment of residents of care homes to the ravages of a deadly disease because they were seen as more expendable than others. It is also hard to believe that there will not, over the years, be a relaxation of restrictions on who may avail themselves of assisted dying procedures. That has been the consistent experience of other jurisdictions.

As a Christian, I believe in the God-given sanctity of every human life, resting on the biblical truth that we are made in the image and likeness of our Creator. To take away God's gift of life is to choose to go against God's good purposes, whatever might be the circumstances in which that happens. That immediately raises a host of complex questions, particularly at the beginning of life. What if the life of a woman is endangered by a pregnancy, might not the imperative to save life point to abortion as the lesser of two evils? At what point does an incipient life become truly a human being and who has responsibility for the unborn life until that point? These complexities are addressed in this Church of England statement on abortion:

The Church of England combines principled opposition to abortion with a recognition that there can be strictly limited conditions under which it may be morally preferable to any available alternative. This is based on our view that the foetus is a human life with the potential to develop relationships, think, pray, choose and love. Women facing unwanted pregnancies realise the gravity of the decision they face: all abortions are tragedies, since they entail judging one individual's welfare against that of another (even if one is, as yet, unborn). Every possible support, especially by church members, needs to be given to those who are pregnant in difficult circumstances and care, support and compassion must be shown to all, whether or not they continue with their pregnancy.

At the other end of life, it is sometimes argued that no clear distinction can be made in borderline cases between assisting somebody to die, on the one hand, and on the other hand administering palliative drugs for pain control that will hasten the end of their life, or stopping intrusive medical

interventions that artificially sustain a vegetative state. Many of us will have experienced issues like these in the dying days or hours of those we love. They can be bitterly difficult to decide. Nevertheless, there is a world of difference between acting to alleviate suffering in someone's dying hours and purposefully seeking to bring about death. Intentionality matters.

At the beginning and the ending of life, and at every point in between, as a Christian I affirm in wonder and gratitude that all human lives belong to God, and that every human life is to be treated with reverence and awe as an image of his glory and a temple of his spirit. Many people of other faiths or beliefs would share in that view, even if expressed in different language. In public as in private we must be free to bear witness to our strongest convictions; it is chilling to hear calls to exclude people from bringing their religiously grounded values to the debate because they are not 'neutral.' Faith or belief is not like a coat to be taken off and left at the door as we enter into the house of public debate.

Finally, at the most practical and immediate level, the Assisted Dying Bill currently before Parliament is good neither in content nor timing. The safeguards it stipulates are viewed by many as woefully inadequate and it seems to me quite extraordinary to be proposing a fully-funded suicide service when palliative care is dramatically under-resourced often left reliant on charitable resources, and when the NHS in general is under such strain.

So, the Lords will now engage with the Bill. Please pray for all members of the House of Lords, and particularly for the bishops who sit there, as we deliberate. Please also pray for debate about disabled people's provision. Every day the chamber begins its business with prayers led by one of the bishops. On the last day of each week these include Psalm 121. *I put my hope in the final words of that psalm: 'The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and for evermore.'*

+*Michael*





UNDER YOUR FEET

By August, areas of long, flowery grassland should have been cut (unless you have late flowering species such as scabious or betony present, in which case these areas can be left a little longer). With the cutting and raking of

long grass there is often an opportunity to spy onto the world of small rodents such as mice, shrews and voles who may have made routes through the sward that are revealed by the cut.

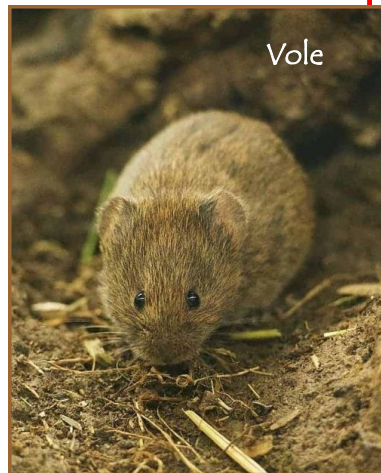
Small rodents are short lived and highly reproductive, wood mice for example tend to live for about a year, during which time they may have up to six litters of between four and eight young. In a churchyard you may have several species of mice, shrews and voles, the most likely being wood mice, field vole and common shrew. Wood mice have large ears and eyes, useful for their largely nocturnal life whilst field voles have blunter noses and smaller ears and eyes, they

can be active during the day and night. Shrews are distinctive with a long, pointed nose and tiny eyes. All of these animals need to feed frequently and are always on the move seeking food, with shrews eating 80 to 90% of their body weight each day. They feed on insects and



