

Teme TRIANGLE

Clifton-upon-Teme • The Shelsleys • Lower Sapey



In this edition

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- Shelsley Events
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- Teme Valley Wildlife

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www.temetriangle.net

FREE to Residents

Front Cover - THE ECLIPSE EXPRESS

Neighbours and friends gathered at the Wilderness Railway in Shelsley Kings on the evening of 12 August to witness the eclipse of the sun. Michael Whitehouse and his family hosted the occasion, which saw friends arrive by steam train to the 'tunnel pagoda' to enjoy good fellowship, delicious canapes and local 2023 Grande Cuvée sparkling wine from Shelsley producer 'Upper Southwood' Vineyard. A fabulous time was had by all.

CALLING ALL FORMER STUDENTS OF THE CHANTRY

Students who live in Martley or surrounding villages and have attended The Chantry School this past year or in previous years and are attending college or university this autumn may be eligible for a grant from the Martley Old Grammar School Foundation. Examples for which the grant can be used for are textbooks, computer equipment, stationery items or specialist clothing. Applications have to be submitted by the end of September. A student can apply more than once up to the age of 25. A reminder too for students claiming this year's grants to submit their receipts. To receive an application form or for more information, please contact the secretary Cheryl Pearsall on 07812 483850.

YOUR TEME TRIANGLE TEAM

MAIN EDITORIAL MAILBOX

editortemetriangle@gmail.com

EDITOR THIS ISSUE

Shane Dossett

shaneadossett@gmail.com

CLIFTON NEWS / WEBSITE

Jerry Johns: 01886 812304

crown.house@polperropress.co.uk

SHELSLEYS NEWS

Louise Hutton: 07803 614078

louise@stroyd-hutton.com

LOWER SAPEY NEWS

Margaret Griffiths: 01886 853543

spock958@gmail.com

ADVERTISING/SPONSORSHIP

Andrew and Anna Brazier:

01886 887898

teme.triangle@thebraziers.co.uk

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STANFORD HISTORY GROUP 2026 PROGRAMME

7.30pm Monday evenings at Upper Sapey Village Hall, Upper Sapey WR6 6EU

5 October The Spanish Labyrinth I: From Civil War & Francoism 1936-1975

12 October The Spanish Labyrinth 2: Transition, Democracy & Monarchy 1975-2022 (Senior Teaching Fellow Antonio Sanchez Univ. of Birmingham)

19 October The Trump Administration: something different or more of the same? 1. From Settler Colonisation and Slavery to keeping the world safe for Democracy

26 October 2. From the Cold War to the War on Terror (Lecturer John Munro Univ. of Birmingham)

2 November Stabilising the level of Economic Activity, 1930s to the present
1. Keynes and Keynesianism – Pre WW2 to 1960s

9 November 2. Monetarism and After - 1970s to 2010s (Professor Roger Backhouse Univ. of Birmingham)

16 November The Rise and Fall of the East India Company

23 November The British Raj and its Undoing (Professor Neil Fleming Univ. of Worcester)

30 November The Decolonization of Africa: Success, Disappointment and Hope

7 December The End of Empire in the Sahara: The Tragedy of the Commons? (Associate Professor Berny Sebe University of Birmingham)

COSTS: The full course £70 or £10 for an individual lecture payable on the door or by bank transfer.

CONTACTS: <https://stanfordhistorygroup.com>

Simon Marriott 01886 853412 simon@adamswoodfarm.co.uk

David Kirrage 07899 817490 david.kirrage@icloud.com

Karon Jamous 07974 981275 karonjamous@aol.com

Alan Stuttard 01886 853465 ajstuttard@gmail.com

Rosemary Smart 01905 621895 ra.smart@kirk12.plus.com

Simon Neary 01584 781698 simon.neary1@googlemail.com

TEME VALLEY WILDLIFE

Our garden pond has been a great joy. Over the years we've witnessed so many unexpected wildlife encounters that I can't thank the garden's prior owners enough for having had the foresight to put it in. Wanting to build a garage, but not possessing anywhere flat, they had found themselves moving rather a lot of soil to create a level base. The homeless soil ended up as a retaining wall on another slope, which they then filled with water to create a small pond. They were keen on dragonflies, so tailored the pond to meet dragonfly needs. We have continued to look out for them and, as they had done, to send yearly records to the county dragonfly recorder. All told, we've seen twelve different species of dragonfly and damselfly either visiting or making themselves at home.

