

Aymestrey Matters



Spring 2026



Parish Notice Board



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Monday 4th May (details tbc) - Walk in the Woods

Friday 22nd May 2.00pm - 'Landscape, Architecture & Memory'.Talk

Monday 25th May - 12.00pm - Plant and Produce Sale



Film Night

Film Season now ended
but
will start again in
September

“Tea/Coffee in the Hall”

*Every Tuesday in the Parish Hall
10.30am to 11.30ish*

Save the Dates

Aymestrey Fete
18th July

Flower & Produce
Show
8th August



Plant and Produce Sale

Bank Holiday Monday

25th May

12.00pm at the Hall

Bring your spare plants and
produce to sell.

From £5 per table

Come along and buy from local people

Refreshments available

Book a table.

Dee ~ 07434621260

Steph ~ 07496 180332



Parish Council

Meetings

held in the Parish Hall

7.00pm

*4th Wednesday in the
month*

*ALL Parishioners are
welcome to attend*

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

FUN QUIZ NIGHTS

2nd Friday in the Month

In the Parish Hall

8.00pm

Season runs until June

With the last quiz on 11th June
hopefully an outdoor event

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

EDITORS' PAGE

Welcome to our Silver Edition, by that we mean this is the 25th Aymestrey Matters we've produced since taking over at the beginning of 2020.

Our first edition proved an interesting, if not rather stressful time due to the Covid outbreak. We were just putting the finishing touches to it when everything started going into lockdown, resulting in events being cancelled and many pages having to be altered, but we got there, after an almost total rewrite we managed to publish a slimmed down version for the Spring edition.

Our original cover designer was Richard Partiss, who stayed with us about 2 years before moving to pastures new, leaving us with our next headache, since neither of us have any artistic talent.

Our saviour came in the form of Immy, who sent us some trial designs which we thought were delightful. The first of these we used was on the Summer '22 edition, and since then we've had a succession of pretty and witty front covers which gives an identity to the magazine.

For most readers of Aymestrey Matters it arrives magically in your letterbox, this is due to our dedicated network of distributors, who freely give their time and energy. The majority of our deliverers were involved before we took over and we are grateful, if not relieved, they are still with us.

So six year of editing and still going strong, and encouraged that with this edition we've managed a bumper 32 pages thanks to lots of interesting articles from both regular and occasional contributors.

A big thank you to everyone involved and we hope you enjoy your Aymestrey Matters.

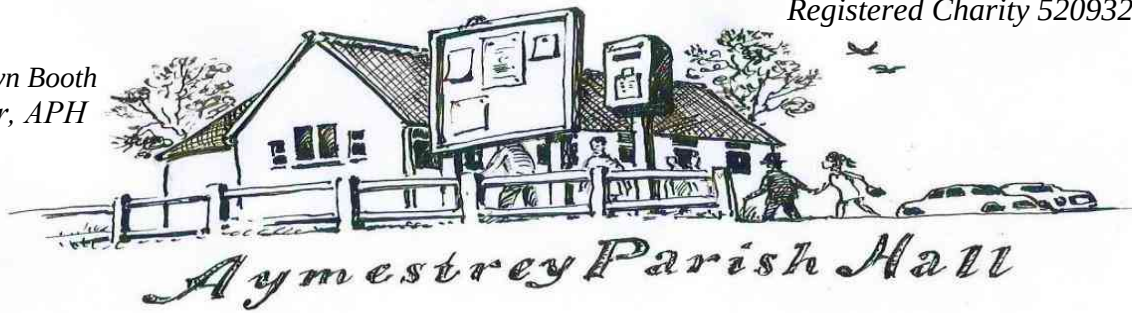
Dee & Martyn

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

HELP! We are looking for a distributor to deliver about 12 copies, four times a year, to Upper Lye. Starting ideally with the Summer issue or as soon as possible.

Please contact Dee or Martyn (see Parish People for contact numbers)

Martyn Booth
Chair, APH



In January the Hall held it's Annual General Meeting, and whilst a successful meeting it was disappointing to see such a poor attendance from the residents, it is after all your Parish Hall. A copy of the draft minutes along with thr financial report is available on the hall notice board.

As we begin a new year of events at the hall, here is a quick reflection on the last one. Coffee Mornings, Quizzes and Film and Food Nights continued to be well attended, unfortunately the future of the whist drives looks doubtful due to lack of support. Monday Night Carpet Bowling continues to thrive and Thursdays are busy with Pilates and then Sequence Dancing in the evening.

We held two gardening events through the year, firstly the Plant Sale which was very successful and then the Flower and Produce Show where this year although still plenty of entries, there were fewer entrants than previously. Both these events will be held again this year with a bigger and better Flower & Produce Show in August. So look out for the schedule of classes and happy gardening.

Our joint ventures with the Church gave us another successful Fete and a spectacularly busy Bonfire and Fireworks display, I would like to thank Dan Hurcomb for his leadership on both of these, and the Hurcomb Family for hosting them.

I think the star event of 2025 was the Parish Christmas Party, this was a new event for us, and during planning (yes there was planning!) we had no idea on attendance numbers. It was therefore a very pleasant surprise to see the hall so full and vibrant on the night. On this, special thanks go to Catherine and Sam for doing the catering, and Richard and Pauline for providing the Karaoke.

In 2025 we began looking at potential funding sources for the project of re-cladding of the hall's exterior. This highlighted another issue regarding the name, title and address of the hall. It transpired that on the hall's documents, the Constitution, Charity Commission, Bank, Insurance and Postal all the addresses were different, we had; The Village Hall Aymestrey, The Parish Hall Aymestrey, Aymestrey Village Hall, and Aymestrey Parish Hall.

Some of these were fairly straightforward to sort out but the most difficult was the bank, where we ended up being frozen out of our account for a couple of months. This has now been resolved thanks to the help of Ian and Steph, and we can therefore now move forward as "Aymestrey Parish Hall".

A few thanks – to all the Committee for their help and invaluable support, and all the Hall users especially those supplying cakes etc. or raffle prizes for events, or just simply helping put away chairs and tables or washing up.

..... and to conclude,

I wanted to say something about how I view the importance of the Parish Hall, so I decided it was time I finally resorted to embracing the technology of 'AI'.....

'A parish hall is the vital heart of a community, serving as a central, multi-purpose hub for social connection, local governance, events, and support, filling gaps left by declining pubs or post offices, hosting everything from exercise classes and dancing to voting and meetings, fostering inclusivity, preserving history, and empowering residents to shape their local future, essentially acting as the "last community asset standing" in many rural areas.'

.....I couldn't have put it better myself. *Martyn*

An Exhibition

at

'Ludlow Museum at The Buttercross'

'Landscape, Architecture & Memory:
*the Art of Elizabeth Jane Woodhouse Lewis',
(1813- 1874)*

February to April Adults £1.20 Children Free

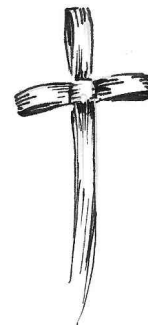
*Early Victorian drawings and watercolours which
capture the changing buildings and landscapes of
Herefordshire and South Shropshire*



Also the Ludlow Heritage News, Spring 2026 No. 83, pp 5-11 is available online at
<https://www.ludlowcivicsociety.org/>



Church Notice Board



EASTER 2026

PALM SUNDAY

**Benefice Service at Kingsland
29th March at 10.30am**

Join the procession around the churchyard
and into church behind the Donkey

MAUNDY THURSDAY

2nd April

6.30pm

Benefice service at Kingsland

GOOD FRIDAY

3rd April at 10am

meet at Leinthall Church and

'Walk with the Cross'

Followed by warming hot
chocolate and hot cross buns

DECORATE THE CHURCH FOR EASTER

Saturday 4th April

Meet at 10am at

AYMESTREY CHURCH

All donations of daffodils, spring flowers
and greenery most welcome! Either bring
with you or leave in the porch.

Many thanks!

EASTER SUNDAY

**Services at: Aymestrey 11am Holy Communion BCP
Leinthall 3.30pm Holy Communion CW**

A Talk

in

Aymestrey Church

LANDSCAPE, ARCHITECTURE & MEMORY

The Art of Elizabeth Jane Woodhouse Lewis (1813-1874)

by Nicola Kearton

in aid of Herefordshire Historic Churches Trust

Aymestrey and Leinthall Earls Churches

From the Church Wardens, Aymestrey and Leinthall Earls Churches.

