

Aymestrey Matters



Autumn 2025

EDITORS' PAGE

This is always a difficult edition of the magazine, sandwiched between the fete issue in Summer and the festive Winter copy, with us always on the look out for new ideas, contributions etc.. The interesting article from Mike Wheeler is most welcome and prompted us to start a new feature 'Wildlife in the Marches' and hope to continue this in future editions; looking at the wider area in which we live.

This is your magazine and we feel it would be good to get other perspectives, so if anyone wishes to submit an article about this lovely region or any other interesting contribution perhaps about gardening, travel, hobbies etc., we would as usual be very grateful.

Thank you to all contributors and distributors, regular and occasional, not forgetting Imogen Davis for her lovely front covers.

Dee & Martyn

Imogen has done something a bit different this edition, adding a bit of spice to the illustration....

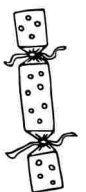
*"Can you identify the autumn leaves?" -subtle colour differences apply-
Answers on page 19*

*Please forward all articles, photos, notices and letters
to editor@aymestrey.org*

AYMESTREY PARISH CHRISTMAS PARTY



CALLING ALL PARISH RESIDENTS AND HALL USERS
WE'RE HAVING A PARTY



Saturday 6th December

**Get into a festive Christmas spirit. With music, a Karaoke, and
a light Buffet, but bring your own drinks.**

A free community event.

8pm start

**Please let a committee member know if you are coming
or text/call 07434 621260**



Parish Notice Board



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday 14th October 10.30am- Macmillan Coffee Morning

Saturday 1st November 2pm - Church Autumn Fayre

Saturday 8th November 6pm - Bonfire & Fireworks

Saturday 6th December - Aymestrey Parish Party

FUN QUIZ

2nd Friday in the Month
In the Parish Hall
8.00pm

New season has started

Teams of up to 4
or come along and join in anyway

Cash Prize
BYO or refreshments Available

"Tea/Coffee in the Hall"
Come and join us for the **weekly**
social event.

*Meet new people, have a chat,
all residents welcome.
Every Tuesday in the Parish Hall
10.30am to 12.00ish*

Macmillan Coffee Morning Tuesday 14th October

Parish Council Vacancies

Please check website
www.aymestrey.org
for update
or
contact the clerk



WHIST DRIVES

The next whist drive is
on
9th October
but these are a monthly
event especially
through Autumn and
Winter

Please contact
07748604215
if interested

Parish Council Meetings

*held in the Parish Hall
7.00pm*

*4th Wednesday in the month
(except Dec)*

ALL Parishioners are welcome to attend

**Carpet Bowls
Monday Evenings
@ Parish Hall
7pm
All Welcome**

Film Night

*3rd Friday in the month
restarts October in the hall
Supper @ 7.00pm Film @ 7.30pm*

Church Notice Board

CHURCH AUTUMN FAYRE

Saturday 1st November
@ 2pm

Aymestrey Parish Hall,

Cakes & Produce, Tea & Coffee,
Raffle, Bric-a-brac, Books/ DVDs etc.

Contributions gratefully received
in the hall on
Friday 31st October 5-6.30pm
Or on Saturday 1st from 11am

For further information
Tel: Alexia on 01568 770189

In aid of Aymestrey & Leinthall
Earls Churches

Remembrance Sunday

at

St John the Baptist & St Alkmund

Aymestrey

9th November

Please gather at church at the
earlier time of 10.50am to allow for
joining the Nation for two minutes
silence at 11am.



CHRISTINGLE SERVICE

St Andrew's Church,
Leinthall Earls

@3.30PM

Sunday 14th December

DECORATE THE CHURCH FOR CHRISTMAS

St John the Baptist & St Alkmund
Aymestrey

Saturday 20th December

Meet at 10am

All contributions of holly and greenery
much appreciated!



CAROL SERVICE

St John the Baptist
& St Alkmund

Aymestrey

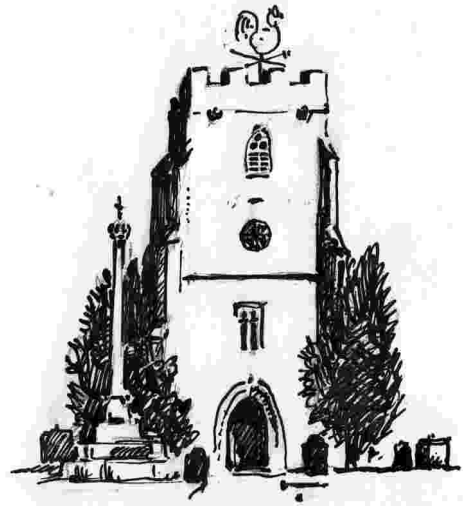
@6pm

Saturday 20th December

Followed by the usual mulled wine & mince pies

Aymestrey and Leinthall Earls Churches

Rev. Rosie, Curate



Dear Friends,

I was recently listening to an episode of Beyond Belief on Radio 4 while driving home, and learned that a survey by the religious think tank Theos found that Christians were more hostile towards immigrants than the UK population as a whole. However, once the data was examined more closely, it showed that those who attended church regularly were more welcoming to immigrants and asylum seekers; it was those who considered themselves to be 'culturally Christian' that were more hostile, on this matter, than the general population, and more than atheists.

There's been a lot in the news recently about the problem of immigration, and about various politicians' theories on how this might be solved. Now I'm sure that, among those reading this, there are a range of views on this matter, probably on a spectrum from wholly positive to wholly negative towards the idea of welcoming those who, for a range of reasons, want to come from other countries to live in the UK. I am well aware that this is a complex and thorny issue. But it is interesting to consider what the 'Christian' perspective on this might be.

The Old Testament contains repeated reminders from God to welcome and care for strangers and foreigners: "You shall love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Deuteronomy 10:19). The Israelites themselves knew the pain of exile and displacement, and God commanded them never to forget it. The message in these commands is uncompromising: a community shaped by God's love must always extend that same love to those on the margins.

Then in the New Testament, history once again repeats itself. Jesus' family has to flee a violent and insecure dictator just after he is born, once more living as strangers in Egypt, as his ancestors had done all those centuries earlier. God takes on human form only to identify with – to live as – the most vulnerable and powerless in society.

