

# THE OXHILL NEWS

May 2022 No. 570



Red Kite painting by Grenville Moore.

*Vanessa Druce, editor & Grenville Moore, consulting editor*  
Email: [oxhill.news.editor@gmail.com](mailto:oxhill.news.editor@gmail.com) Website: [oxhillcommunity.co.uk](http://oxhillcommunity.co.uk)



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ARTICLE	PAGE
Hedge Fire	3
Oxhill Garden Club	4
Babysitter Available	4
Oxhill Garden Club Plant Sale	5
Art Competition	6
The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebration	7
Afternoon Tea	10
The Way We Were: The Fellows House	11
Nature Notes for May	14
St Lawrence Church	16
Wot2Grow Community Orchard	18
Townsend Hall	19
Climate Change Mitigation Event	20
Honeybee Swarms	21
Oxhill Village Hall	22
Nicholas Meese	24
Radway Grange Open Gardens	31

## CLUB & GROUP CONTACT DETAILS

Carers4carers:	kcarers4carers@gmail.com or tel: 07947 893504
Oxhill Village Hall:	Jo Collings - Chair - 01295 680215 Ali Sayer - Hall Hire - 07970 922352 email: village-hall@oxhill.org.uk
The Peacock Pub	01295 688060
Tysoe Tennis Club:	Club Secretary: Carol Spencer email: carol.spencer234@hotmail.co.uk
Warwickshire Mobile Library:	01926 851031
WOT2Grow Community Orchard:	Liz Atkinson (680045), Paul Sayer (680451), Sue & Mike Sanderson (688080) www.wot2grow.co.uk

**If you would like to list your club or group in the Oxhill News  
please send details to [oxhill@btinternet.com](mailto:oxhill@btinternet.com)**

## HEDGE FIRE

Our hedge caught fire although we have no idea how as we were indoors at the time. Luckily Jon was at the front of the house so saw the flames. The speed that the fire travelled up the hedge was scary but we got it under control before the fire engines arrived as they took 20 minutes. The firefighters drenched the hedge but then we had a couple of small smouldering fires set off in the front hedge and the compost heap, caused by flying cinders. The whole hedge will have to come out after nesting season because we can't have a hedge that burns like that close to the house - once seen, never forgotten.

*Ruth Mercer*



## OXHILL GARDEN CLUB



On Wednesday 6th April, Oxhill Garden Club had its very own Gardeners' Question Time. Rather than bring in the normal panel of Pippa Greenwood, Bob Flowerdew et al chaired by Kathy Clugston, it was decided that our local conditions and climate warranted a panel who could relate to our particular patch of God's earth. Thus plants-woman Christine Duke of Tysoe Open Gardens fame, small bugs and wildlife expert Professor Rosemary Collier, garden designer Adrian Fawcus, and nursery-man and graphic artist Josh Welsby were given the unenviable task of fielding the questions posed by our members and visitors. The evening was chaired by Peter Rivers-Fletcher who came armed with slides of shrubs and plants growing / expiring on his estate and live / nearly dead material from inside his mansion.

The questions posed to the panel ranged from what can I do with a fairy ring thru why can't I see tulips (or was it why can't they see me?) to should I take up pottery rather than continue to work my Oxhill garden soil. The erudite / knowledgeable answers to the many sensible questions that were asked are privileged information, but when you see gardens later in the year with verdant lawns, riotous colour, and fruit and veg in abundance you will know that the owners of said plots attended what was a very informative evening.

A quick plug for potting on: The next OGC event is our Bring and Buy Plant Sale 6pm Wednesday 18th May. All proceeds in aid of the Village Hall. Please bring along your plants, preferably labelled, from 5.30pm onwards.

*Douglas Nethercleft*

### **Babysitter Available!**

**I am available evenings and  
weekends.**

**I live in Oxhill so I am local, please  
email me if you're interested!**

**freyaod5@gmail.com**

**Freya O'Donnell**



# OXHILL GARDEN CLUB

**SPRING PLANT SALE**

**18TH MAY**

**6PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL**

**We return to our annual plant sale outside the village hall in the early evening.**

**This is now a 'bring and buy' event and the proceeds go to the village hall.**

**Please raise a few plants for this and/or dig up some plants from your garden to bring along.**



## ART COMPETITION

The Oxhill Art Group are currently working on paintings entitled '**A Right Royal Corgi**' for the Jubilee and the results will be on show in The Old Chapel.

