THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

The Badbury Benefice Newsletter

Winter 2025/Spring 2026

Newsletter for Buscot, Coleshill, Eaton Hastings and Great Coxwell Churches

Senior Warden, Sue Homersham email homcourt@btconnect.com

Vicar's Letter

I have heard people say that Churches are out of touch with modern life and are irrelevant in our world today. Why more churches haven't closed due to low attendance figures is a mystery to them. Churches situated in beautiful, yet isolated rural landscapes seem particularly at risk of closing, especially when worshipper numbers are in decline and the cost of maintaining and repairing the buildings is exceptionally high. It's enough to make any Warden, Church Council member and parishioner lose heart and despair and ask the question "Why bother?"

If we focus solely on the disappointments and challenges, we can lose sight of the good things that are happening around us when we live out our faith in God. A learned priest once wrote: "If our resources seem inadequate, we may find that, through our willingness and effort, the Lord can achieve far more than we imagined possible." It is easy to forget just how much we have achieved in our Benefice. The human stories and community events recorded in this Newsletter remind us that the Church is still active and relevant today. On a personal note, I feel privileged to have been part of this wonderful journey with you for five years. Soon I shall be moving on. May we all celebrate our past achievements and look forward in eagerness to new opportunities of service and witness to our Living Lord.

God Bless you All, Maureen



We were delighted that Bishop Gavin was able to lead and preach at our Benefice Holy Communion service at All Saints' Coleshill in July. It was a meaningful and enjoyable celebration of our wonderful volunteers, and was well attended by a cross section of people from all the four churches and villages. Many people expressed how approachable the bishop was and were impressed by his gentle humble spirit.

The bishop commented that it was a joy for him to be with us, for what he thought was a good and Spirit-filled service and fellowship afterwards. He added "You've got a very special group of saints with you in the Badbury Benefice indeed!"

Christingle Service and Plough Blessing



11th January 2026
All Saints Church Coleshill
2.30pm
For all the family

Buscot News - Church Warden

The good news from Buscot is that Jonny Farnol is now well enough to return as warden of St Mary's. He is delighted to do so and even more delighted to find everything in such good order. Whilst Jonny was away John Burrows stood in and dealt with picking up on the Good Shepherd window project. No small feat. Thank you, John, for your attention to detail and keeping a check on those costs.



It's a little-known fact that I received a medal and a rosette for completing my treatment...from my wife Kitty. "I would never have managed my recovery without the help of Kitty, the NHS and God's strength. Thanks to you All, you saved my life."

Jonny Farnol

The fullness of joy is to behold God in everything - Julian of Norwich

Harvest Festival

Well known hymns, readings and poems featured in Buscot St Mary's Harvest Festival Songs of Praise. Our flower arrangers excelled themselves and the service was truly uplifting with evening light filtering through our newly restored Good Shepherd stained-glass window.

Joan Gardiner



Buscot harvest display

Many thanks to all the wonderful flower arrangers who decorate so beautifully our four churches throughout the year.

PCC Team Working

Teamwork involves people working together, combining their unique skills, ideas, and strengths to achieve a common goal. At St Mary's we have built communication, trust, and respect between the PCC group. We have learnt to collaborate, to solve problems more creatively and efficiently. It has helped to build a sense of belonging and shared responsibility, which motivated everyone to make the Good Shepherd window project a great success. We are all very proud of the challenges we have overcome in making our church what it is today and how it will be tomorrow.



St Mary's Buscot PCC meeting, excluding the vicar, she's taking the photo.

Good Shepherd Window Restoration

Our much admired "Good Shepherd" east window was professionally removed for cleaning and restoration during the summer. The window designed by renowned Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood artist Sir Edward Burne-Jones had been in place for 125 years. The artist was a very good friend of William Morris, and it is believed the original manufacture of the window was undertaken by the Morris factory.