I am aware that Aymestrey offered a warm welcome to those fleeing the war in Ukraine a few years ago. As part of a series of social justice talks at Aymestrey church last year, we heard from both Ukrainian and Iranian refugees about their experiences of coming as strangers to Herefordshire, sometimes feeling welcome, sometimes not. My Christian faith is one of the motivators that drives me to want to find ways of welcoming those fleeing war, persecution, poverty or natural disaster, of sharing the resources we're lucky enough to have, of recognising the humanity I share with people who often only differ from me in their language and their luck.

What is it in your life that shapes your response to this issue?

As we approach Christmas and consider again, either up close or from afar, the story of that baby born into a family soon to become refugees, that baby that changed the world, I would encourage you to join us at church and take a deeper look at how that baby might be challenging you to change, deepen or develop your perspective on this or another of life's thorny issues.

Every blessing,

Rosie

Mortimer Ward

Carole Gandy



So Autumn has arrived, somewhat earlier than usual but I am sure the farmers are grateful for the rain. This year has been such a difficult time for them.

The Adult Social Care inspection by the Care Quality Commission took place at the beginning of September and I believe it went well. As a Directorate we have to wait until November to find out what our rating will be.

Adult Social Care is the biggest spending area of the Council with a budget of approximately £89 million and therefore taking a large amount of your Council Tax and yet rarely do residents or parish councils talk about it. It is one of those services unlike, roads and drainage, which unless you need it you do not think about it.

We have recently purchased the John Haider Building in the centre of Hereford and will internally convert the building into temporary accommodation with 28 one bed flats. This will reduce significantly the number of single people in either hotel or B&B accommodation, and will in time save us a considerable amount of money.

We should know by the middle of November what our government multi year settlement is likely to be, but we believe we will lose a significant amount of government funding and so we are already planning for how we will bridge the gap. Herefordshire is wrongly seen as an affluent County with large numbers of properties being in the high Council Tax band, but in truth it demonstrates that the Government knows nothing about our County. The low wages; old properties that are not well insulated; over 2000 residents on our housing waiting list and a lack of public transport in our rural areas. We have done all we can as a council to explain that deprivation is not just an urban problem but can be found in many rural counties as well.

Locally I continue, when I can, to attend the Aymestrey coffee morning on a Tuesday, if you have not been then do give it a try; Barry and I attend the monthly quiz on the second Tuesday evening of each month in the Parish Hall, This is a really fun event and again if you have not been before then you would be really welcomed.

There has been some concern about the new bus service, and the fact that the contract was given to Yeomans. When the contract with Lugg Transport was terminated it was very close to the procurement process of a new bus contract for the County, therefore any operator that took over accepted that it was for a short period only. When the procurement took place Yeomans were appointed. I am aware that some bus users are unhappy about this and would urge them to contact me if they come across any problems with the Yeomans service.

As ever if you wish to contact me please do not hesitate to do so either by email carole.gandy@herefordshire.gov.uk or telephone 07792882133/ 01568 780583 or I am happy to pop round to see you.

Aymestrey Carpet Bowls



Autumn Report

Monday Night is Bowls Night!

Earlier in the summer we concluded both our Singles and the Drawn Pairs competitions. Mavis became our new Singles champion beating Kiwi in the final, so very well-done Mavis. The Drawn Pairs final was contested between Pat & Kiwi and Steph & myself, with Steph's team winning, so very, very well done to us!

In August, in between heatwaves, we held our annual prize night and BBQ. We'd had so many hot days we could hardly believe that it rained that evening! Although we all stayed nice and dry inside playing target bowls and chatting, our poor chef (Kiwi) was out in the rain cooking our food – thanks Kiwi. The awards presented on the evening were:

- Pairs Champions: Val & Kris
- Singles Champion: Mavis
- Drawn Pairs Champions: Steph & Peter
- Most Improved Player: Irene



Over the Summer Bank Holiday weekend, we had a couple of young visitors (8 & 9 year olds) who came to play and show that this game can be played by all ages, so as I say during each of these reports, if you haven't tried, then why not come along on a Monday night (7pm), as we always welcome new players.

As autumn draws on, we are looking forward to the impending North Herefordshire League, where we will be looking to defend our League Champions status.

Peter

Thoughts from a Retired Gardener

Jim Logan

Quercus Robur

A common oak. It's not exceptional, one of many thousands in this region but very familiar to me having been a constant in my life for the last twenty years. It grows in the lane near to our cottage, it's not ancient by the standards of oak trees, maybe two hundred years old or thereabouts, with a full open crown. A crevice at the base indicates that there may be some internal decay but otherwise it's healthy and vigorous. Oak trees often become hollow but it doesn't seem to affect their longevity, indeed it may make it less likely to be selected for felling for timber. I fitted a tiny 'fairy door' at the crevice for the amusement of our grandchildren when they were younger. I pass under this tree everyday, it's on home ground for me.

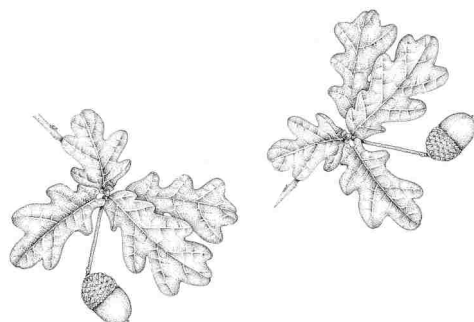
Today in early September I'm gazing at the tree from my garden as I frequently do, There is a stiff southerly breeze. The branches are cavorting and dancing to the tune of the distant thunder storm, that is generating the wind, large branches swaying (force 5-6 on the Beaufort Scale). I know the tree in all conditions, from 0 (still air on the scale) to force 7 or 8 when it's unwise to linger underneath the thrashing canopy. I watch Wood Pigeons flirting in its heights on blousy summer days, listen to Chiff Chaff's in the pale new leaves of spring. Soon the Fieldfare flocks will arrive to chack amongst the fluttering falling autumn leaves. Winter finch flocks swirl in and out of the topmost twigs chattering.