This competition is open to all Oxhill age groups, but particularly children, so get drawing or painting. The subject is: One of the Queen's Corgis.

Please put your name and age on the back of your entry and deliver to Grenville Moore at Peacock House before 31 May. All entries will be on display in The Old Chapel throughout the Jubilee weekend.





## CELEBRATE IN OXHILL ON JUNE 2<sup>ND</sup>, 3<sup>RD</sup> AND 4<sup>TH</sup>, 2022!

Our plans are progressing well and we are very close to selling out of tickets. If you haven't got yours yet, get in touch as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. We have received a number of enquiries about guests who would like to come for only one of the two days, so provided the household has bought full price tickets for the event, additional one day tickets can be purchased for guests at £15 for adults and £8 for children. All ticket sales will close on May 13th, unless we sell out earlier which is highly likely.

### **What does the ticket price cover?**

All of the following events are included in your ticket, subject to weather conditions. (Times are mostly approximate!)

### **Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June**

Beacon lighting at 9.45pm in line with the National Beacon Lighting Programme, followed by a torch lit procession from Kirby Farm to the Church of St. Lawrence, Oxhill. Torches supplied.

### **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> June**

We will gather in the field next to the Old Chapel at around 12.45pm, have a photograph of everyone at 1pm before getting seated in the marquee for the Big Lunch. Serving of lunch will start around 1.45pm and will include salmon, ham, vegetarian quiche, a vegan dish, new potatoes and salad, followed by a cheeseboard and dessert. After lunch, there will be a break to allow for the marquee to be set up for the evening's entertainment. We are very fortunate to have some of The Simon Kemp Orchestra playing for us from 8pm so please come back to the marquee in time to listen to them.

### **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June**

Tea and cake will be served from the Old Chapel all afternoon from 2pm until around 4.30pm. Hobby Horse fun and games will also begin at 2pm in the field next to the Old Chapel. Hobby horse classes will be:

- Best turned out hobby horse - Child (15 and under)
- Best turned out hobby horse - Adult (16 and over)
- Grand National - Adults
- Grand National - Colts & Fillies (15 and under)
- Show jumping - Adults
- Show Jumping – Junior

The Grand National course will be in the field opposite Beech Row by kind permission of Mr and Mrs. A. Welford. Children's games will start at around 3.30pm and the water volleyball tournament will run throughout the afternoon. Water volleyball requires a team of four, but please register your interest even if you don't have a team of four as we can put you in a team. Inside the marquee, there will be face painting and crafts for children. At 5pm, Iain Lachlan will entertain the children in the marquee.

At 6pm, Happy Herefords will be coming to cook us burgers and hotdogs, with vegan, vegetarian and gluten free options available. From around 8pm, we will be entertained in the marquee with a short quiz and some locally grown talent.

### **Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June**

The day of the big clear up! Arrive at 10.30am and there will be bacon and sausage baps for all helpers.

The celebration will conclude with a Songs of Praise service in the church in the afternoon. Please request your favourite to Jill Tucker for inclusion in the service.

The church will be open for visitors from around midday on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June, beautifully decorated with flowers and with an exhibition – Oxhill: Then and Now.

### **Not for Profit**

Although this event is being organised by a team operating through the Oxhill Parochial Church Council Social and Fundraising Committee, the aim is to cover our costs, not make a profit. We also set out to make this a whole-village event in which everybody who wanted to take part could join in. We have received some generous support from the Parish Council and the community for which we are very grateful, as it has enabled us to achieve our objective.

If you are involved in catering for the event, please keep receipts and reclaim the cost of any ingredients you have to buy.

### **Badges**

We will be issuing name badges to everyone who has bought a ticket along with tickets for Happy Herefords. You should receive these before the end of May. Access to the field and the event will be restricted to badge holders only so it essential that you wear them throughout the event. This will be patrolled, no badge, no entry and no food! The event is effectively a private, ticketed function. Wear your badge with pride!

### **Road Closure Notice**

Approval has been given by Stratford on Avon District Council for the closure of Main Street from the junction of Whatcote Road to the junction with Green Lane on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> June and Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June. This is to ensure the safety of all attending the Jubilee



Celebrations. The section of Main Street from The Peacock to its junction with Back Lane will be used for the Jubilee Celebrations but closing the whole length of Main Street will ensure that Beech Row and Back Lane aren't used as a diversion.

The diversion route will be via Green Lane and Whatcote Road. Access to properties affected by the road closure will be maintained at all times.