There is a proposal for a major change to our long standing ecclesiastical parish boundary for the two churches; a proposal that the parish of Wigmore is incorporated within our parishes. The church of St James, Wigmore would be taken into the maintenance and care of the Church Commissioners and be only available for festivals rather than regular services, baptisms, marriages and funerals.

Our benefice, with our new Rector Maggie Tate-Druiff, will be named Benefice of Mortimers Cross Group of Churches. We shall welcome the parishioners of Wigmore to our Aymestrey and Leinthall churches and services and hope they will join our church family.

One very significant change is that Wigmore Primary and Wigmore High Schools will now fall within our parish areas and we will seek to build on the good relationships we have been developing in recent years. We intend this to be to the benefit of children throughout the area and particularly for our Aymestrey children and the wider benefice. At Wigmore Primary, our participative "Open the Book" bible story assemblies have been well received.

St Andrew's, Leinthall Earls, has just completed a restoration project, partly financed by Herefordshire Historic Churches, the Community Lottery Fund, some local charities and our fundraising activities in the last two years. We have replaced the single bell Belfry with new oak timbers and stone slates; this was last done in 1826. The porch on the west entrance has been rebuilt and oak flooring and joists replaced in two areas of the church floor. Ventilation has been improved throughout. This complements restoration work undertaken in 2008 and makes our Norman built church sound and watertight. We hope that you might be tempted to come and join us at our services, where you will be made very welcome in this special place, where so many over the years have found friendship.

After the retirement of Rev'd Julie last July, we now look forward to the arrival of our new Vicar, Rev'd Maggie Tate-Druiff, who joins us from a Benefice of rural parishes in East Anglia, but who has strong connections with Herefordshire where she grew up. We look forward to welcoming her officially on Monday 23rd March when she is to be licensed to the Benefice by the Bishop of Hereford at a special service in Kingsland church at 7pm. Do come along to meet Rev'd Maggie and welcome her and her family to our parishes.

Whilst we look forward to welcoming our new Vicar, we must also say a heartfelt thank you to our curate, Rev'd Rosie Roberts, and the Benefice Team who have ensured our church services and festivals have continued as normal during the vacancy.

As we write this in mid-March it is heartening to see the daffodils are beginning to flower and signs of spring are appearing at last, so may we take the opportunity to wish you all A Very Happy Easter.

*from Meg Thorpe and Stuart Hutchings
Church Wardens, Aymestrey & Leinthall Earls*



-Aymestrey Bells -

The six bells of Aymestrey Tower were cast by Taylor's of Gloucester in 1732, giving nearly three hundred years of service, and hopefully a few more to come. Ringers numbers have fluctuated, or should it be swung to and fro. Three years ago there were four Thorpes i.e. Meg, Chris, Henry and Vida plus Stuart Hutchings. Meg, Chris and Stuart have multi-various jobs within the church, with Henry and Vida increasingly involved with work and education, this meant ringing was spasmodic. Alexia Phillips and myself joined the group and were mostly schooled by Geoff Cowling of Eardisland and Martin Harrison of Kingsland. It is a long and ongoing process to be safe and proficient. The bells weigh up to 600kgs, which is a great deal of momentum to control, they can be very dangerous if not respected.

It is a matter more of finesse than brute force, as ably shown by youngsters from late primary school pupils to demure slight ladies in their seventies. Learning involves going through the rounds, call changes, plain hunting and hopefully to method. This requires a process known as rope sight, which to me is something of a gift. Doug Murrie joined us two years ago and by practising up to three times a week has improved quickly. We were so fortunate to have a teenager join us with some previous experience, in the person of Chelsea. She is competent, calm, attentive and as with youngsters, quick to learn. Although Trevor Price rang many years ago, he has rejoined with Phil Wilmett and Becky Dyke in these last few months. We now have, on a good day, eleven ringers. Phil has rung at his first service, after an amazing start; Trevor and Becky will soon be there.

We are so grateful to our mentors, including Ginny Guy, a wonderful stickler for precision and basics. We practice at Aymestrey on the second Wednesday of the month 7.00 - 8.30pm and each Friday 10-11.30am. At Wigmore on the first Wednesday 7.00-8.00pm, to hopefully bring some Wigmore folk into the team. We join more experienced ringers at either Kingsland or Eardisland every Monday 7.00-7.30pm for newbies and 7.30-9.00 as experience is gained.

There is no charge though being elected into the Diocesan Guild of Bell Ringers costs £10 a year for insurance purposes. It covers a broad church of beliefs encouraging worship and companionship amongst a most eclectic interesting crowd of folk. Youngsters are most welcome from primary school upwards, my eldest son started when he was nine at Kingsland. Do go on YouTube to get an idea of what learning involves or contact any of us to have a try.

Ian Johnson

Aymestrey Carpet Bowls



Winter Report 2026

As some of you will recall, this time last year I reported on a most successful winter season in the North Herefordshire League (when we won a clean sweep of the trophies); unfortunately this year we have not been so successful. Having said that we put in many good performances in the league and were tied top in points but lost out on the 'shots scored rule' to Titley. In the League's Pairs and Singles finals our players put up valiant efforts but were beaten by better players on the day.

So, our attention now will be on our internal Pairs and Singles competitions which I'll get under way shortly.

Over the past year we have had several new players who are continuing to get used to our notorious floor and are improving all the time - actually I'm not sure any of us ever get used to our floor – its unique!

I've said it before, and I'll say it again, we are always looking for new players, young or older to bolster our team. Pop along at 7pm on Monday evenings for what I think all agree is a fun-filled night of Carpet Bowls; you'll make new friends in a relaxed atmosphere, get a little gentle exercise and enjoy a cuppa with biscuits or occasionally cake!

Many of you will remember Joe Scamp who used to run the Carpet Bowls at Aymestrey and he also ran the League; Joe has now stepped down from his role in the League (and I've taken it on) so if you want to contact me on anything to do with Carpet Bowls at Aymestrey or the League, then you can do so via wrightturned@gmail.com or tel: 07759980090.

Peter Wright

The North Herefordshire Indoor Carpet Bowls League

Joe Scamp (centre) along with John Sankey and Trevor Joseph at Joe's recent retirement from the League.

The story is there was a demonstration of Carpet Bowling at Titley Village Hall 27 years ago, the 3 men in the picture were at the demonstration and Trevor said to Joe "You know Joe this could work". So they created the NHICBLeague, originally having 6 teams.

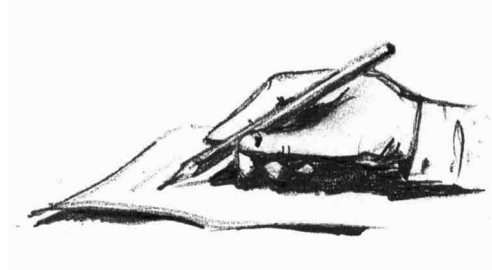
The rest is History.

Joe & Ruth Scamp



Parish Council

News from the Parish Council



In January, the Chairman announced that Councillor Helen Hamilton's resignation had been accepted with regret. It was agreed by all that Helen's presence at meetings and her contributions to the Parish Council will be missed, in particular her informed input into planning matters. First co-opted in May 2003, Helen is thanked for her dedicated service to the Parish Council and her valued contribution to the wider community.

A vacancy exists on the Parish Council. If you have an active interest in the well-being of Aymestrey Parish, you may be just the person needed! Contact me with any questions you may have. Enthusiasm is more important than experience.

A Traffic Safety Group has been established for Mortimers Cross. It has six members, including four Mortimers Cross residents. Collision data has been requested by Ward Councillor Carole Gandy on behalf of the group.

The Good Neighbour Scheme continues to respond to requests from residents. The volunteers offer a range of services, including friendly visits, help with errands like shopping or appointments, and assistance with household tasks. If you would like to find out more or are interested in helping members of our parish by becoming a volunteer, please contact Aymestrey Good Neighbour Scheme on 07942 25754. Thank you.

In February, it was noted that erosion of the banks of the Lugg at Covenhope have worsened. While Herefordshire Council continues to monitor the situation, Councillor Hurcomb has provided them with an update.