The moon, in its many guises, sometimes arcs behind the tree as does the winter sun, and I trudge beneath it with Meg on our afternoon walks. I've played silly games around the trunk with the grand-kids. It's the amphitheatre for our fireworks at New year. As I watch this dancing tree today it's pleasing and humbling to reflect that it was here looking much the same when I was a newborn in Liverpool swaddled against the cold of late winter 1947. It was leafless, and swaddled in snow drifts no doubt.

In those times did others gaze in wonderment into its dancing branches; did they have time, I hope that they did.

Jim



Mortimer Medical Practice



*A Letter from Dr D Corbett, Senior GP Partner;
Dr R Kemp, GP Partner and Dr M Cadman-Davies, GP Partner*

Introducing Total Triage at Mortimer Medical Practice

We are writing to inform you about an important change in the way we manage appointments and access to care at our practice. From 01 October 2025 and in accordance with the GPs contract for 2025-26 the Practice will be implementing a system called Total Triage.

What is Total Triage?

Total Triage means that all requests for appointments, advice, or support will first be assessed by a GP from the surgery before an appointment is offered. This helps us ensure that every patient receives the right care, at the right time, with the right member of our team.

Why are we making this change?

The aim of Total Triage is to improve access, reduce waiting times, and make sure we use all available resources in the best possible way. It allows us to prioritise patients based on clinical need and offer appropriate solutions such as a face to face appointment, with an appropriate clinician, advice over the phone, help from a pharmacist, or referral to another service.

How will it work?

1. You contact us using the online form that will be accessible via our website or NHS app, if you are unable to complete the form online or in person you can still call the Surgery, reception will be on hand to complete the form with you.
2. We ask tailored questions, this helps us to understand your concern.
3. A GP from the Surgery reviews your request that day.
4. You receive the appropriate care, the outcomes may be:
 - o A face-to-face or telephone appointment
 - o Advice or a prescription without needing an appointment
 - o Signposting to another service that can help

How you can help

1. Be ready to give clear information when you contact us. This helps us assess your needs quickly and accurately.
2. Use our online consultation system if you can, it's quick and available during our working hours and you will not have to queue on the phone.
3. Be open to the GPs recommendations, they may save you time and help you get care sooner.

Our promise to you

The Practice is committed to offering safe, timely, and effective care for every patient. Total Triage is designed to ensure we respond to your needs in the most appropriate, timely and efficient way possible.

We are not closing the surgery receptions and we will offer help to those who need it. We understand that not everyone has digital access so you can still call reception or come into the surgery and the receptionist will complete your request supporting you accessing the care you need.

Patients may still request consultations with a specific GP or clinician. While we strive to accommodate such requests, availability and the urgency of clinical need may sometimes limit our ability to do so. We remain committed to providing the best possible care and will always endeavour to meet individual preferences whenever feasible.

If you have any questions or concerns about this new system, please don't hesitate to get in touch. We appreciate your understanding and support as we work to improve our services.

Mrs Fiona Harper, Practice Manager, Mortimer Medical Practice

Notes From The Marsh

mid-June – mid September 2025

A sting in the tail!

Well, I was flabbergasted – all I did was shear a bit of the track past the old gate entrance. Not guilty, your honour – but that didn't stop a tiny bumblebee from launching at me like a miniature Exocet and proceeding to sting me twice through a trouser-leg - my first ever bumble stings. Ouch! (I did feel like saying, 'Do you really want to escalate this? After all, I'm the superpower in this neck of the woods...')

This was at 4.30 pm on 24th June, and it's still a complete puzzle. No flowers there, no further sign of any nest, nor of any bumble large or small in the vicinity. It happened so suddenly that I didn't see any details of the attacker – and as it was so small, probably a worker, and surely a female, as most males have no sting. Nor had I done anything dastardly to any other local bee; wasps can release alarm pheromones to mark you as an enemy if they feel threatened, and a dying wasp can still do so – can bumblebees do this too?



On to less painful encounters! Early July gifted me a slightly sombre black moth with creamy markings' a Waved Black – Nb or Nationally Scarce B according to my books. Moths are labelled 'local' if they are found more regularly in more limited areas of the UK, though they can be quite common in these areas. If they are rarer, then they may be Nb, found in 31 to 100, 10-kilometre squares mapped across the UK; rarer still, Na or Nationally Scarce A moths are only found in 16 to 30 10,kilometre squares. Na and Nb are based on moth records since 1980. (Information from *Manley, British & Irish Moths 3rd ed, pub Bloomsbury*).

Yippee!

Many common moths are gorgeous, and I had a lovely Purple Thorn in the trap as well, and an Old Lady (local) in August (no grannies were trapped, honest) - but it is nice to have something rather more unusual occasionally!



Hot July saw a welcome increase in various insects. Humid and bright, but mainly clouded; 18th July was splendid for a garden safari. Bumblebees are not that easy to identify, as queens, workers and drones of a species can look different - still, highlights included a big Red-tailed (Hill) Cuckoo queen bumble; then something strange landing in the grass – big and clumsy, mostly black but with a striking ginger collar – a Vestal Cuckoo queen bumble which graciously allowed me to take a picture. (It is true to say that finding 3 smug Hornets in my moth-trap was not so welcome; they had probably snacked on half my moths.)

Though Scabious flowers were starting to go over, more bumbles and butterflies flitted to them, including Meadow Browns and Gatekeepers. On the paddock buddleias, there were 7 or 8 Commas, ditto Peacocks, and several Red Admirables (their original title); also spotted, a Stripe-winged Grasshopper and a 7-spot (red with black spots) and 22-spot (yellow with black spots) Ladybird.



Strangely, don't think I've seen a single Harlequin ladybird this summer.

Also strange was the sudden feeling that I'd wandered into Disneyland; there near the paddock entrance stood Bambi, or was I delusional? Nope, its distinctive white rump and lack of antlers told me it was a Roe doe; the original tale did feature a Roe deer – but Disney used an American White-tailed deer for the film. In 40 yrs, not one had been sighted in the garden; they were common in medieval times, declined later, but were re-introduced, into East Anglia at least, in Victorian times.