Wood Mouse

other invertebrates but will also tackle quite large earthworms, far bigger than they are! Mice and voles seek out seeds, berries and fruits, some of which they may stash for later. Whilst mice can be agile climbers, voles tend to stick to the ground, following the trails they make through grassland that you can see after a cut.



Vole

Unfortunately for voles and mice, they are important prey items for a range of other species. Tawny owls, also often found in churchyards, hunt silently for small rodents as do kestrels, weasels, foxes and of course cats. If you are interested to find out more, look for owl pellets beneath a nest or roosting place,

these are regurgitated bundles of the inedible parts of their food and often contain bones which can be teased out of the pellet and then identified, giving information on what they have been eating. Shrews



Kestrel

by contrast are not such a staple food item, you may find a bitten and dead shrew lying on a path suggesting that it has been hunted but was not very tasty.



Common Shrew

Churchyards and other burial grounds are havens for rodents, containing a mosaic of grassland, shrubs, woodland

and lots of places to make burrows or use existing cracks, nooks and crannies. Free of herbicides and pesticides they are full of food, both invertebrates and plant material whilst areas of long meadow and tussocky coarse grass provide perfect cover. See if you can spot their burrows and runways and imagine their busy lives in the fast lane!

Harriet Carty,

Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor

harriet@cfga.org.uk, www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk

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Our two smallest birds

By September many of our summer migrants have left the UK and we are starting to notice shortening days. It can be a good time to reconnect with the birds that don't migrate and which we can enjoy watching all year round. A

churchyard classic is the tiny goldcrest. Goldcrests can be found in the canopies of evergreen trees, particularly yews and cypresses. It's rare to find a churchyard or cemetery without any yews or other evergreens and it's also rare to find one without any Goldcrests too!



It can take patience to spot one, they are tiny, about 9cm from beak to tail tip, and well camouflaged apart from their namesake – a striking black and yellow stripe on their heads, their gold crest which they can raise giving them a punk style hairdo! Their Latin name is *Regulus regulus*, which can be translated as little prince, perhaps due to this golden crown. If you are not able to see a Goldcrest you may hear one, they have a repetitive call, sounding like zee, zee, often on the edge of one's hearing due to the high pitch.

Our Goldcrests do not migrate to warmer climes or join flocks of other small birds moving through the landscape searching for food as many other small birds do in winter. They stay put in their trees with needles, possibly living their whole lives in a few trees within

one churchyard. They are always on the move, busy gleaning small insects and other invertebrates, using a thin beak to pick them out from between tree needles or bark cracks. Although they do not migrate you may however see an increase in Goldcrest numbers in the winter, mainly along the east coast of the UK, as they are joined by Goldcrests from Scandinavia, particularly in hard winters, when large numbers will cross the North Sea. This is quite a flying feat as goldcrests weigh about 5g.



There is another similar species that you may also spot, the Firecrest. These can be thought of as Goldcrests on fire, brighter colours, fiery orange-gold crown and the black head stripe accentuated by a white one below it. Firecrests are increasing in the UK, the first record of

breeding birds was in Hampshire in 1962, they are now moving north and are breeding in the Midlands and Wales, with a few pairs in the north of England. There are now over 2,000 breeding pairs. It seems likely that they are responding to changes in climate.

Look out for both Goldcrests and Firecrests in your local churchyard, chapel yard or cemetery and as always please record what you see and hear, ideally using the iNaturalist app. It may be easier to record their song rather than photograph this restless little bird, hidden within the dark canopy of needles.

Harriet Carty *Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor,*

harriet@cpga.org.uk, www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk

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COUNTRYSIDE MATTERS

— September 2025

from ROGER ASHTON

FARMING POPULATION—2025

Our farming population is slipping seriously!