Concerns about fallen trees, erosion, and the associated flood risk on the Lugg above Aymestrey Bridge has been raised with the Environment Agency and fallen trees (not on Public Rights of Way) reported to Forestry England. In addition, two fallen trees impeding access to the Mortimer Trail near the Iron Fort have been reported to the National Trust.

Recent tasks undertaken by the Lengthsman include trimming vegetation and cleaning road signs throughout Aymestrey village, sweeping the pavements, and removing a large ash tree that had been washed downstream to Aymestrey Bridge on 14 November 2025. Thanks were expressed for the prompt removal of this tree, as the quick response helped to maintain water flow under the bridge and reduced the risk of flooding. More recently, the Lengthsman has (amongst other things) cleared a culvert in Covenhope, and two further projects are underway under the Herefordshire Council Drainage Grant Scheme.

The supply of AQUA-SAC® S.O.S. from Herefordshire Council (50 in total) has been allocated: 10 to an Aymestrey resident, 10 to a resident near Leinthall Earls, 10 to residents in Mortimers Cross and 10 to The Riverside. All these properties are at risk of flooding. Storage of the final 10 is being discussed.

Meetings

All residents are very welcome to attend Parish Council meetings, held on the **4th Wednesday of each month** at **7.00pm in the Parish Hall**, except in August and December. Your views and involvement are important.

- 25 March
- 22 April
- 27 May, Annual Meeting of the Parish Council
- Date for the Annual Parish Meeting is to be announced.

Mrs Maggie Brown, Clerk. clerk@aymestrey.org 07398 222 310

The Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dyrobates minor*)

I knew very little about the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker until recently when I went along to the Wildlife session at Leintwardine organised by Mike Wheeler. Guest speaker was ecologist Toby Fountain of Ross on Wye who is undertaking a project into this elusive Red List bird in his spare time. Now I know a great deal more about this bird I am on the lookout to hear or maybe even see one in the parish— a bit of a long shot by all accounts!

These small birds, the size of a house sparrow, prefer to remain hidden in the canopies of alder and birch where they will nest in tree holes. They also enjoy ancient orchards as a habitat, of which Herefordshire has a significant number. They have a “*pee, pee, pee*” cry and their quiet yet high pitched drumming can give them away. Best chance of spotting or hearing a Lesser Spot is in the early morning during early Spring (February-March).

Plumage wise both male and female have black and white barred back and wings. The male will show a crimson cap on its head. Their beaks are black and unusually their feet will have two toes pointing forwards and two toes pointing backwards. Lesser Spots have a bouncing, undulating flight similar to the Greater Spotted and Green Woodpeckers. Primary food sources include a range of small insects, larvae and spiders living on or in tree bark, twigs and leaves.



The RSPB recognises this bird as a Priority Conservation Species as well as being on the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern. Although the clutch size is generally up to 5, the chicks raised may not survive to adulthood due to insufficient food sources. The increase in population of the Greater Spotted Woodpecker may also be a factor. This is being investigated.

If you want to distinguish their call listen on british-birdsongs.uk or install the Merlin bird app on your phone. If you are lucky enough to hear or see a Lesser Spot this Spring the Editors would be delighted to hear from you. Thanks for reading.

SD

Aymestrey Village – Wassail

Meeting at the Parish Hall on the 17th January - ‘Old Twelfth Night’, over forty revellers took part in a torchlit procession to the Ancient Orchard at Aymestrey Mill.

Wearing feathers for luck and creating a cacophony of sound using drums, whistles pots and pans etc., in an attempt to awaken-up the trees from their winter sleep



On reaching the Ancient Orchard, there were hot dogs and mulled cider, followed by the ‘Wassail Ceremony’



After a welcome by the Kingmaker (Rob Crampton), the Wassail King (Warren Alexander) was crowned before giving his address. Then Chrissie Lawson blessed the trees before they were toasted with cider.

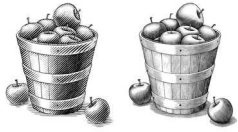
The Wassail Cake (kindly supplied by Aymestrey Patisserie), was cut and then served to the attendees, cider soaked toast was hung in the trees and wishing apples made.

From the proceeds a new apple tree has been planted in the orchard, the rest being shared between the Church and Parish Hall.

A great fun filled evening; and a massive thank you to all involved especially Rob Crampton for organising this special event.

MB

The Aymestrey Wassail Toast



Blessed be this ancient orchard of Aymestrey,
Where the Lugg winds it's path
And these old trees keep watch over field and lane.

Rooted deep in the Herefordshire earth,
Lifting high to the clear borderland skies,
May you wake to another good year.

Let your buds swell with promise,
Your blossom drift like pale snow on spring breezes,
And your fruit grow full, sweet and plenty.

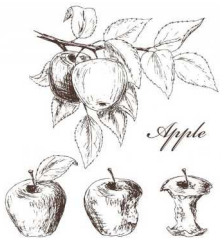
We give thanks for all your shelter
For Fox and Owl, for Thrush and Wren,
For generations who've walked these trees
And the hands that tended them before us.



May your branches stand strong through storm and winter,
May your roots drink well from honest soil,
And may your harvest bless every table in Aymestrey.

So with cider, song, and warm hearts,
We honour this place we love.

Good Fortune to the land
Good harvest to the trees
And good health to all who gather here.



Wassail!
Wassail!
Wassail to the orchard of Aymestrey

SAVE THE DATE

Friday 31st July 2026

illyria presents

The Three Musketeers

by Alexandre Dumas

An outdoor theatre production in the grounds of Yatton Court, Aymestrey

All for One; One for All! Young D'Artagnan is determined to join Athos, Porthos and Aramis as an elite Musketeer of the King's Guard. Set against a sweeping panorama of 17th century France at war, this production is a whirlwind of scheming, romance and broad comedy - and the finest swashbuckling in the business.

(Play contains scenes of peril, politics and passion! Suitable for ages 8+, but younger children welcome - (if they're brave enough...))

Bring a chair and a picnic

...More details to follow on www.illyria.co.uk and on facebook

Mortimer Ward

Carole Gandy

As I write this article, the sun is shining, the daffodils are smiling and reaching for the sky and the crocuses are giving a real splash of colour to my garden. This is the season I love the most and let's hope it is not spoilt by heavy rain and winds which not only play havoc with the garden but result in flooding in parts of Mortimer Ward once again.



My work as a councillor and cabinet member is generally pleasant and at times absolutely joyful. Like my visit very recently to Green Spider an indoor rock climbing facility on the Rotherwas Industrial Estate; where I met year 7 and 8 schoolchildren who teachers are concerned about; due to their lack of confidence or inability to stick to the rules among other things, so they come along for a 2 hour session and learn to work as a team, listen to and carry out instructions. The change in a child in just that 2-hour period is quite amazing.

However, there are times when the job is really challenging and over Christmas and the New Year that has definitely been the case due to the poor 3 year financial settlement we got from the Government. It is clear that the Government does not recognise deprivation in rural counties.

From November onwards we have been busy finalising our Capital Budget and Revenue Budget for presentation to Full Council on the 13th February. As a minority administration we have to rely on councillors from other parties to support this in order to set the budget. Due to the fact that I believe we put so much work into both budgets, consulting regularly with other parties, making adjustments where we could, it was pleasing to see that the Revenue Budget was accepted with only a couple of abstentions and one vote against and the Capital Budget went through with a greater number of abstentions but nobody voting against it.

Our Full Council meeting in March formally sets the Council Tax increase which will be 4.99% and then the hard work begins for each Directorate to make the savings they have promised.

My Directorate, Adults, Health & Wellbeing has got to find savings of nearly £8 million but I am proud to say that of our plans will have little impact on the most vulnerable and frail. This of course may not be the case next year when we will be in the second year of the Unfair Fairer Funding Scheme.

One of the areas where we need to make significant savings is in housing residents, in temporary accommodation, as a result of homelessness. During this financial year that has cost us approximately £2.8 million. Not only does that impact greatly on our revenue budget but it is far from ideal for those in such accommodation. We are meeting with all of our registered social landlords (RSLs) regularly to try to get more social and affordable housing provided and to help them get their empty properties up to the standard of the government's new requirements. We are also considering how we can encourage RSLs to work with us in building the housing we need, in the right place.