The pond is situated only yards from the kitchen window, so we have a fairly constant view of what's going on there. Many's the time we've dropped the washing up to rush outside and see what's new, maybe a water shrew, a heron, a bat, a sodden sparrowhawk drying its wings, a frog, a turquoise flash of kingfisher, even next door's cat looking to pounce on a grass snake!

Don't worry, we distracted the fascinated tabby and 'hissing Sid' slid into the water. He (or she) had been around for a few days, taking leisurely swims and drying off in the sun at the pond's edge. Whilst monitoring its activities (and protecting it from felines!) we'd seen it attempt to catch one of our resident toads. The toad was none too pleased and fought back, slowly drawing its legs out of the snake's jaws and valiantly waging a war of strength against the snake. This was no mean feat because the snake, a large and full-grown adult, was many times the size of the toad. Unfortunately, we did not get to see the end of this tug-of-war because both snake and toad disappeared under the water to continue their duel. It may be that the toad retrieved the rest of its body from the snake's jaws because the next time we saw the snake it had no telltale bulge to suggest that it had recently eaten a large meal.

The incident reminded us of another tussle worthy of a David Attenborough commentary which we witnessed some years ago, again featuring a toad. We had spotted an unusual visiting dragonfly and were just using binoculars to check its appearance against the details in the dragonfly guide, when a toad popped its head up out of the water and grabbed our subject of interest. Perhaps unwisely, the brown hawker dragonfly, for that is what it was, had rested on vegetation quite low to the water's edge. Expecting the match to be very one-sided, we were surprised by how tenaciously the dragonfly held on to the leaf it had grasped.

A very slow trial of strength ensued. Gradually, gradually, the dragonfly pulled more of its abdomen free and eventually, some fifteen minutes later, flew off. But we didn't see another brown hawker that year.



The next meeting of the Teme Valley Wildlife Group will be at 7:30pm on Thursday, September 10, at Stoke Bliss and Kyre Village Hall, WR15 8RR. We welcome Ros Bissell from Moors Meadow, Collington whose talk is called "A wildlife garden". As her garden, which I'm sure many will know, is inspirational, we'll be in for a treat. Members and friends are welcome; it is just £3 on the door. For up-to-date information on what wildlife is being seen in the area, or to give us your sightings or comments, please visit our Facebook page. Our programme of events, newsletter and bird survey are all available on the website www.teme-valley-wildlife.org. We hold meetings on the second Thursday of the month from January to November. All are welcome.

Stephanie Mocroft

BETTER THAN TELEVISION?

The Arts Society Teme Valley meets every third Wednesday in the month from September to June at 2.15pm at Ludlow Assembly Rooms. The illustrated talks by knowledgeable speakers include literature, theatre, gardens, painting, design, ancient culture, architecture and more. Visitors are welcome paying £8 at the door. Annual membership is £50 or £95 for couples for all nine talks, a quarterly Arts Society magazine and reductions for exploration days, outings and special events. After each talk there are refreshments. For more information www.theartsocietytemevalley.org.uk or tel: Ann Marriott 07801 178846.



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ABBREVIATED MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SHELSLEYS PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 14 JULY 2026

Present: Val Jones Chairwoman, Louise Hutton, Laura Taylor, Dave Bates, Carole Warren and Sean Hinton.

Apologies: Councillor Karen Metcalfe (vacation) accepted. County Councillor Justin Bowen.

Declaration of Interests: None.

Minutes: The minutes of the May 12 2026 were approved and signed.

Co-option of Councillor for Shelsley Kings: The vacancy was advertised on the website, notice board and in the Teme Triangle but there were no applications. The Parish Council will continue to advertise.

Midland Automobile Club:

The new large signs directing traffic to the hill climb are a great improvement and the MAC will be thanked.

Several complaints have been received regarding noise from early arrivals and engine revving before the agreed start time. This was mostly from corporate events and the MAC will be made aware.

Lengthsman, Highways & Footpaths: The Lengthsman's worksheets were accepted. The work on clearing the ditch by the Shelsley Beauchamp bungalows was praised.

WCC reports on any highways matters. Camp Lane closure from July 20 for 20 days.