Like a lot of deer, Roes can be a nuisance as they'll graze grain and dig up root-crops – they are also fond of roses! If you want to stop them, you need a 2ft fence at the very minimum; they may not be woolly but they're definitely jumpers. Next, an interesting fact – they are the only hoofed mammal to have *embryonic diapause*; couldn't resist this weighty phrase: mating time is in July and August – but birth is delayed until the following May or June. They are a good source of protein for carnivores; various suppliers from Devon to Northumberland sell their venison.

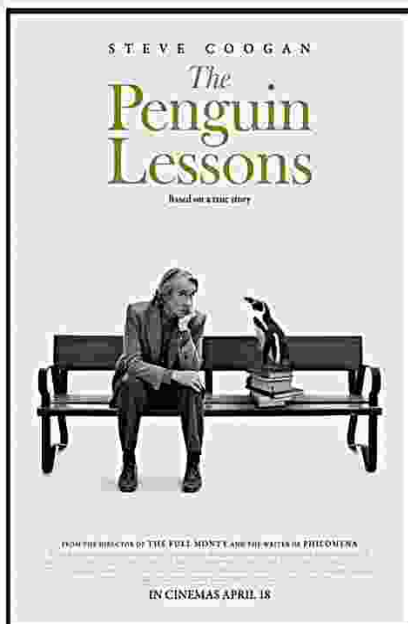
And on the subject of carnivores: on 13th July, a Fox barked a quick triple bark; as far as I know, not an omen of disaster, more a cry for company - said to be a mating call, but Foxy was ahead of himself, as the mating season usually starts round Christmas.



Haven't you been watching the birdies, you may ask? Back to the Tawny Owl squeaking on the wires in late June; having decided it was a failed hooter, I'm now forced to retract this careless judgement; in mid-July it was squeaking again. turns out it's a juvenile begging call; either it's got an enormous appetite, or its parents are mean on the pocket money. No Yatton sightings of my favourite Hobbies, though a falcon, too big for a Merlin and too small for a Peregrine, beat across the field behind Kingsland bowls club recently. Another puzzle – why would a Wren be on the outside edge of the cat-flap? This was the 3rd September, so unlikely to be a search for nest material – and rather risky! Answers on a postcard, please – or you could always try pigeon-post!

Susanna Checketts

Film and Food at Aymestrey Parish Hall



Friday – 17th - October

Food £6 at 7 pm / Film £6 at 7:30 pm

Please let us know if you are coming for food at
www.aymestrey.org/food-film or phone 01568 770816

Spaghetti Bolagnase, Vegetarian option

Ice cream also available, £1

Please bring your own drinks. Cash only please

AYMESTREY PARISH HALL

HR6 9SU

WHIST DRIVE

Thursday 9th October 2pm

Thursday 13th November 2pm

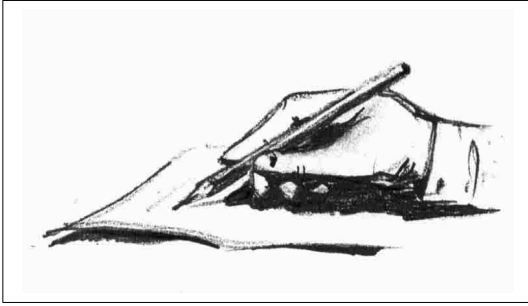
Thursday 11th December 2pm

Come along and play £3pp

Cash Prize - All Welcome

Light Refreshments available





Parish Council

Parish Council doings and extracts from the Clerk's postbag.

September 2025

Since my last update in June, three members have resigned from the Parish Council. Firstly, Ian Goddard, who resigned in July. Co-opted in January 2017, Ian was elected Chairman just six months later in July 2017 and served in that role with commitment until May 2024. During this time, he contributed to the Traffic Calming Working Group, Finance, The Commons Association, and much more. He is thanked for his leadership and guidance.

Secondly, Nicola Luscott, who also resigned in July. Elected in 2023, Nicola quickly became a valued member of the council, and her contributions are much appreciated. Thirdly, Mike Snoswell, who resigned in September. First co-opted in June 2020, Mike served as a valued member of the Finance Working Group and also spoke on behalf of Mortimers Cross during deliberations.

Ian, Nicola, and Mike are sincerely thanked for their dedicated service to the Parish Council and to the wider community.

Three new councillors are needed to represent the views and interests of residents and to help shape decisions that affect the Parish. Could this be you? Contact the clerk (see below) for more information or complete an application form available on the website www.aymestrey.org.

An extraordinary meeting was held in June, to consider planning application *P250980/M - Minerals Leinthall Quarry, Leinthall Earls, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 9TR. Proposed Western extension of existing quarry and consolidation of planning permissions*. The Parish Council's response can be seen on Herefordshire Council's website.

Wildflower seeds have been sown in Yatton, thanks to help from Cllr Luscott. Their growth is to be monitored, and a sign will advise that it is a wildflower verge – not to be mown early in the year.

The Parish Council is disappointed that all other roadside verges were mown in June, contrary to the Parish Council's request that they be cut once only, at the end of the season. Balfour Beatty has been asked why this happened and a request made that a second cut takes place later this year to prevent problems in 2026.



The new Mortimer Trail sign was installed!
This was funded by The Riverside,
Herefordshire Council and the Parish Council.

The Parish Council will be discussing the budget for 2026/27 at the October meeting, to be finalised in November when the precept will also be set. Do come along and learn more.

Scheduled meetings take place at 7 pm at the Parish Hall on the fourth Wednesday of each month (except August and December). Upcoming meeting dates are, 22 October 2025, 26 November 2025, 28 January 2026, 25 February 2026, 25 March 2026, 22 April 2026 and 27 May 2026.

Your input is valued, and you are welcome to attend meetings at the Parish Hall.

Mrs. Maggie Brown, Clerk
Email: clerk@aymestrey.org

Aymestrey Parish Commons Association

After a slow start to the year, the work on the Yatton Hill Common started in earnest in early July, with a days hire of a *Robocut* machine and operator. The *Robocut* is a powerful tracked remote control brush-cutter with a 4 foot cutting width, this being ideal for the steep slopes on Yatton Hill. The day concentrated on the north-west side of the common, re-opening paths that were becoming impassible due to the six foot high bracken and scrub. All the paths were double cut making them nice and wide; we hope to repeat the process next year and we encourage walkers to use these paths; which will help keep them available.