Our new Public Realm contractor M Group Highways will be taking over from Balfour Beatty in May. The new contract is very different to the one we had with Balfour Beatty as about 60 of the previous posts have now been moved to Herefordshire Council. I and my colleagues are absolutely committed to bringing a better service to residents with regard to pothole repairs and other services which M Group Highways will be responsible for delivering.

If you wish to contact me, please do not hesitate to phone either 01568 780583/ 07792882133 or email me at carole.gandy@herefordshire.gov.uk.

4th Aymestrey Curry Competition – Results



On February 20th the 4th annual Aymestrey Curry Competition was held at the Parish Hall. There was a wide range of delicious dishes from which to choose: chicken, lamb, fish, vegetarian, creamy, spicy along with rice, poppadoms, raita, mango chutney and pickles.

Ten keen entrants vied for the glory of having their name inscribed on the coveted trophy. It was a packed hall, with over 50 people voting on their favourite curry of the evening. The competition was close with the standard of dishes very high, but one curry stood out and the winner was Martyn Booth with his Imperial Chicken Curry, followed by Sam Hurcomb in second place with Chinese Chicken Curry.

A great big 'thank you' to those that took the time and effort to cook and enter a curry, and thanks to everyone who attended and made the night a great success.

The event raised just under £400 for the Parish Hall.

IB

AYMESTREY PARISH HALL

Provides excellent facilities for all your events



Children's Parties, Birthdays, Anniversaries,

Wedding, Christening & Wake Receptions, Meetings & Workshops

Large, welcoming main hall with stage & screen. Comfortably seats 90 + people at tables.

Well equipped kitchen with large cooker, two sinks, dishwasher, fridge, freezer, ample preparation space and serving hatch. Separate side room. Free Wi-Fi

Very reasonable rates – Tel: 07796 590266

Thoughts from a Retired Gardener

Jim Logan

A dismal cold grey day in late January, I couldn't motivate myself to do any gardening at home. But outstanding on the list of 'to do' tasks in my head was to take the brush-cutter to St Mary's Church Bromfield and nip off the brambles that encroach upon the burial ground. I was less than enthusiastic but soon became engrossed in the job, and it was physical enough to keep me warm.

There are carpets of Snowdrops and emerging Daffodils to avoid and trip hazards galore, so visor down and ear defenders on I went about my business quite happily.



My thoughts flitting easily from the next group of brambles as I scan ahead, to where exactly are the torpid Slow Worms and Grass Snakes, the hibernating Dormice on this bleak day. I know they are here, but where. I'm also planning what can usefully be done by the Caring for Gods Acre volunteers when they meet here next week. Inscriptions on gravestones divert my thoughts, did they die younger than I am now, or much older; what month. I imagine the churchyard in that month, in that season.

As I work methodically along the edge of the escarpment above the River Onny I glance down, the meander of the river has scoured the near bank necessitating a revetment of large rocks to prevent further erosion.

One of the rocks was moving. I flipped the visor to confirm that this was an Otter clambering out directly below where I stood, me in full view with my brush-cutter engine running. Unfazed the Otter lolloped along the bank on what is clearly a well used path and slipped back into the river churning upstream, against the strong flow sinuously undulating. I was tempted to think it was showing off.

Look at me, I'm not shy or nocturnal. It was midday.

It then popped out onto the bank again and continued on, making better headway on the bank than in the receding flood. I lost sight of it as it approached the busy A49



bridge. An Otter on a mission, perhaps a male, I've read that dog Otters hold riverine territory's several miles long and patrol them regularly.

Surprise encounters like this excite the latent hunter gatherer in me, suddenly the day is not so drear, all my senses are alert. I'm in the presence of a more competent fisher than I could ever be.

A privilege.

I've seen Otters regularly but infrequently on the river Teme and in a local lake but never when I have been actively looking for them, they've always presented themselves as a surprise, usually when I've been fishing and sitting quietly. But on one memorable occasion an Otter swam literally beneath my feet as I stood on a tree stump in the river. whilst having a larking around day in the river with my sons when they were lads.

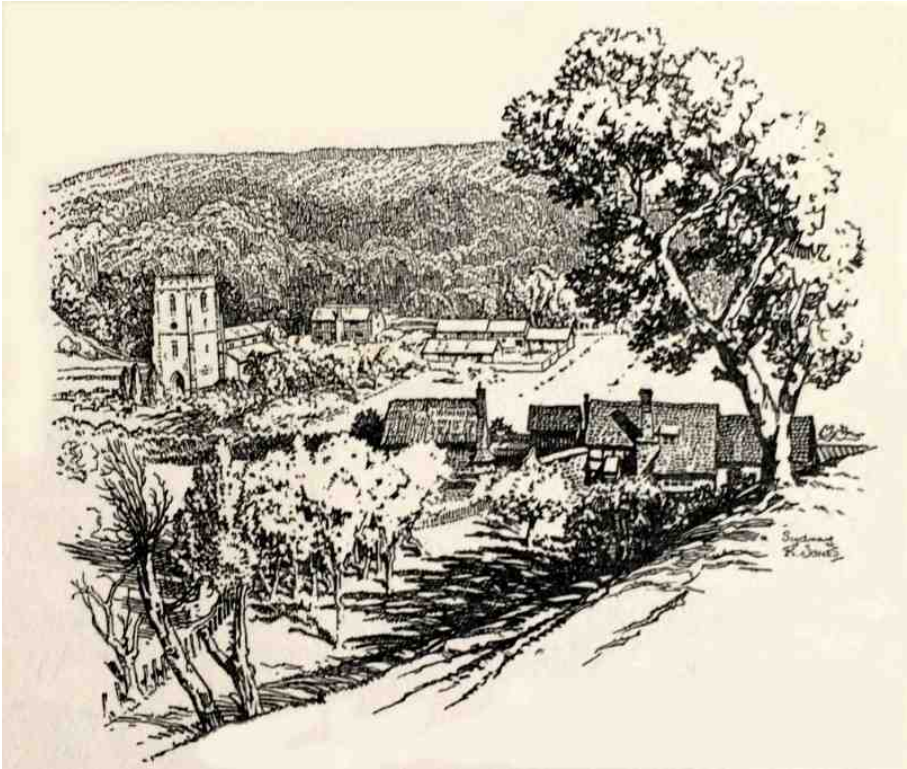
When we lived beside the river I often heard their whistling contact calls in the evening. Once when hearing the calls heading upstream in my direction I sat tight, as mother and cub swam past in the clear summer flow, a second cub startled me and itself by popping out onto the bank beside me for a moment before following on. These welsh border rivers are not quite pristine but they are corridors of near wilderness snaking through our agricultural and urban areas. Life sustaining arteries where Otters can, if they wish, display themselves when we least expect it.

Today's encounter turned a dismal day into a memorable one.