Water by Worcester Way although the spring water has now stopped the landowner will be contacted to alleviate the problem which causes surface water and potential danger when freezing in the winter.

Sinkhole by the church signposting Shelsleys has been repaired.

Hedge from Church to bungalows. The owner to be contacted to cut back the hedge from the church to the Shelsleys bungalows.

The lengthsman will be asked to clear the very narrow part of the lane by the village hall which is liable to flooding. The Chairwoman offered to meet with the lengthsman to discuss the problem.

Planning: MHDC decisions are as follows:

M/26/00538/HP Brabant House orangery approved. M/26/00679/FUL Walcroft Farm refused.

Correspondence:

Letter to Chairwoman. The Chairwoman has received an anonymous letter. It is not known if it is from a parishioner or someone further afield. The Chairwoman wished it to be minuted that the matter cannot move forward until she speaks privately to whoever sent the letter.

Draft Charging Schedule. No comment

The Parish Council wishes to thank PCSO Partridge who is now the sole officer with responsibility for the local area.

Literature on Social Media Guidance from MHDC was circulated prior to the meeting so that all councillors would be familiar with the contents.

Village Hall: Councillor Laura Taylor agreed to continue as liaison with the Shelsleys Village Hall Committee.

The Annual Report and Accounts was received and circulated by email prior to the meeting. The Treasurer was thanked.

The start date for the electricity charge for enhanced signal has not been received.

A problem with installation affecting neighbouring properties has been resolved. An invoice for the hire of village hall has not been received. The clerk suggested a flat rate paid after each meeting. This was approved and if agreed with the village hall a standing order could be set up at £11 per month. The clerk to ask the village hall treasurer.

Bench update: Councillor Hinton will update by email and the request to the PCC to place a specific bench at the church will be pursued. Councillors will be sent details of this by email from Councillor Hinton.

As reported previously the owner of a bench which was kindly offered to the parish will be contacted shortly.

Open Space: Southwood Common: Deferred to the next meeting.

Finance: The following payments were agreed, Clerk's expenses £91.62 and Lengthsman £384.00

Councillors' reports and items for future agenda:

Area Meeting report. There was no report.

Information from CALC regarding the change of date for the area meeting arrived at the last minute and no one was available to attend.

The next is to be held on 1st October which will be a zoom meeting.

Councillors Warren and Taylor tendered their apologies for the next meeting.

Date of next meeting: 8 September 2026 7pm Village Hall.

Future confirmed dates for 2027 to be agreed at the 3 November 2026 meeting.

THE FILLING STATION

Our next meeting of the above will be on Thursday 17 September at Eastham Memorial Hall, Eastham, Worcs. WR15 8NP at 7.15pm for a 7.30pm start. At present I am awaiting confirmation of who the speaker will be but will let people on our mailing list know as soon as I have been informed.

We look forward to seeing you at our evening of fellowship, worship, teaching and refreshments. If you are not on our mailing list and would like further information or details about our meetings, then please do not hesitate to contact me on kate.harley6@gmail.com



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FRIENDSHIP GROUP VISIT TO THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

The Clifton Friendship Group is organising a day trip to the National Memorial Arboretum on Wednesday 30 September 2026.

Set in 150 acres of beautiful grounds, the Arboretum is home to more than 400 memorials commemorating the service and sacrifice of members of the Armed Forces, Emergency Services and civilian organisations. There will be plenty of time to explore the grounds, visit the Remembrance Chapel and gift shop, and hear some of the talks given by guides throughout the day.

Our visit will begin with a welcome talk, followed later by a 45-minute train tour of the grounds, which is included in the cost. Refreshments and meals are available from the café, coffee shop and restaurant, or visitors are welcome to bring a picnic.

The coach will leave Clifton Village Hall at 9.00am and Martley at 9.15am, returning at approximately 5.00–5.15pm. The cost is £25 per person, payable in full when booking, and includes return coach travel and the train tour.

The coach and facilities are disabled-friendly, with the coach dropping passengers close to the main entrance. Wheelchairs are available free of charge and mobility scooters can be hired for £10.