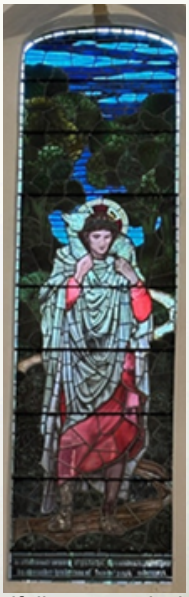
St Mary's PCC employed Glastonbury based Dan Humphries, a professional stained-glass restorer and conservator, to undertake the work following close collaboration with Dr Amy Lim the curator at Buscot Park. Indeed, the church is very grateful for the encouragement and support of James and Lucinda Henderson in helping the church realise the project. The window is now not only clean, restored but also protected externally with environmental protection glass.



Restoration team at work

It should be good for another 125 years.

We encourage all to come and view the window during the autumn and spring months when the sun is lower in the sky. The easterly morning sun makes the work of Burne-Jones sing. His representation of Christ as the good shepherd is at its most inspiring with the sunlight behind it mid-morning, about he time of Communion on a Sunday.



Beautifully restored window

Benefice Wide Team Working

In September, a special Benefice-wide PCC meeting was held to address several important matters affecting our rural churches. We discussed strategies for coping with the growing challenge of having fewer volunteers in which to recruit churchwardens and PCC members. Additionally, the meeting promoted better joint support, whilst recognizing and respecting their individual identities. They also considered the formation of a single benefice council. These discussions are continuing in the four church PCCs. Special thanks to Peter Foot (Deanery Secretary) for attending the meeting and giving us valuable input and advice.

In Memoriam 2025

Sally MacMillan, Eaton Hastings
Rose Davies, Coleshill
Norman Johnson, Great Coxwell
Brenda Bromford, Coleshill
Kathleen Berry, Buscot
Barry Eames, Great Coxwell

May they rest in peace and rise in glory

BAPTISMS AT COLESHILL

Keeping it in the family!

In July this year we baptized our Micky Mansfield into our church. He joins his sister Phoebe who was baptized in October 2021.



In December, we will baptize George Knight who follows in the footsteps of brother Thomas, baptized in February 2021.



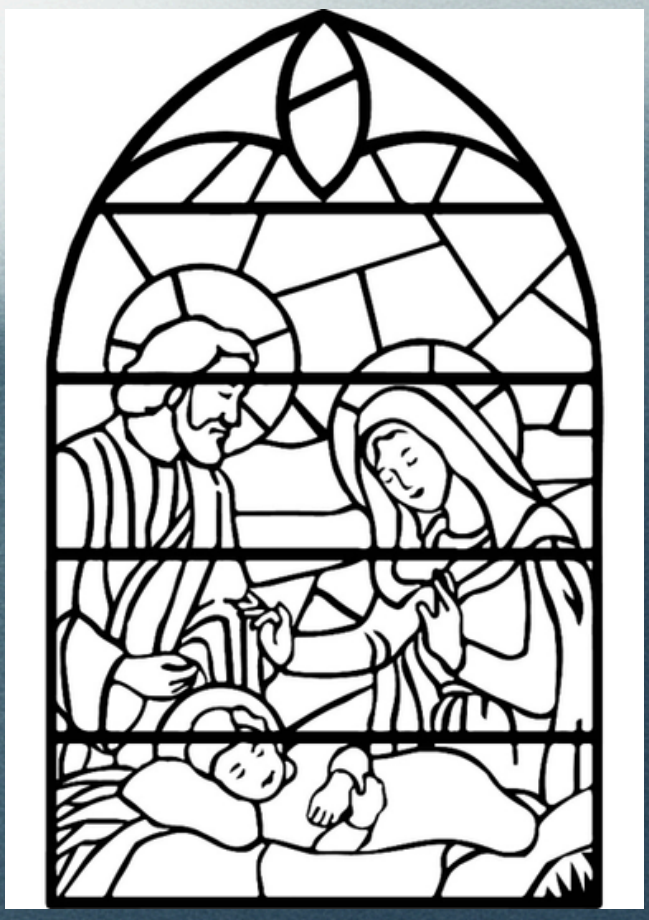
Great Coxwell Christmas Eve Barn Carol Service