The average age of a UK farmer is nearly 60. Sixty years ago there were a lot more farms and farm staff numbers were many times greater than today. Mechanisation and farm consolidation were progressing rapidly by then, spurred initially by the 1948 Agricultural Act which gave government subsidies (deficiency payments) to support market prices and increase home grown food production. How about reintroducing them again now!

Efficiency of scale coupled with intensive farming practices saw a great reduction in the farming population. This has now been compounded by the day to day pressures



on farming; political, economic, weather patterns and a younger generation attracted away from a career in agriculture by better job prospects and housing access. This is an acute structural situation which needs to be addressed.

The Government is not supporting us enough, the environmental schemes are wanting, home grown food is

still a low priority and then there is the Inheritance Tax situation which could make some family farms unviable with the loss of young sons and daughters.

There is some evidence that the lifestyle of working in the countryside is bearing fruit. The more recent times have seen a huge reduction in hard graft as new technologies evolve. Training is essential as special skills are required and the UK provides some the best educational centres in the world. Our local Harper Adams University is one of the best. But we also need to get agriculture, horticulture and farming onto the school curriculums so there is a better understanding in our mainly urban based environment.

The farming world gives purpose and reward, working with animals and plants within the natural world. Our DNA is based on nature, God given of course.



Abbé Michel Quoist would like to see with God's eyes:

SIN

It is not only temptation that tries the generous Christian, but at times sin also; one may have a heavy



fall that seemed impossible, so deep and strong had one's love for the Lord seemed. And having fallen, one is likely to become discouraged. Never before has one understood to such an extent the ugliness of sin—it's because one now has a greater understanding of the

love of God. All is grace. This fall will make one realise that one cannot rely on oneself at all. It will put one in one's place—at the bottom.

But with this mistrust of oneself must go a greater confidence in God, the Father.

2 Corinthians 12:6b-10

(St Paul writes) But I refrain (from boasting), so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say,⁷ or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.¹⁰ That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Luke 15:7

⁷ And Jesus said, 'I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.'

I have fallen, Lord,
Once more.
I Can't go on, I will never succeed.
I am ashamed, I don't dare look at you.
And yet I struggled, Lord, for I knew you were right near me,
 bending over me, watching.
But temptation blew like a hurricane
And instead of looking at you I turned my head away,
I stepped aside
While you stood, silent and sorrowful,
Like a spurned fiancé who has seen his loved one carried off by his
 rival.
When the wind died down as suddenly as it had arisen,
When the lightning ceased after proudly streaking the darkness,
All of a sudden I found myself alone, ashamed, disgusted, with
 my sin in my hands.
This sin that I selected as a customer his purchase,
This sin that I paid for and cannot return, for the store-keeper
 is no longer there,
This tasteless sin, this odourless sin, this sin that sickens me,
That I have wanted and want no more,
That I have imagined,
 sought, played with
 fondled, for a long time,
That I have finally embraced while coldly by-passing you,
My arms outstretched, my eyes and heart irresistibly drawn:
This sin that I have grasped and consumed with gluttony,
It's mine now, but it possesses me as the spider-web holds captive
 the fly.
It is mine, it sticks to me
It flows in my veins, it fills my heart.
It has slipped in everywhere, as darkness slips into the forest at dusk
 and fills all the patches of light.
I can't get rid of it.
I run from it, like the master of an unwanted and mangy dog, but it
 catches up with me, and rubs joyfully against my legs. —————→

Everyone must notice it.

I am so ashamed that I feel like crawling to avoid being seen,

I am ashamed of being seen by my friend,

I am ashamed of being seen by you, Lord,

For you loved me, and I forgot you.

I forgot you because I was thinking of myself,

And one can't think of several persons at once.

One must choose, and I chose.

And your voice, and your look, and your love hurt me.

They weigh me down, they weigh me down more than my sin.

Lord, don't look at me like that,

For I am naked, I am dirty, I am down,

Shattered, with no strength left.

I dare not make any more promises,

I can only stand bowed before you.

Come, child, look up.

Isn't it mainly vanity that is wounded?

If you love me, you would grieve, but you would trust.

Do you think that there is a limit to God's love?