To book, or for further information, please contact:

Dot Millward:	07890 295269	Jenny Painter:	07935 799287
Wendy Ellis:	07891 902803	Chris House:	07931 307797

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

At last, the Apex Cross has been restored to the roof of St Kenelm's Church in Clifton. Thanks to the work of Dawson Steeplejacks who removed the cross last year whilst restoring the east end gable of the church where water was leaking in above the altar. Due to the hot weather there were concerns that the lime mortar would crack so they left a wet blanket around the base to protect the mortar hopefully this will have now been removed. The cross, which has also been restored, was badly cracked and had worked loose in the coping stone, becoming a health and safety issue as it was moving in the wind. The wall repair is still awaiting approval as various permissions are needed to ensure the work is done correctly due to the church being a listed building. It is hoped that by September the work will be started as it needs to be completed before the winter.

Part of the process included a visit by Historic England, who oversee all work to listed buildings, St Kenelm's is a Grade 2* listing. Their report has recognised the serious concerns with the state of the tower generally and the church has now been added to Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register highlighting the need for significant repairs. The hope is that this will help with raising grants towards the work needed, approximately £250,000 at current costings. Grants and donations have already been sought towards the initial wall repair of approx. £32,000 to ensure the emergency repair work goes ahead. A daunting task all round!

Further information will be shared whenever possible and several events are already planned to help raise funds including the Murder Mystery Evening in the Village Hall on Saturday 19 September (see page 19) and the Clifton Dog Show on Saturday 26 September. Also there will be regular Cream Teas, Coffee Mornings and information events and leaflets with ways of supporting a very special building that has been part of the village since 1200. Any help towards fund raising will be very helpful, please do contact me, ruth.wilson38@btinternet.com



Thank you to those who have been busy watering the new hedge at the rear of the church; despite the exceptionally hot, dry summer most of the plants are growing well.

Ruth Wilson, Churchwarden.

PARISHES TOGETHER BBQ

Sunday 9 August was a busy day for Shelsley residents, starting with an early morning 'Midland Automobile Club' service at St Andrews Shelsley Walsh, led by Archdeacon Mark. This was to mark the final Hillclimb of the season, the 'Championship Challenge'.

During this event there was also a team of volunteers collecting donations for St Andrew's - see the separate article regarding this.

A second service followed, this time held at All Saints, led by Rev Julia Curtis. There was music from cellist Corinne Frost and pianist Tim Goodall. Even the bell ringers were on show to gather everyone together.

And if this was not enough, there was then a Parishes Together BBQ held at Lower House Farm. All in all, a very happy, sharing, productive and enjoyable day in the Shelsleys.

Beryl Robson



WOMEN OF THE SHELSLEY'S

We now meet monthly, currently alternating between the third Tuesday and Wednesday evening of the month. In July we had a social evening with a fun and interactive session on using Vinted. August saw some of us enjoy afternoon tea at the Secret Gardens Tea rooms.

Our next meetings will be held on:

Wednesday 23 September – a social evening with a quiz;

Tuesday 20 October – Art workshop.

Currently our events are free, but we aim to support Shelsley Village Hall by purchasing drinks from the bar. A small charge or donation may be required for some activities to cover the costs of any materials.

For further information please message Susie Taylor: 07807 539043, or email Karen Metcalfe: kmetcalfe.shelseyspc@gmail.com

HILLCLIMB FUNDRAISING FOR ST ANDREW'S, SHELSLEY WALSH



L-R: Jo Moore, Alyson Cox, Carole Warren, Louise Hutton, Jude Bettinson, Bridget Francis, Rachel Wright. Missing from the photo: Val Jones and Karen Metcalfe.

Sunday 9 August saw a dedicated group of Shelsley ladies come together to fundraise at the Shelsley hillclimb. This annual event was raising funds for our beautiful Grade I listed, Norman church of St. Andrew's, based on the Hillclimb site at Shelsley Walsh.

Despite it being a roasting hot day, the ladies were outstanding and worked tirelessly to chat to people and encourage donations for the church. And it certainly paid off! This year's total was an amazing £1,209.42 - a huge increase on last year's total.

Very many thanks must go to the MAC for permitting us to carry out collections once again. Also to the MAC members, the drivers and their teams, and the spectators, for all their kind donations and friendly conversations.

Thanks also to Barry and Simon Hodgetts at SB Printing in Shelsley for creating beautiful new collection box labels and sashes for us - it really helped us to look the part!