We owe a big thank you to the Parish Council for funding this work.



We had a good response from our advert in the last edition of Aymestrey Matters, asking for volunteers to join our work-party WhatsApp group. We have had an excellent response and the group is now up and running. Our first use of this was at the beginning of August when seven of us met up at Ballsgate Common to fight the bracken and re-open the path which forms a loop around the topside. Thank you to all who took part, and if you weren't available for this one, we'll get you next time!

If you would like to be involved in the APCA, please contact either myself on – martyn_booth@hotmail.com or Richard rjhammond500@btinternet

Martyn



What is your earliest childhood memory?

I remember looking through the bars of my crib as my mother showed me Dad's pay packet, money in a brown envelope. I must have been very young, so whether this is true or not is debatable, especially as my dad had been an ambulance driver since before I was born; so why my mother would be waving his pay packet in my face is anyone's guess. Perhaps my mother had promised she was going to buy me something with it. I don't know, but she was very happy and so was I.

Where in the world have you most enjoyed travelling

I haven't travelled extensively (so far!), but have certainly been to contrasting places from Thailand to Dublin. I don't enjoy the travelling part, the airports seem to be an exercise in cattle herding, but once I've arrived, I usually love it, wherever I am. I have recently returned from Marrakech. An amazing and very new experience.

What is your most memorable moment?

That's hard, there are so many. Getting married, my son being born, hot air ballooning, completely renovating a house with my husband ...using YouTube.

Who is your favourite artist?

Without a doubt it's Vermeer.... I can't forget about Rembrandt.... And I'm particularly fond of Belinda Eaton too.

What is your most treasured possession?

My husband and my son, everything else is just stuff.... But I do have a special place in my heart for lipstick.

Alison Archer moved to Malvern in Worcestershire in 1994 from the Midlands, dipping a toe into rural life. In 2004 she and her husband moved to Bosbury where, she wrote a book and they ran the Bosbury pub. They moved to Aymestrey in 2020 and renovated an almost derelict house during lockdown. Alison is Chair of Aymestrey parish Council.

What advice would you give a young person leaving home?

Go for it! It's an adventure, but make sure you know what your monthly outgoings are and always have clean underwear. For anything else there's always Mum and Dad or a special guardian to turn to, or just Google it!

What is your favourite Film?

That's easy.... If you have a favourite film, you haven't seen enough of them!

What are you passionate about?

Human Rights, Animal Rights, Politics and crisps

What is your greatest extravagance?

Probably my house, like most people. But I cannot resist a good cake either.... And don't get me started on buying clothes. I LOVE clothes!

What book are you reading at the moment?

I read 2 or 3 at the same time. On the go at the moment, I have The River Murders by James Patterson (a charity shop buy), Three Women by Lisa Taddeo and The Bee Sting by Paul Murray.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?

I'm sure most people would say happiness can be different things on different days. I love walking with my dogs in the woods, listening to the birds and the relative silence, I'm happy curling up on the sofa with a good book, I enjoy being with friends and family, laughing and chatting about nothing. There are many, many things that make me happy every day.

What is your favourite piece of music?

Going Underground by The Jam

What do you consider the most overrated virtue?

I can't really think of anything. There are many traits I dislike (not being judgemental or anything), but, virtues, I feel are generally a good thing.

What would be your ideal dinner menu

I *LOVE* food, so there is no ideal dinner menu. I will eat everything and anything, but particularly like spicy food.... But then again, I'm also happy with a roast dinner. Food to me is the ultimate pleasure.

How would you like to be remembered?

I saw an inscription on a bench once and I think I would like to be remembered in the same way. It said:
“..... was awful when she was hungry, but a pretty solid person to know when she wasn't.”

Do you have motto or proverb that you live by?

Not really, but if pressed I'd say... “Try to perform an act of kindness every day.”

MH



Arts and Crafts Round-up 2025

What a great day we had in the Arts & Crafts Competition tent! After a bit of a damp start the sun made an appearance and the entries for all our competition classes came flooding in. Our bakers, preserve makers and crafters excelled themselves, the Juniors got very creative with Lego and poetry and the floral classes ensured that the tent was a riot with colour and scent. In all, 148 entries were put forward by 46 contenders in the 25 classes. That's a whole lot of cooking, crafting and creativity!

So to the winners:- The Joyce Pugh cup for baking went to Ruth Hurcomb who led the way with her delicious cake and scones, although there was stiff competition from Ian Banks and Perry Edwards.

A new trophy this year has been generously donated by the family of Margaret Probert in her memory and the inaugural winner of the Margaret Probert Cup for a Victoria Sponge was won by Ruth Hurcomb. Ruth's cake was light and fluffy and so delicious that it was hard to get the judges to move on to the other classes!

We were lucky to have some very talented folk enter in the Handicraft section. Carol Bowen excelled with her knitting, crochet and art entries, as did Cheryl McEwan in the Embroidery class. Pauline Hammond presented a very impressive jacket to win the Handmade Item class and Martyn Booth came top in Photography.

In Floral Art, Mary Lowe won the trophy for best single rose in a vase, and Pauline Hammond scooped first place for both her arrangement of fresh flowers and miniature arrangement of dried flowers.

There were some fabulous entries from our junior participants although none of them seemed very keen on baking as the space for home made biscuits remained empty. However, that was more than made up for by Junior section entries gaining first and second places for the Best in Show Cup. The winner was Matilda Mundy for her magnificent cauliflower and spud poodle which brought a smile to the faces of everyone who saw it. And the runner up rosette went to Arthur Cowley for his wonderfully intricate Lego model.

All in all, the judges had their work cut out with such a superb array of entries. Huge thanks go to Angela Gardener, Hazel Bows, Doug Murrie and Isabel Goddard. They were a marvellous team and did a very professional job. It was a fantastic day and we look forward to welcoming your entries again next year.