Do you think that for a moment I stopped loving you?

But you still rely on yourself, my child.

You must rely on me.

Ask my pardon

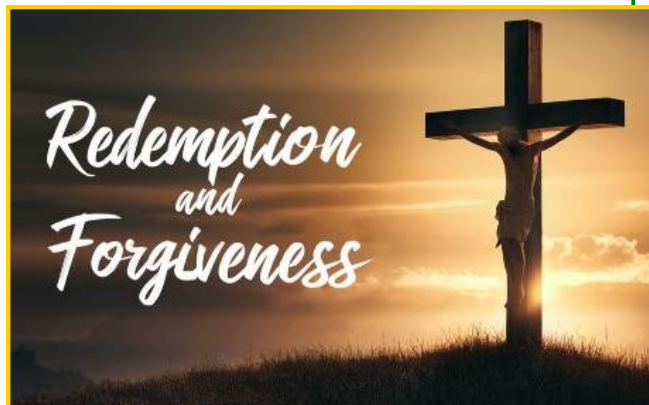
and get up quickly.

You see, it is not falling

that is the worst,

But staying on the

ground.



from 'Prayers of Life' by Michel Quoist ISBN 0-7171-0158-4

CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO GOD

collected by
Trish Bamford

Dear God

I do not think anybody could be a
better God.

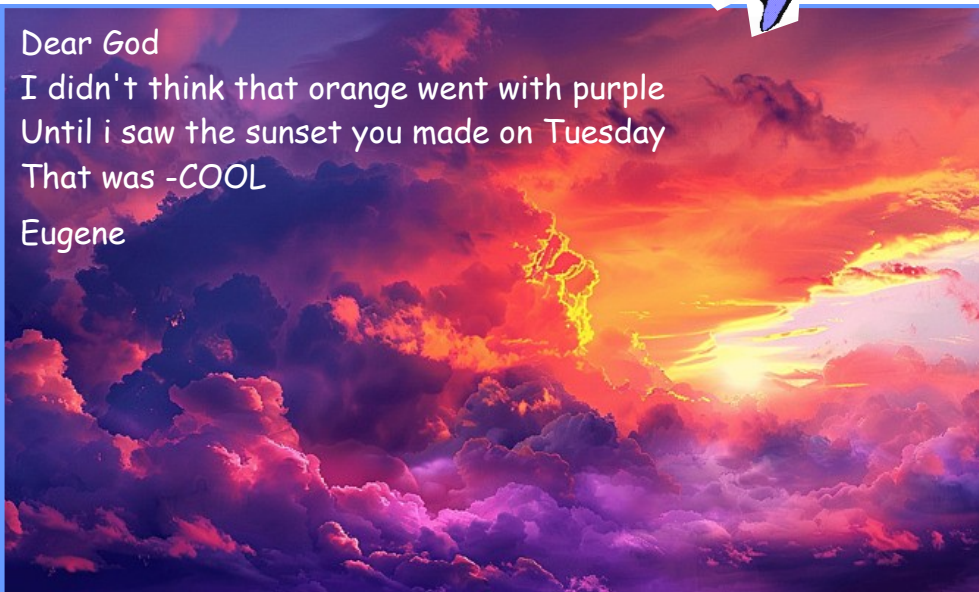
Well I just want you to know, because
because you are God



Dear God

I didn't think that orange went with purple
Until i saw the sunset you made on Tuesday
That was -COOL

Eugene



Dear God

Iam doing the best I can

Frank

RIDE+STRIDE – on Saturday 13 September 2025

Ride+Stride is an opportunity for YOU to raise money for your Church. Anyone can join in - collect **sponsors**, then plan your own route - walk, bike, **or car** - visit some churches - enjoy the day.

If you are busy on the 13th, go another day - which is what a lot of people do.

The **sponsorship money is split 50/50 between your local Church** and the Shropshire Historic Churches Trust (SHCT), which awards grants for repairs and improvements to our Churches and Chapels. So 100% goes to our places of worship.

This is definitely a '**Good Thing**'.