Jim

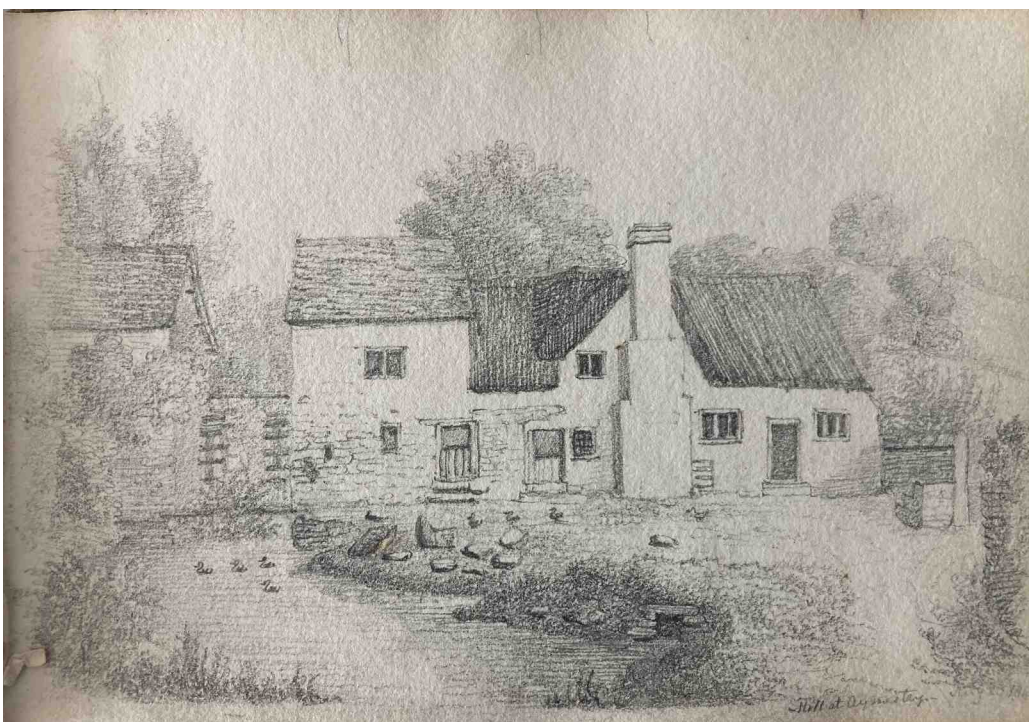
Old Pictures of Aymestrey Parish

Sketch of Aymestrey Church



This is an Original Antique print of Aymestrey in Herefordshire; a drawing by Sydney R Jones. From a publication of monochrome views of English Villages and Hamlets. First published by B T Batsford Ltd in 1934; prints printed on cream paper by The Darien Press of Edinburgh.

Sketch Of Aymestrey Mill before being rebuilt following a fire in the 1870s



This is an original sketch by Elizabeth Jane Lewis. Printed by kind permission of Nicola Kearton

Aymestrey Fete 18th July 2026

Arts and crafts competition at the Fete.

The Aymestrey Village Fete will soon be with us and we are hoping to see a bumper selection of entries and celebrate the your creativity and skill.

The new schedule for 2026 (see opposite) covers a wide range of crafts, from baking to crochet and floral art.

The Junior Section is always popular with entrants and judges alike; with classes including a Lego model, baking and a flower arrangement.

Call for Judges

Interested in helping out as a Judge? No need to be an expert; judging takes only an hour or so from about mid-day. Interested? Contact Dan; see below.

Ideas for events and stalls.

If you have any ideas for new stalls or events; it is your village fete; please contact Dan; see below

Would you like to have a stand at the Fete?

We always welcome new stands covering what's happening in and around the parish, and those who wish to return. Please contact Dan; see below

Calling Tug 'o' War Teams

There will be the usual end of day Tug 'O' War Competition. Teams of 8. Cash prize to the winners. Get training now!

If you would be willing to help in any way please contact [Dan ~hurcombd@gmail.com](mailto:~hurcombd@gmail.com)

Ed: The next edition of Aymestrey Matters will, of course have the full schedule and running order for a fun filled main ring with displays, children's games and not forgetting, the fun dog show.

Produce & Flower Show 8th August 2026

Gardeners get ready for the Produce and Flower Show!

For the gardeners among you now is the time to begin planning your entries for the Aymestrey Produce and Flower Show which will take place on Saturday 8th August. This entertaining annual show is a highlight of the local gardening calendar with classes covering a wide range of seasonal flowers and produce.

New trophies for 2026

We are delighted to announce that two new trophies will be awarded this year. The Aymestrey Produce and Flower Show *Vegetable and Fruit Trophy* will go to the person with the highest total of points in the first 18 classes, and the Aymestrey Produce and Flower Show *Flower Trophy* for the highest total in classes 19 to 31.

The award for best single rose will be the lovely crystal rose bowl which has been kindly donated by Pauline and Richard Hammond. The Steve Price Cup for best overall points scored, and the Judges' choice of Best In Show trophy will also be awarded as usual.

Whether you are a newbie gardener or a veteran competitor please come along and have a go or, after the judging, just view all the wonderful entries. And to sustain you while you await the judges decisions and view the prizes awarded, tea or coffee and cake will be available during the afternoon. The schedule of classes can be found on the next page over. And a full schedule will be in the next edition of this magazine along with a separate leaflet available nearer the show.

Aymestrey Village Fete 18th July 2026

Arts and Crafts Competition Classes

Food and drinks

The winner of Class 1 will win the Margaret Probert Cup

The entrant with the most points accumulated from Classes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 will win the Joyce Pugh Cup for baking

Class 1 - A Victoria sponge cake, any filling

Class 2 - A cake using fruit or vegetable as a main ingredient

Class 3 - Loaf of bread, any recipe

Class 4 - 3 shortbread biscuits on a plate

Class 5 - 6 cheese straws on a plate

Class 6 - 6 sweets or other home made confectionery

Class 7 - A home-made fruit or alcoholic beverage

Class 8 - A jar of sweet preserve

Class 9 - A jar of savoury preserve

Class 10 - Three eggs on a plate



Handicrafts

The Aymestrey Fete Handicrafts Cup will be awarded for judges' choice of 1st prize winners

Class 11 - A handmade item using any materials

Class 12 - An item of knitting or crochet

Class 13 - A piece of cross-stitch or embroidery

Class 14 - My best photograph "in the Garden"

Class 15 - A drawing or painting on a subject of your choice



Floral Art

Class 16 - A single rose in a vase

Class 17 - A Floral arrangement of fresh flowers and foliage

Class 18 - A miniature arrangement of fresh or dried flowers (max 6 inches x 6 inches excluding base)

Class 19 - Sweet peas in a vase



Junior Section

Please state age on all exhibits. Best of the Best Rosette to be awarded to Judges' choice of first prize winners

Class 20 - A Lego model, not from a kit

Class 21 - An animal made from fruit and/or vegetables

Class 22 - A drawing or painting of Trees

Class 23 - 3 home baked and decorated fancy cakes on a plate

Class 24 - A poem about Wild Animals

Class 25 - A miniature garden or flower arrangement displayed in a mug.



All Exhibits MUST be the work of the Exhibitor and any items previously entered will not be eligible.

Produce and Flower Show Schedule

Saturday 8th August, 2026

Vegetables and Fruit

Class 1 - 3 white or red potatoes (washed) on a plate

Class 2 - 2 courgettes on a plate

Class 3 - 3 runner beans on a plate

Class 4 - 5 dwarf or French beans on a plate

Class 5 - 3 onions on a plate

Class 6 - 6 shallots on a plate

Class 7 - 3 bulbs of garlic

Class 8 - 3 beetroots with 3-inch tops on a plate

Class 9 - 3 carrots with 3-inch tops on a plate

Class 10 - 1 cucumber on a plate

Class 11 - 3 tomatoes on a plate

Class 12 - a selection of salad items (max 3 types) on a plate

Class 13 - 3 stems of rhubarb

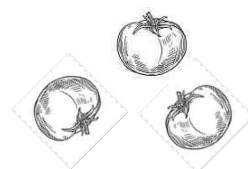
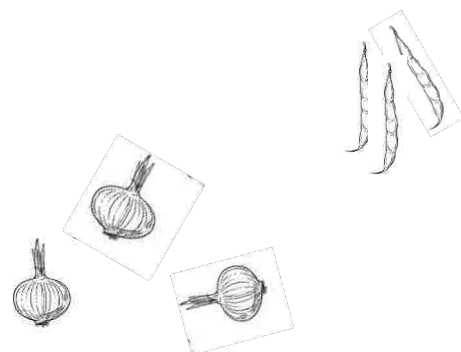
Class 14 - a selection of soft fruit (max 3 types) on a plate

Class 15 - an unusual or exotic vegetable of your choice (max 3 specimens) on a plate

Class 16 - heaviest marrow

Class 17 - longest runner bean

Class 18 - trug/box/basket display of four types of vegetables



Flowers

Class 19 - a single rose in a vase

Class 20 - a vase of my garden perennials, mixed

Class 21 - a flowering house plant

Class 22 - a jug of flowers from my garden

Class 23 - a vase of 5 sweet peas (any colour)

Class 24 - a vase of 3 dahlias (any variety)

Class 25 - a vase of 3 gladioli (any variety)

Class 26 - a single sunflower bloom

Class 27 - a hand tied bunch of fresh herbs

Class 28 - the best cut flower in my garden (in a vase)

Class 29 - the best scented flower in my garden (in a vase)

Class 30 - a vase of foliage (up to 5 varieties)

Class 31 - Aymestrey Matters Mystery Seeds. (see below)



This class is always popular. Packets of seed will be available for collection from The Aymestrey Parish Hall plus The Riverside Inn and the Churches in both Aymestrey and Leinthall Earls.