Each year our talented and willing villagers and volunteers erect and decorate the Great Barn for our Christmas Eve Nativity Service at 6pm preceded by a village procession at 5.30pm. The singing of carols and nativity scene in the Barn make for a magical time for all ages as we focus on the birth of Jesus. Everyone is welcome



Jacqueline Pumphrey and sheep

Children's picture



Eaton Hastings Events

2025 AUTUMN LECTURES

The two lectures in St Michael and All Angels' church were well received. The first on 4th October was about The Faringdon Collection at Buscot Park, given by Dr Amy Lim, Curator, Faringdon Collection. This important and diverse collection, begun by Alexander Henderson, 1st Baron of Faringdon, comprising of fine and decorative arts, is privately run within the National Trust country house.



The second lecture on 11th October entitled "the Beauty of Bronze, was given by Jeremy Warren, Honorary Curator of Sculpture, Ashmolean Museum. This museum of the University of Oxford houses one of the world's great collections of European small bronzes, including the fabulous collection of Charles Drury Edward Fortnum, bequeathed in 1899.

A big thank you to our speakers. Proceeds went to Church Funds.

Summer Choral Evensong

On 20th July, we hosted a very successful Choral Evensong to celebrate St. Mary Magdalene. The wonderful music included the Hartley Responses, Fauxbourdon by Thomas Morley and "View me Lord" by Lloyd. This was followed by refreshments in a garden overlooking the river Thames. Our sincere thanks to the Shrivenham and Ashbury choir and friends, who led the singing so beautifully under the direction of Claire Hartley, and to our wonderful Eaton Hastings PCC members who organised this special event.

Benefice Christmas Carol Services

Sunday 7th December 5pm
Carol Service (BCP) at Eaton Hastings
(with the Shrivenham and Ashbury Choir)

Saturday 13th December 5pm
Family Nativity Service at Coleshill

Sunday 14th December 10.30am
Holy Communion with carols at
Great Coxwell

Sunday 21st December 5pm
Traditional Carol Service at Buscot

Christmas Eve 24th 6pm
Great Barn Carol Service
Great Coxwell
(Village procession starts at 5.30)

Christmas Day Holy Communion

Coleshill 9am
Eaton Hastings 10.30am

Great Coxwell Events

'Essentials of First Aid'

On 4th October, the Reading Room was turned into a drop-in centre for villagers to learn about life saving skills. The 3 one-hour sessions which covered basic life support, CPR and how to use the Automated External Defibrillator, was presented by Malcolm (our First Responder). He was ably supported by the Rapid Relief Team who provided delicious bacon butties and coffee.

A big “thank you” to them for this successful, thought-provoking event.



Three of the team: James Turner, Dave Norris, Malcolm Gee

Village BBQ

In June we enjoyed a village BBQ in the vicarage garden. Even though it poured with rain, we carried on smiling. Thanks to all who organised this.



Stonevale Concerts in St Giles’



Another magical season of classical concerts began in October. With a variety of professional musicians, coming from all parts of the world, with different instruments and genres, we have been enthralled by the extremely high standard of concerts. Already we have heard the talented German pianist, Max Mostovetski and the Tessera Viol Consort. Concerts begin at 4pm.

Still to come:

25 January - Winterreise with mezzo-soprano Hera Protopapas

15 March - Soprano and Piano recital with Betty Makharinsky and Pavel Timofeyefksy

26 April - Cello recital with Derek de la Bernardie

7 June - Piano recital with Ukrainian pianist Ivan Hovorun

All the concerts are on the Stonevale website where tickets can be booked. As always, tickets/donations can also be made at the door. Please join us for this excellent season. Included is a glass of wine or soft drink, and great company!

Many thanks to Lynette Stulting who organises these wonderful concerts.



CONTEMPLATION GARDEN REVIEW

It is 4 years since we took a new direction in the garden of remembrance at St Giles. During the pandemic, mental wellbeing and the healing power of nature came into focus. The need for quiet reflection and an opportunity to be in nature was the focus for our garden design makeover.