'Ride+Stride' is a National event by the National Churches Trust and Shropshire is pleased to join in. The basic idea is twofold:

- (1) Churches are open for visitors on Saturday 13 Sept from about 10 to 6, ideally with light refreshments (biscuits. squash; cake maybe).
- (2) Anyone can visit as few or as many churches as you wish. Go anywhere ... on foot, by bike, **or by car**, using our Sponsorship Form to collect sponsorship for your church and for the Trust.

'Ride+Stride' is **NOT** an event where church visits are centrally organised. We **do not have** a 'central team' that plans any walks or rides or drives.

NO ... It's **something that Churches can do for themselves**.

And **you** can do it for your Church. **Not rocket science!**

Just get some sponsors to back you on a church-based trip to some of our Churches.

The **Sponsorship Form** is on our website
www.shropshirehct.org.uk

Or contact me and I will get one to you. You can still go and visit

other churches, even if your own church is closed. Visiting is important; otherwise, the event will cease.

The County raised £38,446 last year - a record!

So our two Dioceses, Hereford and Lichfield, are encouraging it to grow - even in Parishes where the event is not well-known and the open churches get hardly any visitors. Yet.

This event has enormous potential - Dorset raised £98,629 last September. My cousin lives there and I'd love to catch up!

Please 'have a go' this year - **Help preserve our Churches in good repair; and help to keep them open for the future.**

David Hardham (Trustee – and County Organiser for Ride+Stride)

Telephone: 01588 650362.

E-Mail: shrops.ridestride@gmail.com (Note: new email)

Full details on SHCT website: www.shropshirehct.org.uk





*The Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul,
Wem*



St Peter & St Paul's Parish Church

SUNDAYS

08:00—Holy Communion

09:45—Sung Eucharist

4th SUNDAY

17:00—Prayer & Praise

THURSDAYS

09:30—Holy Communion

SUNDAY SERVICES IN SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY 7th SEPTEMBER—12th SUNDAY after TRINITY

08:00 & 09:45—Holy Eucharist

SUNDAY 14th SEPTEMBER—HOLY CROSS DAY

08:00 & 09:45—Holy Eucharist

SUNDAY 21st SEPTEMBER—MATTHEW, Apostle & Evangelist

08:00 & 09:45—Holy Eucharist

SUNDAY 28th SEPTEMBER—15th SUNDAY after TRINITY

08:00 & 09:45—Holy Eucharist

17:00—Prayer & Praise

**You are welcome to join us
at any of our services!**



“Growing in Faith, Hope and Love”

WHAT'S ON IN THE PARISH



Sunday 28th September
at 5 pm in the Church
*Please come along for a quiet
time together*

CHURCH COFFEE MORNINGS

Following on from our recent August coffee morning we plan to hold coffee mornings on:

September 27th

1st November

(deferred for 1 week because we are hosting the Art Society Annual Exhibition at the end of October)

13th December The Christmas Fayre

We have a stall for Homemade cakes, Olive brings Gluten Free cakes and biscuits, David and Margaret's scones (especially cheese ones) are always winners, Tricia bakes the ever-popular fruit cake, Sarah's Chocolate Brownies were a hit too. We often have chocolate cake & lemon drizzle cake and I expect this month there will be apple cake.

July & August have seen plentiful harvest of soft fruits, strawberries, raspberries, blackcurrants, redcurrants, blackberries and plums and now there are courgettes, tomatoes and wind fall cooking apples.

I have been busy making :-

- Strawberry Jam
- Raspberry Jam
- Blackcurrant Jam
- Blackberry Jam

- Tutti Fruiti Jam (*Strawberry, Raspberry, Blackcurrant & Redcurrant*)
- Spiced Port & Plum Jam
- Blackcurrant and Rhubarb Jam
- Plum and Redcurrant Jam
- Blackcurrant & Orange Jelly
- Autumn Marmalade (*Lemon, Lime & Apple*)
- Lemon, Courgette and Thyme Marmalade
- Redcurrant and Apricot Chutney
- Plum and Apple Chutney
- Red Tomato and Celery Chutney
- Tangy Courgette Relish
- Yellow Courgette and Tomato Relish

So whether you are looking for a traditional jam or something a little different do visit my Preserves Stall.