RT

WILDLIFE IN THE MARCHES



Irruptions – Times of plenty and times of scarcity...

For the third year in a row, we are enjoying an irruption of a bird species. In the winter of 23/24 it was Waxwings, last winter it was Hawfinches, this year... it's the turn of Common Crossbills. So why do birds that are usually very scarce irrupt *en masse* to the extent where it becomes easy to find them? The reasons all boil down to the amount of food available.

Let's take Waxwings as a good example. They breed in the boreal forests of Scandinavia and Russia. In spring and summer their diet mainly consists of insects, but this switches late in the season to a diet of seeds and especially fruits. Because they live in a marginal environment they are at the behest of several things which may occur in some years but not others. First, the crop can be poor in any given year. Because the trees that they feed from generally **all** have a good crop or **all** have a bad crop, then those years in which the crop is poor sees the birds ranging further afield in search of food. Secondly, the population of these birds varies from year to year. In a good breeding season, there may be an excess of birds and again this will create pressure to find food and push birds further afield. Finally, there are differences in the weather from year to year. In a cold year food may be hard to find and conditions less favourable to survival (birds need to eat more in times of cold). The net result of these factors is that birds move in large numbers some years but in other years, hardly at all.

This year it's Common Crossbills. So, what is going on? It is very similar to the case of Waxwings above. In this case however, irruptions seem to occur after the failure of the Norway Spruce cone crop. The seeds of Norway Spruce in Scandinavia form the most important food source for the Common Crossbill. In fact, the extent by which they are dependent on Norway Spruce is indicated by their adaptation to opening the cones. In all Crossbill species the shape of the mandibles (the upper and lower part of the bill) is highly adapted to opening particular cones (in the related species, Parrot Crossbill, it is Scots Pine cones). From research carried out it appears that the best indication of when an irruption will take place comes from a poor Norway Spruce crop following a year when the cones were plentiful (Summers et al 2024). Thinking back to the example of Waxwings above, this is due to two of the three factors – a larger population (from the previous good year) and a failure of the crop.



So where is it best for you to see Common Crossbills locally? We are blessed around South Shropshire and North Herefordshire with plenty of conifer plantations. I have already seen a large flock (around 50 birds) in the Mortimer Forest in late July this year. They were feeding in the conifers alongside the Mortimer Trail in the forest to the south of Whitcliffe car park and just to the east of Mary Knoll Valley.

There are plenty of places around the area where they could turn up – Wigmore Rolls, Barnett Wood, High Vinnals, Bucknell Wood, Hopton Titterhill, Bury Ditches to name

a few. Anywhere that has a good cone crop in fact. Yesterday I had a small group flying overhead while standing in Brockley Meadow, Leintwardine and to be honest you may see them flying over pretty much anywhere. The best way to detect them is by their noisy 'glip, glip' calls as they fly (Listen to it on the RSPB website). Use the call to locate the birds and if you're lucky you'll see where they land. If so, look for a group of large finches with the flock having various colours – juveniles (brownish), females yellow/brown, males varying from yellow/green through orange to bright scarlet. The best thing of all though is to get onto a bird and watch it manipulate cones with its bizarre, crossed mandibles. A wonderful sight!

Ref – Summers RW, Swallow B, Fridman J, Hokkanen T, Newton I, Buckland ST. (2024) Irruptions of Crossbills Loxia spp. In Northern Europe – patterns and correlations with seed production by key and non-key conifers. Ibis. (166) pp. 1172-1183.

Mike Wheeler

Ed: Mike runs the Leintwardine Wildlife Group, they have regular talks and events throughout the year; their Facebook group gives details plus information of sightings in the area.

PARISH COUNCIL VACANCIES

There are two vacancies on the Parish Council which may now be filled by co-option.

Applications are invited.

If you have an active interest in the well-being of your community,
you may be just the person we need!

If you would like to be considered, or to know more about what being a councillor involves,
please do contact Maggie Brown, Parish Clerk on 07398 222 310 or email
clerk@aymestrey.org

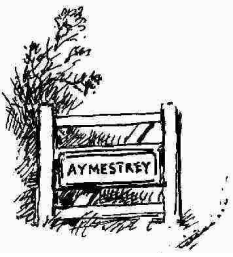
A third vacancy occurred in September. Applications for co-option will likely be invited in October.

Bonfire Wood Required

Fallen timber, old pallets, wood furniture (no glass please) etc.
Use the opportunity to get rid of your old wood and wooden items!

Place your items 'neatly' as last year or
contact Dan Hurcomb- hurcombdc@gmail.com

Traffic Calming in Aymestrey Parish



Hello neighbours – a couple of small asks from the Aymestrey Traffic Calming Group

As autumn settles in, our village paths are starting to get covered with fallen leaves, fruit, and overhanging branches. We'd like to ask for a little help to keep Aymestrey looking its best and safe for everyone.

If you can, please try to sweep up leaves and fruit from the footpath in front of your home. If you have any branches hanging over the pavement, a quick trim would make it easier for everyone to pass by safely. It's a small effort that really makes a big difference!

Keeping the village tidy is more than just making it look nice—it's part of a traffic calming initiative. Villages that are cared for tend to encourage drivers to slow down, helping to keep everyone safe. By looking after our own little patch, we're all contributing to a safer, more welcoming community.

We're also looking for volunteers to help with the Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs). It only takes a few minutes each month, but it's a two-person job. If you could spare a little time to help us monitor traffic speeds, it would be a big help to our traffic calming efforts.

We know that not everyone can manage clearing leaves, fruit, or branches themselves, and that's absolutely fine. If you're unable to do so, please get in touch—we're happy to help.

Thank you for pitching in and helping Aymestrey stay a lovely, safe place to live. Every little bit counts, and together we can make a real difference this autumn.

Rob Crampton – Aymestrey Traffic Calming Group Co-ordinator (07780 663632)





Autumn has arrived, with the long hot lazy days of Summer punctuated by the Fete and Produce Show (these are definitely not lazy days), becoming a distant memory.

We had better weather for the fete this year and it proved a much busier and more successful event than the last few years. All of the old favourite stalls were there, plus a new 'Mini-digger Skill Test' run by Josh Hurcomb, where you could try your hand at various tasks moving fence posts etc.