The eastern boundary was strengthened and windows into the landscape beyond cut in the hedges to the south. A management regime aimed at encouraging the wildflowers was introduced and more wild plants added. The circular path was punctuated with 4 seats and some new trees.

Simple way-markers inscribed with words, including MEMORIES, LOVE, TRANQUILITY and NATURE, focus thinking or prayer. A box of handheld guides at the gate offers associated biblical texts if wished.

The space offers peaceful seclusion with opportunities to be in nature, calm the mind and seek spiritual uplift.



Photogrpahy by Anne Hamling



National Trust Scything Team in action

This year we have managed the wildflower meadow in the traditional way. The brilliant volunteer scything team from the National Trust Coleshill and Buscot Estates turned out on yet another very hot day at the end of July and scythed it. Curious villagers greeted by small clouds of butterflies and grasshoppers came to watch the waving grasses felled and raked away for another year.

We are very grateful for the continued support and enthusiasm of the National Trust, our small group who manage the Contemplation Garden and all the people who occasionally help with gardening tasks. The garden situated on the south side of the church is always open.
All are welcome.
Anne Hamling

Special Thanks

Thanks to Anne, the Contemplation Garden Committee and volunteers who support this wonderful eco project.

Special thanks also to Derek Belcher, who kindly volunteers to attend and tidy up St Giles' Churchyard. The results are amazing.

Goodbye to Pat Cook

In the Summer, we said goodbye to Pat, who retired as St Giles' Church Warden. She moved with her family to Scotland. Pat made a wonderful contribution to both the Church and the wider village community. We thank Pat for her work here and wish her well in this exciting new adventure.



Pat Cook (Photo by Anne Hamling)

We have three Benefice Church Wardens (due to the vacancy). Ideally there should be eight! Wardens work incredibly hard to ensure the churches are in good order, remain open and welcoming to villagers, worshippers and visitors alike. Sue Homersham (senior warden) looks after Coleshill; Suzanne Tearle, Eaton Hastings and Jonny Farnol, Buscot. We thank them for their commitment and time.

Church Wardens rely on the voluntary help of parishioners and others to fulfil the various roles required in the life of the church. Please get in touch with them, or vicar, if you can offer your skills and time, or are interested in joining the Parochial Church Council (PCC) where important decisions about church life are discussed, or becoming a Church Warden or Deputy Warden.

Mike and Judy's Anniversary

Congratulations to Mike and Judy Heathcoat who celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary recently.



Friends of St. Giles Charity
Could you become a Trustee?

This new Registered Charity was formed to raise funds and project-manage repairs and improvements to our historic 12th-century church. We need to raise £176,000 for the roof alone to prevent the building from falling into disuse. To date, we have raised £25,000. The immediate plan is to replace the leaky church roof, with longer-term plans that include upgrading the lighting and heating system, installing Mains water, constructing a small modern kitchen with a disabled and unisex toilet, and creating a "quiet place".

These extra facilities will make the church building more appealing, relevant and accessible for group activities and individuals of all ages, as well as being more comfortable for the congregations attending services. The Friends Group need to recruit two or three more people to become Trustees of the Charity, especially to take charge of fundraising activities. If this is something you think you could get involved with, please contact Russ Payne for further information on: Russpayne999@gmail.com

Benefice Weddings

Congratulations to the four couples who were married in our churches this year.



Flo and Alex Richardson
Coleshill 28th June



Jessica and Oliver Busuttil
Great Coxwell 6th September



Richard and Harriet Dean
Buscot 22nd August

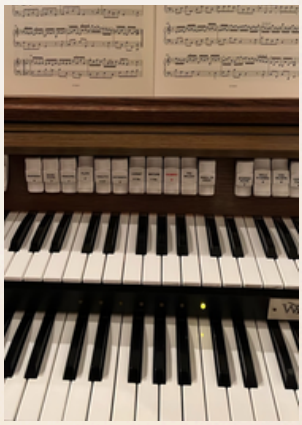


Sophie and Aaron Mansfield
Coleshill Church 27th September

Organ playing in the Badbury Group of churches

As distinctive as the four churches themselves, the four instruments that are used to provide musical accompaniment for regular Sunday services in the Badbury Group of churches each have their own unique character and idiosyncrasies. This makes playing them such a pleasure (and challenge!) where even hymns that are familiar to all of us can sound quite different depending on which church you are in.