There are tombola and raffle stalls. Alan & Wendy are going to look after the bric a brac stall and would appreciate donations of pre-loved goods. We have recently started a book stall stocked with donated books and are asking folks to put a donation in the box if they are taking a book away. And finally, there is the jigsaw exchange where you can take away a jigsaw for £2 or if you bring a jigsaw in exchange, you will be charged £1.

If you would like to help with the raffle or serving coffee, please speak to Elaine Shaw who is coordinating volunteers for our coffee mornings. Donations of books, homemade cakes and raffle prizes are always welcome.

Although these coffee mornings do raise funds for church, the main reason that Bette and June started coffee mornings was to give people the chance to meet up and chat so do use this opportunity to meet with friends and come and support our coffee mornings this autumn.

Sybil

SEPTEMBER COFFEE MORNING

10:00 –12:00

IN ST PETER AND ST PAUL'S
CHURCH HALL

SATURDAY 27th SEPTEMBER

PLEASE JOIN US FOR COFFEE
AND A CHAT

SS Peter &
Paul's
Church,
Wem

Growing
in
Faith,
Hope
and
Love

TOMBOLA

Raffle

Homemade Cakes
Jams, Marmalades,
Chutneys.

Bric a Brac

BOOKS

JIGSAWS



Church Flowers

In September we are grateful to our sponsors

7th September

Sarah Newell remembering Malcom & Yvonne Raynor

14th September

Margaret and Rob Haarhoff remembering Pat Haarhoff

21st September

Peter Fauknall remembering Doris Fauknall

There are still some dates free in October & November, so please add your name to the list at the back of church if you would like to sponsor a particular date. Donations should be made via our treasurer Caroline Sinclair.

Next month we will be celebrating Harvest on Sunday 5th October and this will be preceded on Friday 3rd October with St Peter's School Harvest Service. We will therefore be decorating the church on Thursday 2nd October. If you would like to help with this, please speak to me or just turn up at 10:30. Many hands make light work.

Sybil





THE JIGSAW EXCHANGE

Don't forget the Jigsaw exchange at our coffee mornings. Jigsaws galore with the plan that you can take away a jigsaw for £2 or if you bring a jigsaw to exchange then you will be asked to donate £1.

I hope this will enable us to share our jigsaws and raise a little extra for church funds. Thank you in anticipation of your support.

Sybil



The Church is looking for people to join our choir.
We practice on a Thursday evening in the Church
from 7:30 – 8:30pm.

Why not come along and give it a try. You're guaranteed
a very warm welcome and no obligation!

For further information please contact Elaine on 07969 511590

Musical Events in Wem Parish Church



Following on from the piano recital by Sarah Beth Briggs, more music events are planned for the autumn.

Firstly, on **Sunday 5th October** at 2:30 pm there will be a piano duet recital by Nigel

Clayton and Imma Setiadi. They will play an entertaining selection of music for 4 hands at 1 piano. We will serve refreshments (tea or coffee & cake) in the church hall during the interval.

Tickets £12—contact Elaine 07969 511590
or Wendy 07828 282996.

In November the Community Choir will be giving a concert.

This will be on Friday **22nd November at 19:00.**

In December Brass Buttons, a brass quartet, have kindly accepted our invitation to join Kim Archer, Elaine Shaw and Glyn Williams in a Christmas themed concert with audience participation. This will be on **Saturday 6th December at 14:00**, so please keep this date free so that you can join us for this celebratory event.



The Parish Church of St Peter, Lee Brockhurst

St Peter's Church



Come and join us here on Wednesdays
17th September, 15th October,
and 19th November
for "Coffee and Chat"

Any time between 10.30 and 12.00

No charge but donations to the church welcomed

For further information ring 07858123669





ST PETER'S CHURCH,
LEE BROCKHURST

HARVEST SUPPER & AUCTION SALE

At Lee Brockhurst Village Hall

on

Monday 29th September

7.00pm for 7.30 p.m.

£7.00 adults, £3.00 children

A simple meal of soup and bread followed by
various fruit desserts will be served!