Louise Hutton

LION CRIBBAGE TEAM WELCOMES NEW PLAYERS

The Lion Inn (Clifton Upon Teme) Cribbage Team is open to new players who wish to join whether you are an experienced player, a novice or just would like to learn.

League matches are played on Wednesday evenings between September 2026 and April 2027 visiting a number of Pubs within Bromyard and the surrounding area.

If you are interested and wish to learn more please contact the Team Captain Laura Hughes: rarahughes@icloud.com Mobile: 07585 905525.

WANTED – GIRLS FOR GUIDING

Clifton-on-Teme Girlguiding is inviting girls aged four to 14 to come along and discover what Guiding has to offer.

Rainbows, for girls aged four to seven, and Brownies, for seven to 10-year-olds, meet on Wednesday evenings, while Guides, for girls aged 10 to 14, meet on Mondays. All groups meet during term time. There is plenty to enjoy, from crafts, cooking and pottery to swimming, sport, trips and visits – as well as the chance to make new friends and have fun in a safe and friendly environment.

Anyone interested in finding out more can contact Angie Griffiths on 07957 462519 or email angiegriffiths@aol.com.

hArt WEEK IN HANLEY BROADHEATH

Although it still feels like high summer in Broadheath, my annual calendar tells me it's nearly time for my favourite exhibition event – Herefordshire Art Week, affectionately known as hArt.



Recognised by its bright pink and white signage, the 9-day event runs from 5th–13th September. I'm opening my home and studio, just two doors down from our wonderful local pub, The Fox (WR15 8QS). Look out for my pink signs by the village phone box directing you to venue 26 on the B4204.

I'll be joined by my friend, highly skilled silver art-jeweller Sarah Kinnersley of Skylark Jewellery. We welcome visitors daily from 11am–5pm, with complimentary

tea and cake and plenty of opportunity to chat about our work.

We hope the road closure on the B4204 won't affect visitors too much. Perhaps it will even give our local neighbours a quieter opportunity to visit!

For more information, visit www.h-art.org.uk.

Shelly Perkins

MURDER MYSTERY EVENING AT CLIFTON VILLAGE HALL

Clifton Village Hall will be transformed into the 'Clifton Casa Trattoria' on Saturday 19 September at 7.30pm, for an evening of murder, mystery, good food and fun.

Seven local actors will take on the roles of the decidedly dubious Roni family, headed by Rocco Roni. The family have gathered for a traditional dinner in memory of Rocco's brother, the restaurant owner – but there is one small complication: he has been murdered, and the murderer is sitting at the table!

As the evening unfolds, squabbles and accusations will break out and clues will emerge. Between courses, the actors will perform scenes and visit guests at their tables, where they can be questioned and challenged about their part in the mystery. It will then be up to the guests to piece together the evidence and decide whodunnit, with a small prize for those who identify the murderer correctly.

Tickets cost £10, including a two-course dinner, and there will also be a bar. Proceeds will be shared between Clifton Village Hall and St Kenelm's Church, helping towards the cost of repairs to the church tower. To book, contact Mandy Henry at amandajhenry1970@gmail.com, or telephone Tony Davis on 07764 578410.



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Saturday 1.30- 4.00
26th September

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IN AID OF ST KENELM'S AND CHILD OF HOPE

LOWER SAPEY NEWS

Where have July and August gone? Maybe this extreme hot weather has merged them into one, every day being similar and this has affected my memory. In July, I wrote that we were still waiting for summer and now it's almost gone and autumn will soon be officially here. Somehow, it doesn't feel like 'the days of mists and mellow fruitfulness' as the fruits are hard and shrivelled and the crops are not as good as usual in some cases. My pond is almost dry, my prided Gunera is listless and I am too weary to drag bucketfuls of water to it every day. I am afraid I am not a hot weather person and hide from the midday heat. I am sure this has been so much worse than the spell in 1976. The then government organised a rain dance, which helped, but I am not sure climate change will respond to this! The burning of over 20 houses in the West Midlands is so tragic and our thoughts are with all those people.

No doubt we will all have to make adjustments to our lives for the future. The good thing about it? Well, no cricket game has been cancelled because of rain stopping play! It is difficult to remember that New Road, Worcester was flooded seven times this winter. We have also been able to hold many services in the open and the 'Quiet Morning' services were appreciated.