This year's challenge is a half hardy annual which should be sown as soon as possible. Sow seed on the surface of damp compost, and cover with a light sprinkling of vermiculite or compost. Use a heated propagator or place in a plastic bag at 15 - 21 degrees C until germination. Do not exclude light. Then transplant and grow on as usual. Good luck!

All Exhibits – MUST be the property of the exhibitor
and grown on their land.



CROFT AMBREY RUNNING CLUB



Formed in 1982, Croft Ambrey Running Club is one of the longest-established running clubs in Herefordshire. The club's first President was Lord Croft and Croft Castle has been the club's spiritual home ever since.

Club members take part in every type of running you can think of from parkrun to trail and fell running, road, short distances and ultra, multi-day and endurance events.

The inaugural Hillfort Hustle took place last year on the Sunday after the Aymestrey Fete. 239 runners tackled the challenging 10 or 5 mile course. 21 Juniors took part in the fun run.

This year, as in 2025, the Hillfort Hustle will be supporting the work of The Aymestrey Commons Association.

Training on Tuesday and Thursday Evenings

We pride ourselves in being genuinely inclusive. We know that's easy to say but come along to any of our Tuesday or Thursday evening training sessions and you'll see just how true it is.

We like to give runners as much variety as possible and hold training sessions at different locations across North Herefordshire each week including Mortimer Forest, Shobdon, Wigmore, Brampton Bryan and, of course, Croft Castle. We meet at 6:45pm and training sessions finish at around 8pm.

The location of training sessions are published each Sunday evening on the club website, Facebook page and in the weekly Email Newsletter sent to all club members.

For young runners

Croft Juniors meet at 5:30pm most term-time Monday evenings at Wigmore High School. For youngsters aged from 8 to 16, the focus is on running for fun with a mix of age appropriate short and long - distance intervals, dynamic sessions and games. Many of our Juniors take part in Herefordshire Cross Country races.

Fancy giving Croft a go?

We welcome all abilities of runners at our training sessions on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. We're happy for anyone to come along for up to 3 training sessions without joining. A full year's membership is just £36 which includes membership to England Athletics.

For more information Email Huw Williams, Chairman at Croft Ambrey Running Club:
chair@croftambreyrunningclub.co.uk

or go to the club web site:

www.croftambreyrunningclub.co.uk



CROFT AMBREY RUNNING CLUB PRESENTS



**10am 19th July,
Aymestrey,
Herefordshire
Conquer the fort
and return to tell the tale!**



**10 and 5 mile trail races
through beautiful
Herefordshire countryside
with a challenging ascent
to the Iron Age
Croft Ambrey Hillfort**

Enter at:

www.hillforthustle.com

Chip timing • Hillfort Hustle medal for all finishers • Age group prizes

10 Mile Hustle - £20 (£18 for affiliated runners). Min age 17

5 Mile Half Hustle - £16 (£14 for affiliated runners). Min age 16

The Hillfort Hustle is run with the kind permission of Croft Castle and the Dunne and Hurcombe families. This is a rare opportunity to run in parts of the Herefordshire countryside that are not normally accessible to the general public.

Notes From The Marsh

mid-November 2025 – February 2026

sleeping beauties and headless hunters

Tuesday 24th February - there's a reckless Red Admiral flitting in the heather, my love-seat has disintegrated (don't ask!) and the blackbirds are fighting each other – it must be spring!

Of course, this announcement is a little premature; it's still winter technically, though nobody told the crocuses. The Red Admiral, like the Comma and the Peacock, has to have over-wintered as an adult, possibly in my garage or a shed; other butterflies and moths have different tactics to survive the cold season. A spring favourite, the Orange-tip, spends winter as a pupa, encased in a hard skin as it develops from caterpillar to butterfly – the lazy item can take four winters to do so!

The term 'pupa' comes from Latin 'doll' though it can also mean 'girl' - which puzzles me rather. Were they thinking of hard china dolls, or simply of juvenile animals? That most attractive little moth the Rosy Footman also pupates – but in a distinctly odd skin – it includes its hairs in its pupa, possibly as a defence. It would be a treat to see one; pictures show something like a minuscule bird's nest. Some of the other Footmen in my garden (Buff and Common) spend the winter as small caterpillars; whether they actually eat anything, or simply wait till spring, I'm still unsure.

All these strategies are fascinating; the tough pupa shell must give some protection from predators (though, for

some, being suspended helpless from a silken thread is a bit risky) - a little caterpillar is surely more vulnerable, even if it can run. As for spending winter as an egg - well, moth eggs are tiny, so perhaps larger predators wouldn't bother; the Canary-shouldered Thorn moth, a heart-warming bright yellow on top and a regular garden visitor, leaves its eggs alone till spring.

Right, a brief recap on November – the Song Thrushes had already started carolling. A Roe buck materialised by the bird-table, a nice russet – the cat was not impressed. I was worried about my Parrots – pieces of eight, just call me Long Joan Silver. Actually, the mice got a lot of my Parrot tulips last spring, all I got were holes in the soil. Thanks are due to Trudie who gave me the natural solution – prickly holly in middle and top of pot.

At the end of November the Mahonia was in bloom, and it's still blooming in late February, a real boost for Queen Bumbles as they stoke up for nesting; so far, mostly Buff-tails, a lot of them with no collar (it was probably dress-down Friday). This is a variation on having a dark golden stripe below the head – they look blacker, but still have the golden stripe below waist, and a rich buff tail.

A gorgeous Redwing on the marsh boundary on an early December morning – it had bright white 'eyebrows' and rich orange-red flanks – more flew further north-west. Siskins were foraging in the marsh alders. A little later, a parti-coloured Buzzard landed on the zigzag hedge opposite – cream, tawny, brown against misty hills and brief scuds of rain.

Meanwhile, you may have heard of ants in pants and bees in bonnets, but...

suddenly there was a bee in my trousers! (The poor little devil was too weak to sting; every so often honeybees lose their way down the chimney and end up in my sitting-room, though rarely in my jeans – or perhaps they are surplus to requirements.)

12th December and a glorious starry night, Orion glittering and rising in the south-east. Five shooting stars from the Geminid shower: the first bright, the second brief, the third a spectacular dazzling rush quite low and going north-west, the next two dropping like white-hot stones – splendid! Here's to the night sky as well as the daily wetland!

Now, if you have followed these marsh ramblings over the past 15 years, you'll know that I occasionally go Greek (rather than Dutch). So – more about that larger-than-life character Orion; one of my favourite constellations as he sparkles through cold nights – but I'm not so sure about his mythological reputation – bold & burly may sound useful, too much butchery-cum-swaggering is not my cup of tea.

First, the good bits(?): he was incredibly strong and unbelievably handsome, the son of the sea god Poseidon, while his mother was the daughter of King Minos of Crete - he could even walk on water! Next, the naughty bits: once upon a more savage time, he was renowned as a mighty hunter – these days he could well be prosecuted for decimating wildlife. However, he did a lot better at reproduction, as he apparently had hundreds of children, including 50 sons by as many nymphs – oh dear, Orion, you also added to world over-population. He may or may not have raped Merope, the daughter of the king of Chios (Merops, by the bye, is the clan name of the Bee-

eaters – two European Bee-eaters, rare migrants, nested in Herefordshire about 20 years ago). He may or may not have fallen for the goddess Artemis – another mighty hunter. A contradictory chap, Orion, and in many ways the archetypal macho man – even his death is disputed. In one story, he bragged he'd kill every animal on earth, so Gaia (the earth goddess) got annoyed, and sent a giant scorpion, which killed him. In another, he fell for Artemis but her brother Apollo disapproved – and who could blame him, even if she was apparently not allowed to choose her friends herself. Apollo tricked Artemis into shooting an arrow into Orion while he was swimming – she had to prove how good she was at archery, she saw something bobbing in the water, so she went and shot it. Well, you would, wouldn't you? Needless to say, it was Orion's head, and suddenly he was very dead. Never mind, Zeus agreed that Orion and the Scorpion could both be stars, or rather constellations. (And I still love seeing him stride across a frosty sky...)