Please book your place by contacting

Phoebe Ashton on 07858123669

or phoebe42.lee@gmail.com

or Valerie Lusby on 01939 235610

or 07766 272425



Walking In My Life—part 2

Phoebe reminisces about another important part of her life

In the early 70's I was introduced to a very different type of walking. Mountain walking I became a member of the UK Section of the Austrian Alpine Club and travelled from Crawley to Dover or Folkestone to catch a ferry to Ostend where we caught the sleeper train to Munich or Vienna or on one occasion Basle. We slept in couchettes and were supplied with a small pillow and a blanket; we took our own provisions supplemented with food and drink bought on station platforms. On arrival we would take local transport into the Austrian alpine valleys and begin our two week walking holiday.

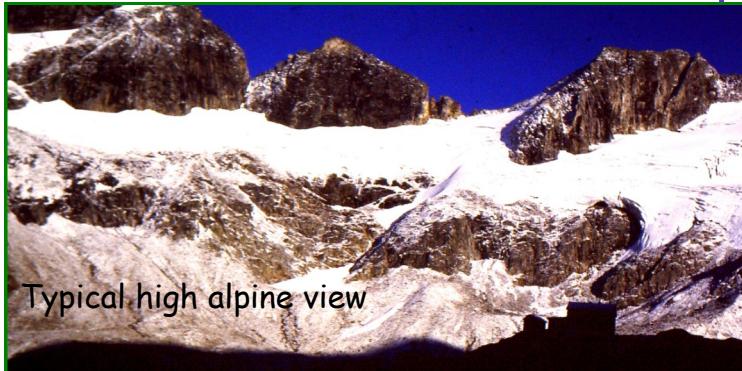


My first experience of Austrian alpine walking was a big eye opener. We walked to our first night's accommodation, called a hut, but more like a youth hostel. We carried anything from 20 to 30 pounds weight in our rucksacks, clothes and waterproofs and also including all our breakfast and lunch provisions. We

would buy a 1 kilo rye loaf in the valley before we set off on our mountain holiday. We slept in dormitories (matratzenlager) with a row of mattresses adjacent to each other, each mattress supplied with a blanket and pillow (the blankets had Fussende (foot end) embroidered on them as they were not washed between guests! We used our own sheet sleeping bags. Very often there was no electric light in the upper storeys of these huts and we had to use our torches to see what we were doing. Snoring was problem for light sleepers! For a little more money we could book bunk beds in a four person room which afforded a little more comfort and space. Toilet facilities were very primitive George called them "long drop loos", wooden seats with a lid and a long drop to the ground below. Washing could be in a stream or a wash room with cold water. Occasionally a hut would

have a shower which we could use for about 20 Austrian schillings, no Euros until 1999, I think.

In the high mountain huts above 2000 metres everyone got up very early (4 or 5 am) to get onto the snow and glaciers before the sun starts to melt them. In these conditions we wore crampons on our boots, these



Typical high alpine view

have spikes that cut into the hard snow and ice and with the aid of an ice axe one can make slow but sure progress. However, as soon as the snow begins to melt the crampons have to be removed as they



George viewing the Grossglocher

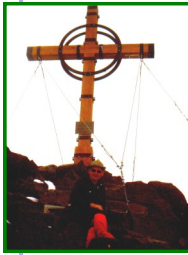
become a hazard sinking into the snow. My second trip was probably the most memorable; we walked in an area called the Oetztal Mountains the highest of which, the Wildspitz 3774m, is the second highest mountain in Austria, just 23m lower than the highest the Grossglochner at 3797m.

As described above we left the hut very early and walked across a flat area for some hours before we started climbing the final 1000 metres, a steep ridge with serious drops on either side. I was pretty terrified especially as we had had to take off our crampons as it was late in the morning and the snow was soft. At the bottom of the climb we roped up, this entailed circling our waists and between our legs with a "harness" made of a thin rope which was connected to the main rope with a carabineer. Nowadays you can buy readymade harnesses but in the early 70's things were much



The Ridge!

more primitive! I was told that if someone fell off one side we should all jump off the other side of the ridge to stop the one person pulling us all down with him or her. I never really believed that this was a sane thing to do but it is probably true. If an angel from heaven



could have descended and taken me off that mountain I would have been very grateful. The top of this mountain has a narrow ridge between the top, marked with a large cross and a sub-peak; here we ate our lunch and then after a couple of photo shots we began the descent, not so exposed as the ascent but not very easy for all that. We reached the hut where we were going to sleep in mid

-afternoon and indulged in apelsaft or beer or something called scheevasser which is a very dilute soft drink and comes in half litre glasses.