St Bartholomew's held a very successful service celebrating the NHS, which included music, readings and contributions from present and former members of staff, all very entertaining. We also celebrated Lammas Day with a service; breaking of the bread, baked by the celebrant himself.

A sad note is that Marion West, former resident of Harpley, has sadly died aged 87. Marion lived in the area for over 30 years and recently moved to a home in Surrey to be near her daughters and grandchildren. A note from her daughter, Juanita, follows. She was a mainstay of our church, always making tea and coffee, baking cakes, washing the pots, looking after the flowers when necessary and calling in regularly on the church to make sure all was well. She was also a member of the PCC and the Ladies Bible Group for many years. We do miss her very much. Our sympathy and love goes to Genevieve, Juanita, Natasha and Stefan.

NOTICES

Church Services at St Bartholomew's (Please check dates and times nearer the dates)

Sunday 6 September Morning Prayer 10.30am

Sunday 27 September Circle Service 10.30am

There will also be a Harvest Festival, but no date has been fixed at the time of writing. I am sure all the farmers and growers will need all our prayers.

Housekeeping: We have no one to fill this gap yet, so I am sure we can all help. Ladies Bible Group: Due to members' holidays, there will be no meeting in September; we start again next month on 13 October at 2pm at The Hatt, by kind permission of Pat as usual. The Mobile Library will call on Friday 18 September at 10.20am.

Margaret Griffiths

IN MEMORIAM - MARION WEST

We are deeply sad to announce the passing of Marion West, who lived at The Elms, Tedstone Wafre for 30 years. Her memorial service will be held at St Bartholomew's Church, Lower Sapey at 2pm on 26 September. All are welcome. This follows her funeral service on 18 August in London.

She loved being a part of the Harpley community and was closely involved with St Bartholomew's Church for many years. She bred and showed sheep with her late friend Eileen, made wonderful, dearly-valued friends in the village, and helped organise church activities, local events and exhibitions. All her family loved visiting her at The Elms, and her grandchildren particularly enjoyed the annual Easter egg hunts and family Christmases there. She leaves behind her loving family, including children Juanita, Genevieve and Justin and grandchildren Natasha and Stefan.

Please join us in celebrating her life on 26 September. We don't have contact details for all her friends, so please accept our apologies if we have not contacted you directly.



Juanita West.

Marion West was one of the members of the original Teme Triangle team in the early years of this century in her role as the editorial correspondent for Harpley and Lower Sapey. She continued to play an active part in the monthly production of the magazine for more than 20 years before moving away from the area. She will be much missed by all of us.

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CLIVE AUSTIN TALK CANCELLED (or postponed?)



Clive Austin, who was due to give a talk on *The Oldest Hillclimb in the World* in Clifton village hall on 5 September, had to cancel as a result of falling off a ladder last month. Clive is pictured in hospital enjoying the attention of nursing staff.

A Letter from South Worcestershire Leaders

Dear residents,

So now we know. From April 2028, we will have a North Worcestershire Council and a South Worcestershire Council, delivering all services from bin collections to roads and social care for children and adults.

As leaders of the three district councils in South Worcestershire, we believe this is the right decision, not just for the communities we serve, but for the whole county.

Moving to a unitary is a government decision. It has to happen and we are fully behind a South Worcestershire unitary.

Our task now is to make reorganisation a success. The people of Worcestershire will expect us to focus less on yesterday's arguments and more on tomorrow's opportunities. That is the responsibility we all now share.

There is a long and complex road ahead. Working with Worcestershire County Council and our colleagues in the north, we are determined to seize this once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform services, move towards long-term financial sustainability, and deliver better outcomes for residents.

The proposal for two councils emerged from extensive public consultation. You told us it was important to reflect the distinct character of north and south Worcestershire, keep decision-making close to communities and protect the local services people rely on. We're pleased the Government listened to your voice, but you still have a key role to play.

The creation of unitary councils will enable the next stage of local government reorganisation and the devolution of power from Whitehall. This means that more decisions will be made locally by people who know Worcestershire well.

The subsequent formation in stage two of what are called strategic authorities, consisting of a number of new unitary councils constructively working together under a mayoral structure, allows the possibility of control of infrastructure development in our region supporting the economic growth and jobs that we need.

As the English White Paper says, "The number one mission of this government is to relight the fire of our economy and ignite growth in every region". To that end, we stand ready to play our part in making local government reorganisation and English devolution a success.