Returning to February and Yatton, February fill-dyke has lived up to its nickname. 19 days out of 28 have been wet to some degree – quite a bit of it as hill mizzle and drizzle (or if you like, dribble, which has the same origin; I prefer to call it drivel when it carries mindlessly on). The most exciting storm was on 15th February, when a sudden hailstorm blew up and we were treated to flashes of lightning and rumbles of thunder. Now is the time to start pondering about potatoes and re-educating raspberries and meditating on meadows massed with flowers and bees – may the dreams come colourfully true!

Susanna Checketts



PARISH NATTERS & POST BOX



Bus Routes

Thanks to K Johnson for this useful information concerning Buses through Aymestrey and Mortimers Cross.

No. 489 Shoppers Bus to Leominster

- Tuesday & Friday Only -

9.45am at Aymestrey Church

9.48am at Mortimers Cross

Arrives 10.22am in Leominster

Returns at 1.00pm from the Bus Station stand 4

No. 498 Shoppers Bus to Hereford

- Wednesday Only -

9.42am at Aymestrey Church

9.48am at Mortimers Cross

Arrives 10.58 in Hereford

Returns at 1.30pm from the Bus Station stand 9

A copy of the timetables including the Arrow Circular (Runs through Mortimers Cross) will be available in the Hall



HELP! We are looking for a distributor to deliver about 12 copies, four times a year, to Upper Lye. Starting ideally with the Summer issue or as soon as possible.

Please contact Dee or Martyn (see Parish People for contact numbers)



A warm welcome to the Parish
and also to Yatton ~

Steve and Noelle

With very best wishes to
you in your new home

"Walk in the Woods"

at

Shobdon Wood

Organised by

Aymestrey Parish Hall

Bank Holiday Monday

4th May

Further details to be confirmed,
look out for leaflets at the Hall
and on Facebook etc.

Circular Walk Approx 4 - 5 mls

Refreshments at

Covenhope Cottage on return

Well behaved dogs welcome

Tel: Pauline ~ 07796 590266



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

Aymestrey Village Telephone Kiosk

In 1936 the red K6 telephone box arrived in Aymestrey and was secured in a spot by the A4110 alongside Mr Walter Wilmett's property (Clerk's House) where it provided a useful pay as you call service for those in the parish who were otherwise without telephone communication at home. The original K2 box design was the result of architect Giles Gilbert Scott winning a national competition in 1924. The K6 version was made from cast iron and stands at 8' 3" tall. In 1980 Post Office Telephones privatised and morphed into British Telecom who took on maintenance.

In the 21st century with the arrival of mobile phones the usage of the big red boxes started to drop drastically throughout the country. Who was the last person to make a call in the Aymestrey box remains unknown; unless you dear reader can throw some light on this fact?

As reported in Aymestrey Matters Winter 2021 edition, the box, in a somewhat dilapidated state of repair, was relocated to the Parish Hall car-park after being purchased by Aymestrey Parish Council for the grand sum of £1. A working party consisting of Ian Goddard, Nick Wilmett, Phil Wilmett, Dave Dunn and Mark Farmer successfully relocated the box early one Sunday morning in November 2021.

Today the big red boxes are classed as iconic street furniture and new uses have been devised including book and jigsaw swaps, defibrillator locations, galleries and notice boards.

Since 2023 the newly refurbished Aymestrey box has taken the role of an Info Spot allowing access to those who wish to advertise for free: events, jobs, trades and items for sale as an alternative to social media posts. *SD*



PARISH COUNCIL VACANCY

There is one vacancy 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 needed!

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

Mortimer Medical Practice

News from the Patient
Participation Group (PPG)



Unfortunately some of you may have experienced delays when trying to ring the surgery, this is due to staff being busy helping other patients to complete the online Anima form especially when those individuals don't have internet access or who are unsure how to do it.

Please if you have the means and capabilities can you use the online form.

There is a tablet in the surgery for public use and you can then ask staff to help you, so if you have access at home then next time you will be able to fill in the form yourself.

It has been brought to our attention that the surgery will not talk to a relative or friend, regarding your treatment or even to arrange an appointment, if they answer the phone for you on a call back. If you add your preferences at the end of the information gathering box on Anima that you are happy for a particular person to take messages or even discuss your care, this can then be done. This information can at any time be added to your main notes but should still be put every time on your Anima form. This might help when a phone call is missed by the patient and might reduce the need for a phone call back to the surgery

If you *only* need a **medication review** this should be done using "admin request option" on Anima.

The surgery will be arranging further training workshops for the public to help with the completion of the Anima online forms, dates still to be announced.

Staff training:

The surgery and dispensary will be **closed** from 12pm to 4pm on Thursday 16th April (will reopen for business after 4pm) the reception will still be open during this time for emergencies and you will still be able to complete an Anima request.

Bank Holidays:

The surgery will be closed on the following days

Good Friday 3rd April

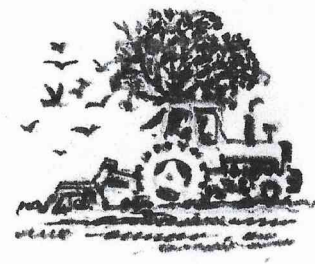
Easter Monday 6th April

Early May 4th May

Spring BH 25th May

Pauline Hammond

My Life in Young Farmers



My young Farmers journey started back in 2023, I was a late starter at the age of 25 and before joining I feared I would be too old. However I joined Teme Valley YFC and it was the best decision I have ever made; young farmers has given me so much; competing in competitions ranging from boys cookery, auctioneering, sheep and horse stock judging and my favourite competition Tug of War !

We also have had many farm tours, a recent tour around Markham's Garage in Kingsland and in January we always have our Annual Tractor Run.

In my short time being at Teme Valley I have been Chairman twice, once in 2024 and I am now the current Chairman, I have made good friends for life and I have met some wonderful people in the Parish of Aymestrey whilst partaking in such events as the Aymestrey annual bonfire and fireworks night, where Teme Valley YFC have helped with the car parking. Also a Burns Night Supper where our club waited on the tables and helped with pot wash and also last but not least holding our annual stall at the Aymestrey Village Fete ,

Any one who is reading this, if you are thinking of sending your children to Young Farmers or if you the reader yourself are thinking about joining, I cannot encourage you enough, you will love it. The age range for young farmers is 10-28 years old and our biggest slogan is YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A FARMER, TO BE A YOUNG FARMER and that is very true !

If anyone would like to chat more about Young farmers or have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me -

James Farmer
Chairman
Teme Valley YFC
07547106136

Parish Church of St. Michael & All Angels, Kingsland
Licensing Service for our New Vicar for the Mortimer's Cross Benefice

Reverend Maggie Tate-Druiff

Led by
Rt. Rev. Richard Jackson (Bishop of Hereford)

Kingsland Church

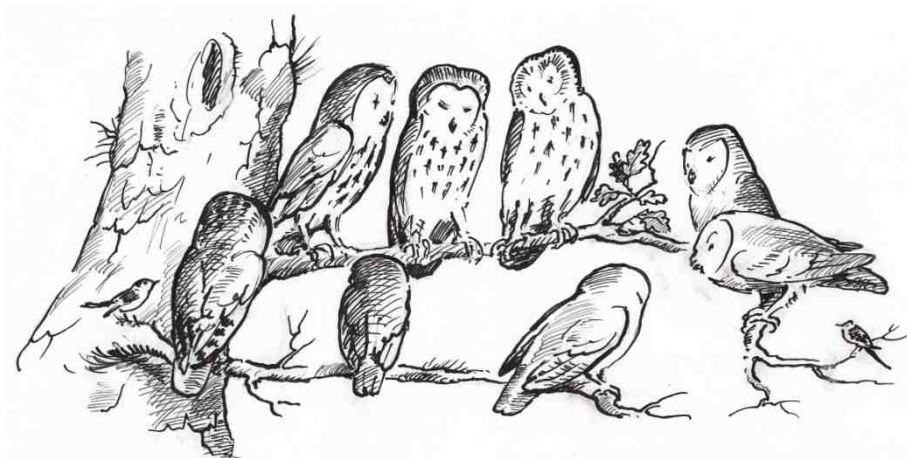
7pm

Monday 23rd March 2026

ALL WELCOME

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

John Probert 01568 708484	-	Dan Hurcomb hurcombdc@gmail.com
Domenica Dunne 07966103698	-	Pauline Hammond 01568 708044
Eleanor Waldron	-	Doug Murrie (contact both 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 Maggie Tate-Druiff
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