Other experiences on this second trip were walking across or down scree, loose stones of various sizes



Butterfly Orchid

up to medium sized rock which move as you put your weight

on them. But all this hard work was rewarded by fantastic views of the mountains and amazing wild flowers including lots of wild orchids and edelweiss.

The wonders of God's creation are truly laid out before you in the mountains.



Limestone Mountain View

After this holiday we regularly visited Austria in July, sometimes with friends, but quite often on our own, each year covering a different area of the Austrian Alps. George's ambition was to walk (in stages) from one end of the Austrian Alps to the other and before he died he almost manage to achieve this. As you can see my earliest experiences did not deter me from visiting the Austrian Alps for the next thirty-five years!

In 1990 we did a trek in Nepal, but more of this next time!

Phoebe

Yours truly! Early 70's



St Peter's **Big Clean-up**

Val's lovely
clean porch

Judith—Queen
of the
Vacuum Cleaner



Roger up the
Pol.. sorry, the
Ladder!
Polishing the
Lampshades



WELL DONE

The Parish Church of St Luke,

Weston-under-Redcastle



THE VILLAGE SHOW—WHAT A DAY!

RAIN AND WIND IN THE MORNING, SUN AND HEAT IN THE AFTERNOON. OUR LUCK CONTINUES!!

A BIG, BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OF YOU WHO HELPED, THE FIELD PREPARATION GOES ON FOR SEVERAL DAYS BEFOREHAND, AND OF COURSE IT ALL HAS TO BE PUT AWAY AGAIN AFTERWARDS.

THE PLANNING IS ON THE GO FOR MANY MONTHS . THEN ON THE DAY SO, SO MANY OF YOU GET INVOLVED AND WE HOPE ENJOY BEING PART OF SUCH A SUCCESSFUL EVENT.

IT HAS BEEN CALLED "THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH" SLIGHT EXAGGERATION!!!

BUT AS A SMALL VILLAGE IT IS SOMETHING TO BE PROUD OF ESPECIALLY AS IT HAS RAISED, WE CAN NOW REPORT, IN THE REGION OF £13,000 ALL FOR CHARITIES, HOME AND AWAY. FINAL FIGURE LATER.

Weston Under Redcastle
Village Show 2025
Thank you everyone!



The 4th Rob Wickstead Memorial Golf Match

In aid of Severn Hospice



Hawkstone Park Golf Club Thursday 18th September 2025

18 holes Hawkstone Course
Brunch
1 course dinner
£65pp
(includes £5 donation to Severn Hospice)

Menu Choices

Ham, egg & chips
Mushroom risotto
Steak & ale pie

Brunch at 12.30pm
Tee off 2pm
Dinner & Raffle approx
6.30pm



Remember to wear
your checked shirt
in honour of Rob!

Non-golfers also
welcome for dinner!
(£15pp)



Thank you very much
to all our contributors.

THE OCTOBER ISSUE

needs your input preferably by **13th September,**
but definitely no later than 20th, please.

All articles e-mailed to Phoebe Ashton

phoebe42.lee@gmail.com

In Word, please, and any Pictures as jpeg's

THE LAST PAGE

THE COLLECT FOR HOLY CROSS DAY

Almighty God,
who in the passion of your blessed Son
made an instrument of painful death
to be for us the means of life and peace:
grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ
that we may gladly suffer for his sake;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.



The cross on which our Lord was crucified has become the universal symbol for Christianity, replacing the fish symbol of the early church, though the latter has been revived in recent times. After the end of the persecution era, early in the fourth century, pilgrims began to travel to Jerusalem to visit and pray at the places associated with the life of Jesus. Helena, the mother of the emperor, was a Christian and, whilst overseeing excavations in the city, is said to have uncovered a cross, which many believed to be the Cross of Christ. A basilica was built on the site of the Holy Sepulchre and dedicated on 14th September in the year 335