The pipe organs at Eaton Hastings and Coleshill could not be more dissimilar, the former is limited in its range but has a chamber music quality and came into its own supporting the Shrivenham choir earlier this year. One of the biggest challenges with the Eaton Hastings organ is fitting pieces of music, and even some hymns, onto the short keyboard where I often run out of keys and have to quickly improvise the bass notes. It contrasts well with the larger, but still only single manual (keyboard), organ at Coleshill.



I've known this instrument since I first started playing there 27 years ago and feel at home playing hymns and other music, almost as second nature now. The electronic organs at Buscot and Great Coxwell also provide variety, the Buscot instrument being larger with a wide range of stops and sounds possible. Both organs have two manuals giving opportunities to play a broader repertoire and to provide more varied accompaniment to hymns.

Having taken on playing the Great Coxwell instrument more recently it's fair to say that I am still getting used to it.

The interesting variety of instruments, supplemented with others I play at Shellingford, Uffington, Southrop and Woolstone, makes playing Handel, Bach or Corelli each Sunday such an enjoyable experience. *Oliver Fox*



Interior of Coleshill Church

Coleshill Reordering

Plans for All Saints Church are under consideration with alternatives to include the provision of a lavatory, a small kitchen facility and the creation of a space for meetings, events, activities or just a quiet space, for example, by removing the pews to the rear of the church or the area of the box pews which are seldom used and also using the existing vestry for storage (and the loo). We will need the approval of the Diocese and have already had a meeting with the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC). Progress is slow but we are confident we will achieve our aims in the near future.

Saints are people who let the Son shine through

Badbury Parish Calendar of Services: January – May 2026

Morning Prayer (MP) Holy Communion (HC) Book of Common Prayer (BCP)

Date	Service	Church	Time
4th January: Epiphany	MP & HC, BCP	Eaton Hastings	10.30 AM
11th: Plough Sunday	HC	Great Coxwell Family Service Coleshill	10.30 AM 2.30 PM
18th: Epiphany 2	HC	Buscot	10.30 AM
25th Conversion of St Paul	HC	Coleshill	10.30 AM
1st February: Candlemans	MP & HC, BCP	Eaton Hastings	10.30 AM
8th: 2nd before Lent	HC	Great Coxwell	10.30 AM
15th: Sunday before Lent	HC	Buscot	10.30 AM
22nd: Lent 1	HC	Coleshill	10.30 AM
1st March: Lent 2	MP & HC, BCP	Eaton Hastings	10.30 AM
8th: Lent 3	HC	Great Coxwell	10.30 AM
15th: Mothering Sunday	HC	Buscot	10.30 AM
22nd: Lent 5	HC	Coleshill	10.30 AM
29th: Palm Sunday	Joint HC	Coleshill	10.30 AM
3rd April: Good Friday	HC, BCP Family Easter Garden	Eaton Hastings Coleshill	10.30 AM 15.00 PM
5th: Easter	HC	Great Coxwell	10.30 AM
12th: Easter 2	HC	Great Coxwell	10.30 AM
19th: Easter 3	HC	Buscot	10.30 AM
26th: Easter 4	HC	Coleshill	10.30 AM
3rd May: Easter 5	HC, BCP	Eaton Hastings	10.30 AM
10th: Easter 6	HC	Coleshill	10.30 AM
17th: Sunday After Ascension	HC	Buscot	10.30 AM
24th Pentecost	HC	Great Coxwell	10.30 AM
31st: Trinity Sunday	Joint Benefice Holy Communion	Buscot	10.30 AM