Over the next nine months, your existing councils will help shape the new authorities. In May next year, you will elect the councillors who will lead the final preparations before the new councils take over on 1 April 2028.

For many councillors, this will be the final chapter of a lifetime of public service. For others, it will be the beginning of a new one. Whatever the future holds, it has been the greatest privilege to serve the people of Malvern Hills, Worcester and Wychavon.

Until our final day, we will remain focused on serving our communities.

History will judge this moment not by the councils we create, but by the difference they make to people's lives. Our responsibility is to ensure the new councils inherit strong services, sound finances and thriving communities. That is the legacy we aim to leave.

A new and strong economic voice.

Councillor John Gallagher
Leader of Malvern Hills District Council

Councillor Lynn Denham
Leader of Worcester City Council

Councillor Richard Morris
Leader of Wychavon District Council

Church Matters

by Julia Curtis



SERMON FROM THE HILL

This month, with permission, we are publishing Archdeacon Mark Badger's sermon from the 8am Midlands Automobile Club service at St Andrew's, Shelsley Walsh in August. He was speaking on Matthew 14:22-33, and links it beautifully to the Hill Climb. Enjoy!

There can be few churches more closely associated with a hill than this one. For over a hundred years people have come to Shelsley Walsh to take on the hill climb. Some arrive with experience, some with enthusiasm, some perhaps with a little more confidence than wisdom, but all of them know that at some point preparation has to give way to commitment.

You can stand in the paddock discussing lines and gears. You can walk the course and study every detail. You can talk to those who have driven it before. But eventually the marshal points you towards the start line and there is only one thing left to do.

Go! I often think the Christian life feels rather like that.

Most of us would prefer to know exactly what lies ahead. We'd like a map of the route, a forecast of the weather and some reassurance that there are no surprises beyond the next corner.

But faith is rarely like that.

In today's Gospel, the disciples find themselves in a boat on a lake at night. The wind is against them. The waves are getting stronger. They are making little progress. Then, out of the darkness, comes Jesus, walking towards them across the water.

At first they think they are seeing a ghost. But Jesus says, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

Peter hears those words and responds with characteristic courage and impulsiveness. "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."

And Jesus simply says, "Come."

And so Peter steps out of the boat.

It is a remarkable moment. For a few seconds Peter does the impossible. He walks towards Jesus.

But then he notices the wind. He stops looking at Christ and starts looking at everything else. He becomes aware of the danger. He thinks about what might happen. And he begins to sink.

There is something wonderfully human about that.

Peter is not undone by the storm alone. The storm was there all along. He is undone because he lets the storm occupy his attention.

Drivers on the hill climb may tell you something similar. If you become fixated on the bank, you are likely to end up in the bank. If all your attention is on the barrier, you drift towards the barrier. The secret is to keep your eyes on the road ahead.

The same is often true in the life of faith.

The road before us is not always straight. Sometimes there are blind bends like Crossing or Kennel. Sometimes the gradient suddenly steepens. Sometimes we cannot quite see what comes next. Sometimes there are moments when all we can do is trust the line and keep moving forward.

Life itself can feel like that.

We face decisions about family, work, health and the future. We worry about those we love. We carry responsibilities. We wonder what lies around the next corner.

When we focus exclusively on those concerns they can seem overwhelming, just as the waves seemed overwhelming to Peter.

Yet the real miracle in this story is not that Peter walked on water.

The real miracle is what happens when he starts to sink.

He cries out, "Lord, save me."

And immediately Jesus reaches out his hand.

Immediately.

Not after a telling-off.

Not after Peter has made himself worthy.

Not after he has learnt his lesson.

Immediately.

That is the Gospel in miniature.

We are saved not by the strength of our faith but by the strength of Christ's faithfulness.

The Christian life is not about never doubting, never stumbling or never being afraid. It is about discovering that whenever we stumble there is a hand reaching out to us.

Perhaps that is why this story is such a comfort.

Generation after generation has climbed this hill. Different cars. Different drivers. Different conditions. Yet the same course.

Generation after generation has followed Christ. Different people. Different challenges. Different circumstances. Yet the same Lord.

And he still speaks the same words to his disciples today:

"Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

So whether the road ahead looks steep, whether the bends are sharp, whether the weather is fair or stormy, may we keep our eyes fixed on Christ, trust him for the next few yards, and remember that his grip on us is always stronger than our grip on him. Amen.