The Produce Show held in August, had plenty of high quality entries although there were fewer participants this year, for results see a separate write-up elsewhere in this magazine.

Whist Drives have restarted in September, although attendance was down (hopefully just due to holidays), it was still enjoyed by the few participants. It's an enjoyable afternoon which no one takes too seriously, and new players would be very welcome. In contrast the quiz nights started with a bang, we had eight teams answering questions over eight rounds including, Art & Literature, Female Comedians and Nursery Rhymes. September's quiz was won by the incorrectly named 'Runners-up', well done to them.

Film & Food starts in October with 'The Penguin Lessons' starring Steve Coogan. The food will be Spaghetti Bolognese, with a vegetarian option available. Coffee mornings continue every Tuesday, with a Macmillan special on the 14th October – please support this worthwhile cause if you can.

Dates for all the above and other forthcoming events can be found on the 'Dates for Diaries' page, however I would like to draw special attention to an event on Saturday 6th December at the Parish Hall. We are hosting an 'Aymestrey Parish Christmas Party', we hope to have music and a Karaoke, also we are planning a light Buffet. This is a free event but please note there will *not* be a bar, so bring your own drinks. This should be a great opportunity to meet other locals and get into a festive Christmas spirit.

MB

Don't Forget the **Christmas Quiz on Friday 12th December**. Very much a fun quiz with your Best Festive Jumpers, Hats etc. Prize for best outfit, as well as quiz winners.

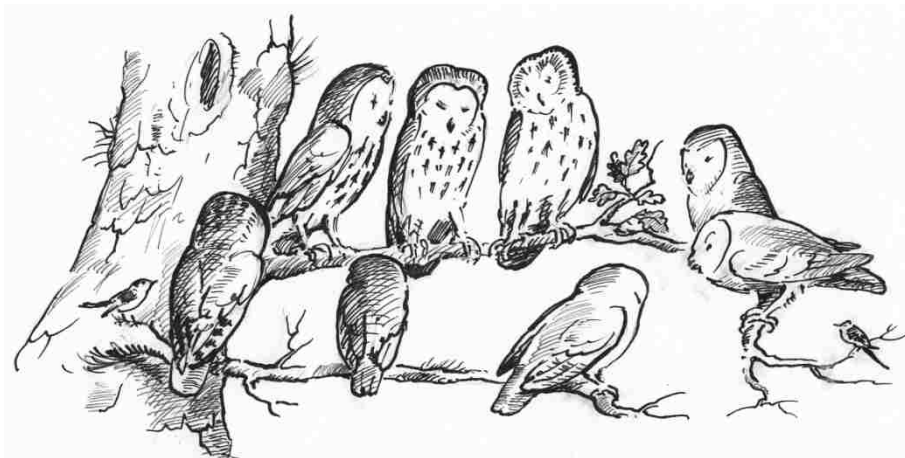


Can you identify the autumn leaves? Answers - (from left to right, 4 rows)

Yew, Hazel, Sweet Chestnut, Birch, Beech (directly below Birch), Ash, Rowan, London Plane, White poplar, Turkey Oak, Copper Beech, Oak, Hawthorn, Aspen, Elder, Sycamore, Horse Chestnut, Alder.

PARISH PEOPLE

Here are some details for people in the parish you might need to contact



PARISH COUNCIL

Chair

Alison Archer
hello@alisonarcher.co.uk

Clerk

Maggie Brown
clerk@aymestrey.org
Tel: 07398 222 310

Members

Helen Hamilton 01568 709155
John Probert 01568 708484 - Domenica Dunne 07966103698
Eleanor Waldron (contact via clerk)

Special Responsibilities

Lengthsman: Yatton Farm Services Footpaths: Dave Dunn 01568 770224
Tree Warden: Richard Hammond rjhammond500@btinternet.com
MMP Patient Rep: Pauline Hammond pauline.hammond500@btinternet.com 01568 708044.

Ward Councillor

Carole Gandy 01568 780583 carole.gandy@herefordshire.gov.uk

PARISH HALL

Chair: Martyn Booth 07748604215
Bookings Secretary: Pauline Hammond 01568 708044 or 07796590266

CHURCH

Reverend Rosie Roberts revd.rosie@mortimerscrosschurches.co.uk 07720 333383
Churchwardens: Meg Thorpe 07943046450. Stuart Hutchings 01547 540511, 07961117050

AYMESTREY MATTERS

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Aymestrey Website: www.aymestrey.org Ian Banks 01568 770816 webadmin@aymestrey.org



PARISH NATTERS & POST BOX



Dear Ed.

Your poem in the Spring edition which is attributed to both Spike Milligan and Jez Alborough led me to some other thoughts on smiles.....

'A smile is happiness you'll find right under your nose'

'Everyone smiles in the same language'

'Smile it increases your face value'

SD

∞ ∞

A warm welcome to the Parish

Phillipa & Warren @ Bacon Lane
and also to Yatton ~

Wayne & Claire @ Lower Yatton Barn
Adrian & Jacky @ Dairy House

With very best wishes to all in your new homes.

MADE IN HR6

RETURNS!
Yarpole's popular festive

Art and Craft Fair

Saturday and Sunday 22nd & 23rd November
10:30 – 16:00

at St Leonard's, Green Lane, Yarpole, HR6 0BB
AND

NEW - at The Bell pub, HR6 0BD

Come and browse the wide range of hand-made items –
Just in time for Christmas!

Free
admission

Gallery Café and Yarpole Community shop
open both days

Alexia's fundraiser for "Alzheimer's & Dementia Support Services". ADSS.

As some of you will already know Alexia Phillips from Yatton was doing a parachute jump in September to raise money for this worthy cause and donations were sought through *Just Giving*.

Unfortunately the event had to be cancelled due to adverse weather on the day, but has been rescheduled for 11th October.