DATES FOR DIARIES 2026

When	What	Where
Mondays 7.00pm	Carpet Bowls	PH
Tuesdays 10.30am to 11.30 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

March

Munday 23rd 7.00pm.	Licensing Service for our New Vicar.	Kingsland
Wednesday 25th 7.00pm	Parish Council Meeting	PH
Sunday 29th 10.30am	Benefice PALM SUNDAY service	Kingsland

April

Thursday 2nd 6.30pm	Maundy Thursday Service	Kingsland
Friday 3rd 10.00am	Good Friday 'Walk with the Cross'	Leinthall Earls
Saturday 4th 10.00am.	Decorating the Church for Easter.	Aymestrey
Easter Sunday 5th 11.00am	Holy communion BCP.	Aymestrey
Easter Sunday 3.30pm	Holy communion CW.	Leinthall Earls
Friday 10th 8.00pm	Fun Quiz Night	PH
Sunday 12th 11.00am	Morning Prayer	Aymestrey
Sunday 19th 3.00pm	Evensong	Leinthall Earls
Wednesday 22nd 7.00pm	Parish Council Meeting	PH
Saturday 25th 7.00pm	Cheese and Wine Night	Yatton Court
Sunday 26th 9.30am	Forest Church	Aymestrey

May

Sunday 3rd 11.00am	Holy Communion BCP	Aymestrey
Monday 4th 10.00am	Walk in the (Shobdon) Woods	Covenhope tbc
Friday 8th 8.00pm	Fun Quiz Night	PH
Sunday 10th 10.30am	Rogation Sunday 'on farm' service	TBA
Sunday 17th 3.30pm	Holy Communion CW	Leinthall Earls
Friday 22nd. 2.00pm.	'Landscape, Architecture & Memory'. Talk by Nicola Kearton.	Aymestrey Church
Sunday 24th 9.30am	Forest Church	Aymestrey
Sunday 24th 1.00-5.00pmm	Border Peonies ~ Open Day	Gatley Farms, Leinthall Earls
Monday 25th 12.00-3.00pm	Plant & Produce Sale	PH
Wednesday 27th 7.00pm	Annual Meeting of the Parish Council	PH
Sunday 31st 10.30am.	Benefice Fifth Sunday Service.	Leinthall Earls
Sunday 31st 1.00-5.00pmm	Border Peonies ~ Open Day	Gatley Farms, Leinthall Earls

June

Sunday 7th 11.00am	Holy Communion BCP	Aymestrey
Friday 11th 8.00pm	Fun Quiz Night	tbc
Sunday 14th 11.00am	Morning Prayer	Aymestrey
Sunday 21st 3.30pm	Evensong	Leinthall Earls
Wednesday 24th 7.00pm	Parish Council Meeting	PH
Sunday 28th 9.30am	Forest Church	Aymestrey

WILDLIFE IN THE MARCHES



Watery Birding

What a winter it's been in North Herefordshire! It seems like a good time to talk about the local water birds in the spirit of 'it's been nice weather for ducks'. The local area is peculiar in that while it has lots of water-bodies (Teme, Clun, Lugg, Arrow, Redlake etc) it lacks much in the way of deep standing water which is typically where you would be looking for waterfowl. So, what do we have locally?

Let's start with the local breeding waterfowl. We have a few pairs of Mute Swans that breed in various places, along the Teme around Trippleton, Leintwardine and Nacklestone, in the pools immediately north of Aymestrey and possibly elsewhere from time to time. It's not uncommon to see families in summer anywhere along the Lugg or the Teme as they'll swim quite a distance from their nesting site. Both species are supplemented in the winter by more swans and both Greylag and Canada Geese that fly in from elsewhere. Occasionally we can get decent feeding flocks, and these can attract rarer swans and geese. There are records, over the past 20 years of Whooper Swan and White-fronted, Pink-footed, Bean and Barnacle Geese locally. So, anything can turn up and it is always worth looking on the meadows at Trippleton (easy to view from the road) or the floods at Nacklestone (again viewed from the roads where there are gates to fields).

In terms of ducks, we have three breeding species locally, Mallard, Goosander and Mandarin Ducks. These can turn up anywhere, but you might be surprised to learn that both Goosanders and Mandarins nest in holes in the trees rather than on the ground, so worth looking up! It does mean that Mandarin and Goosander ducklings have to jump out of trees (before they can fly) and then follow mum to the water when they leave the nest. One of the more nationally common breeding ducks that we are missing around here is Tufted Duck which will be familiar to anyone who has been to a large body of water to watch ducks elsewhere. The small pools around here are simply not deep enough to sustain these lovely diving ducks and I've only seen them once around here, on Jay Farm pool.

It's in the winter when looking out for ducks gets a little more interesting. Large numbers of Teal arrive from arctic Russia (Becky Smith, who conducts a wetland bird survey for the British Trust for Ornithology recently had a count of 130 Teal at Nacklestone). These small ducks can be found on any piece of water locally from the Teme to small wet areas like Pember's Ditch and Buckton Bog. Easily recognised by their short whistles that can be heard quite some distance away (have a listen on Merlin or the RSPB website). These can often be associated with Wigeon, and we have a few of these scattered around annually in the winter. Larger than Teal, you'll see them feeding on grass next to water bodies. Scarcer still, it's been a pleasure to find that small numbers of Gadwalls and Pintails seem to come through here. Gadwalls are a potential breeding bird, and I have once seen a pair together in spring near here.

Pintails would be unlikely to breed locally but I've now had three sightings in wintertime which has really pleased me as they are one of my favourite ducks, very elegant (see the photograph of one I saw wintering at Slimbridge). So even though we've all had a tough time the past couple of months with the weather, it has at least been good for our waterfowl. Let me know if you fancy going on a bird identifying walk any time by contacting me at mike.lwg@gmail.com.



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.

LANDSCAPE, ARCHITECTURE & MEMORY

The Art of Elizabeth Jane Woodhouse Lewis (1813-1874)

by Nicola Kearton

Nicola's talk on 22 May in Aymestrey Church (see poster) is going to focus on the art of Elizabeth Lewis who spent much of her life in Aymestrey. She was a gifted artist who left behind a treasure trove of finely-detailed drawings and watercolours. Images of local churches, fabulously-carved fonts, ruined castles, country houses and vernacular buildings nestling amongst steeply-wooded slopes leap from the pages of her albums. Some are particularly valuable as they record structures which have since been altered or lost. Her work reflects the intellectual curiosity of the Victorian period and the often-overlooked contribution of women.



Brought up by her maternal grandmother following the death of her mother in childbirth, Elizabeth lived for much of her life at Yatton Court. She was an unusually independent-minded young woman whose father Captain George Ferguson disowned her when she married the curate of Aymestrey, the widowed Revd Thomas Taylor Lewis. Lewis, who was born in Ludlow, was well-known in local geological circles as a key collaborator of the geologist Roderick Murchison in his ground-breaking classification of Silurian rock formations. Murchison named the stone quarried in the local quarry 'Aymestrey' [sic] limestone, as a gesture to Lewis, which is how it is known internationally today.

The 1830s-1850s was a time of rapid developments in many different fields especially in the natural sciences and local history and Elizabeth and Lewis shared many interests. Elizabeth had a particular fascination for architecture throughout her life. She became increasingly interested in conservation, and is likely to have inspired the restoration of Aymestrey Church completed after her death.

Aymestrey Matters has featured some of Elizabeth Lewis's drawings in other issues. For more see: Nicola Kearton, 'Charcoal burning in Aymestrey, (Autumn 2023), pp 26-27; 'The Story of Aymestrey Bridge and the flood of 1795' (Spring 2025) pp 10-13; Chrissie Lawson and Nicola Kearton 'Aymestrey Village School 1516-1965' (Summer 2024), pp 19-21.



A Talk in Aymestrey Church

'Landscape, Architecture & Memory'

by Nicola Kearton

on Friday 22nd May at 2pm



in aid of
Herefordshire Historic Churches Trust
and as part of
the Herefordshire Histories Festival
(Saturday 9 May to Monday 25 May 2026).

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