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**CHURCH SERVICES IN CLIFTON, THE SHELSLEYS
AND LOWER SAPEY (HARPLEY)**

September 2026

Sunday 6th September

10.30am: Holy Communion, St Kenelm's, Clifton

10.30am: Morning Prayer, St Bartholomew, Harpley

Sunday 13th September

10.30am: Holy Communion, All Saints, Shelsley Beauchamp

Wednesday 16th September

10.30am: Holy Communion, St Andrews, Shelsley Walsh

Saturday 19th September

4.00pm: Welly Church, St Kenelm's, Clifton

Sunday 20th September

10.00pm: Praise 4 All, St Kenelm's, Clifton

6.30pm: Choral Evensong, Led by Severn Voices Choir
and Friends of St Kenelm's, Light Refreshments at 6.00pm,
St Kenelm's, Clifton

Sunday 27th September

10.30am: Circle Service St Bartholomew, Harpley

3.00pm: Pet Service, St Kenelm's, Clifton

6.30pm: Evensong, St Kenelm's, Clifton

SEVEN SINGERS RETURN TO CLIFTON

The Seven Singers make a third return visit to St Kenelm's Church in Clifton on Sunday 20 September at 6.30pm when they will lead a service of choral evensong. Refreshments will be provided by the Friends of St Kenelm's.

Shelsley Harvest Service and Supper



Sunday 11 October 2026

Service at All Saints Church, 5pm

followed by



Supper at The Village Hall, 6pm

Tickets for the supper are £15 per person, £10 under 16's and under 5's free.

Tickets include a glass of wine and 2 course meal

(please feel free to bring any additional drinks that you may like - the bar will also be open).

Please do advise of any dietary requirements when you purchase your tickets.

Please contact Louise Hutton on 07803 614 078 or Carole Warren on 07891 861 490 for further details and tickets.

BERNARD HART (1947-2026)

Shelsley resident Bernard Hart sadly passed away at Astley Hall Care Home on 23 June. Born in the Forest of Dean and having spent some time living in Devon, Bernard moved to the Teme Valley in the 1980s. He married Rosemary in 1983, and in 1985 they welcomed their daughter, Lucy.



Bernard was a much-loved and active member of the community, giving generously of his time and energy to help organise many fêtes, galas and other community events. He also served as a Churchwarden for many years and would often take his turn leading family services — sometimes to be found on a Sunday morning searching for inspiration about what to talk about! Bernard loved to have fun, and I am sure that many of those reading this will have a favourite memory of his sense of humour, warmth and enjoyment of life. He was a kind and generous friend, colleague, husband and father, and his passing will leave a great sadness for all who knew and loved him.

We would like to thank everyone for their kindness, help, support and prayers during this difficult time. Bernard will be greatly missed and fondly remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

- 3 Clifton Parish Council meeting, VH 7.40pm
- 6 Music on the Lawn, Harborough Bank, Shelsley Beauchamp 4pm
- 8 Shelsleys Parish Council meeting, VH 7pm
- 10 Teme Valley Wildlife Group: Stoke Bliss and Kyre VH 7.30pm
- 17 Filling Station meeting, Eastham VH 7.15pm
- 20 Seven Singers, St Kenelm's Church, Clifton 6.30pm
- 26 St Kenelm's Fun Dog show, 2pm-4pm
- 27 St Kenelm's Pet Service, 3pm
- 30 Friendship Group outing to National Arboretum, VH 9am

OCTOBER

- 11 Shelsley Harvest Service and Supper, Church and VH 5/6pm

NOVEMBER

- 3 Shelsleys Parish Council meeting, VH 7pm

PET SERVICE

Rosettes and refreshments at the St Kenelm's Pet Service, Sunday 27 September, at 3pm.

Pets, bring your well-behaved owners... Celebrate our special friendship and support from God's animal creations.

CHURCH CONTACTS

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All Saints, Shelsley Beauchamp / St Andrew's, Shelsley Walsh Church Wardens:

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Clifton's Brian Butler discovered the 1959 Fordson Major tractor (above) sitting unloved in a field for 20 years and slowly transformed it into the beautifully restored vehicle below which made an appearance at the Martley Show last month.



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editortemetriangle@gmail.com

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