The donation page is still open and will be for several months; if you'd like to support

[https://www.justgiving.com/page/alexia-phillips-1?](https://www.justgiving.com/page/alexia-phillips-1?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=WA)

[utm_medium=FR&utm_source=WA](https://www.justgiving.com/page/alexia-phillips-1?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=WA)

(or simply go to Just Giving website and search for Alexia Phillips in the friend search. Ed)

+ + + + + + + + + + + + + + +

Another welcome to a new venture in Aymestrey '**Aymestrey Patisserie**'.

Selling a wide range of pastries, both savoury, milk eggs and sweet along with cakes and sweet treats (these have been sampled at the weekly coffee morning). We wish the bakers, Simon and

Caroline working alongside Tim and Melissa every success with their undertaking.

Watch this space for news on the 2026 opening of the 'Farm Shop' and the larger bakery selling a wider range of produce.

*Letters, notices and events are most welcome, please send to
editor@aymestrey.org*

DATES FOR DIARIES

2025

| When | What | Where |
|---|------------------------|-------|
| Mondays 7.00pm | Carpet Bowls | PH |
| Tuesdays 10.30am to 12.00 am | Tea/Coffee in the Hall | PH |
| Thursdays 8.00pm | Sequence Dancing | PH |
| Thursdays 9.30am to 10.30am
and 10.45am to 11.45am | Pilates | PH |

October

| | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Thursday 9 th 2.00pm | Whist Drive | PH |
| Friday 10 th 8.00pm | Fun Quiz Night | PH |
| Sunday 12 th 11am | Holy Communion BCP | Aymestrey |
| Tuesday 14 th 10.30 am | Macmillan Coffee Morning | PH |
| Friday 17 th 7.00pm(Food) for 7.30pm | Film Night | PH |
| Sunday 19 th 3.30pm. | Holy Communion CW. (If open). | Leinthall Earls |
| Wednesday 22 nd 7.00pm | Parish Council Meeting | PH |
| Sunday 26 th 9.30am | Forest Church | Aymestrey |

November

| | | |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Saturday 1 st 2pm. | Autumn Fayre. | PH |
| Sunday 2 nd 11am. | Holy Communion BCP. | Aymestrey |
| Saturday 8 th Gates open 5pm | Bonfire 6pm | Fete Field, Aymestrey |
| Sunday 9 th 10.50am. | Remembrance Service. | Aymestrey |
| Thursday 13 th 2.00pm | Whist Drive | PH |
| Friday 14 th 8.00pm | Fun Quiz Night | PH |
| Sunday 16 th 3.30pm | Evensong CW. | Leinthall Earls |
| Friday 21 st 7.00pm(Food) for 7.30pm | Film Night | PH |
| Sunday 23 rd 9.30am | Forest Church | Aymestrey |
| Wednesday 26 th 7.00pm | Parish Council Meeting | PH |
| Sunday 30 th 6.30pm. | Advent Sunday. | Kingsland |

December

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Sunday 7 th 11.00 am | Holy Communion BCP | Aymestrey |
| Saturday 6 th 7.00pm (Doors Open) | Aymestrey Parish Party | PH |
| Thursday 11 th 2.00pm | Whist Drive | PH |
| Friday 12 th 8.00pm | Christmas Quiz Night | PH |
| Sunday 14 th 3.30pm | Christingle | Leinthall Earls |
| Friday 19 th 7.00pm(Food) for 7.30pm | Film Night | PH |
| Saturday 20 th 10.00am | Decorate church for Christmas. | Aymestrey |
| Saturday 20 th 6.00pm . | Carol Service | Aymestrey |
| Sunday 21 st 6.30pm | Benefice service with Bishop Richard. | Kingsland |
| Christmas Day. 9.30 am.
11am. | Holy Communion.
Holy Communion. | Leinthall Earls
Aymestrey |
| Sunday 28 th 10.30am | Benefice Service | TBA |



Produce & Flower Show Report 2025

Top quality vegetables, flowers and fruits were the order of the day at the Aymestrey Produce and Flower Show back in August. The hot weather this summer was great for sunbathing but dry conditions meant that very careful management was necessary to ensure success in the garden. Yet despite a few mumblings about early flowering and constant need for watering, Aymestrey's gardeners came up trumps once again.

The conditions were particularly challenging for tomatoes and salad crops at that time, although Jackie Sayer and Simon Daws managed excellent winning entries, and Barry Gandy's beetroot were superb.

The flower classes once again set the hall alive with their colour and fragrance. Debbie Brown's sweet peas, Ruth Hurcomb's lilies and the wonderful selection of roses were all beautifully scented. Also, thanks in part to the hot conditions, we saw some impressive sunflowers.

Three trophies were awarded. The Rose Cup went to Ruth Hurcomb who also won the Steve Price Cup for the highest overall points awarded over all classes. Dee Booth and Steph Dunn also had some excellent entries and were strongly in the running. The Hurcomb garden must have been very beautiful if Ruth's entries in the rose, scented flower and dahlia classes are anything to go by.

The final trophy is for Best in Show which is chosen by the judges from among all the class winners. This year that went to Steph Dunn for her magnificent entry in the 'Ayestrey Matters' Mystery Seeds class. This year's "mystery" was a half hardy annual Phlox called Tapestry and I have it on good authority that the prize winning entry is still blooming well in September.

Our judges for this year's Show were Catherine Swain and Sam Hurcomb. They did a wonderful job; as competition was fierce throughout. Many thanks to them both.

So here's wishing you a happy autumn season in the garden and looking forward to another year of beautiful flowers and produce in 2026!

RT



In aid of Aymestrey and Leinthall Earls churches



*Cakes & Produce
Tea & Coffee
Books & DVDs
Bric-A-Brac
Raffle*

*Contributions gratefully received to Aymestrey Parish Hall
on Friday 31st October 5-6:30pm or Saturday 1st from
11am. For more information contact
Alexia Phillips: 01568770189*

AYMESTREY PARISH BONFIRE & FIREWORKS

SATURDAY 8TH NOVEMBER

To be held on the Fete Field, starting at 6pm
with fireworks from 6.45pm.

Gates open at 5pm

Food and Soft Refreshments Available

Tickets: £8, Under 12s £5 (under 4s free)
Family Ticket (for 4, with 2 adults) £23

Online Bookings~ www.wegottickets.com/aymestrey