### **Volunteers**

Thank you to everyone who has already volunteered to help with the event. We are still in need of more help to make the event safe and enjoyable for all. If you have a talent for health and safety and risk assessments, we should definitely like to hear from you! We would also like more First Aiders, marshalls and cooks.

If you have signed up to help with food preparation and haven't been contacted yet, Joanna Griffiths will be calling you very soon.

### **Be Prepared!**

The Oxhill Jubilee celebration is organised "In the Village, By the Village, For the village" so it is now time for everyone attending to make it fun and successful for everyone. Now is the time to prepare for the event:

- ❖ Buy your tickets and supply all the ticket holders' names for their badges
- ❖ Build a hobby horse, or decorate an existing one
- ❖ Enter one of the hobby horse races by emailing Ed Bracher, edbracher@gmail.com
- ❖ Enter the Oxhill Water Volleyball Competition by emailing Andy Buchanan, andrew@andrewjbuchanan.com
- ❖ Get involved in making Oxhill look spectacular for the jubilee by decorating your house/garden
- ❖ Come to the Old Chapel at 7.30pm on May 19<sup>th</sup> to learn the Song of the Commonwealth, to be sung at the Beacon lighting

### **Any questions?**

If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions, please contact Ruth Mercer by email [oxjub@btinternet.com](mailto:oxjub@btinternet.com) or on 07400 615999.

For regular updates, follow our Facebook page, Oxhill Celebrates the Queen's Platinum Jubilee!

Thank you for your continuing support.

# CHURCH FUNDRAISING TEAM

## Afternoon Tea with Prosecco

Tickets are selling fast for our Afternoon Tea with Prosecco on Sunday 8th May at 3pm, in the Old Chapel, so please call or email me to reserve your places as soon as possible! There will be plenty of freshly prepared sandwiches and savouries, homemade scones and cakes, all for the most reasonable price of £10 per adult ticket to include a glass of Prosecco, £5 for school age children and free for under 5s.

If you are able to help on the day with setting up, serving tea or clearing up, please contact me.

Ruth Mercer  
07400 615999  
or email  
[ruthc.mercer@  
btinternet.com](mailto:ruthc.mercer@btinternet.com)

# Afternoon Tea & prosecco at the Old Chapel

Sunday  
8th May  
3pm

*Scrumptious  
sandwiches  
and delectable  
home baked  
cakes*

£10 Adults  
£5 Children

To book, contact  
Ruth Mercer: 07400 615 999

St Lawrence's Church, Oxhill Fundraising Committee



# The Way We Were



## THE FELLOWS HOUSE

*by Carol Clark*

One single tantalising sentence in Ann Hale's notes, relating to a 1991 telephone conversation with local researcher Charles Ivins, reads "Fellows House belonged to/with Oxhill House from 1500s". I imagine the Oxhill House deeds could throw more light on this connection, but for now let's focus on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In the mid-to-late nineteenth century, the area between The Fellows House and Old House was much more densely populated than today. The line of buildings now joining these two properties comprised several cottages, and an 1886 map indicates that The Fellows House could also have been subdivided into three separate properties. Furthermore, an advert in the Stratford Herald from October 1886 relates to the sale of five cottages described as fronting both Turners Lane (Manor Lane) and Dock Lane (Back Lane), which would put them on the corner site.

This line of cottages included amongst its inhabitants in the mid 19th century two brothers (William and John Thackwell) and their families. In a scarlet fever epidemic that swept the village in 1869-1870, William lost five of his children, and John two. The cottages, never very sanitary, were empty for many years towards the end of the 19th century, and certainly the properties on Back Lane were semi-derelict in the early years of the 20th century.

In the 1891 census, a local Oxhill man, Charles Taylor, first appears at The Fellows House property, with his new wife, Jane Anne nee Terry, who was from Sussex, but taught at Oxhill School between about 1885 and 1888. Charles was the village carpenter and coffin maker as well as doing general building and decorating. He used the roadside outbuilding on Kinton Road between Fithers Field and Aytonholm as his workshop. I have a copy of a vintage photo in which the shed is just visible in the background, complete with a thatched roof.

Charles seems to have been quite a high-profile member of the village community; he was an Overseer of the Poor and also enumerated the 1911 census. It is thought that the name "Dock Lane" (the old name for Back Lane) derives from the custom of having a village "coal dock", where coal would be distributed in small bags to the poor of the village. Ann Hale in the early "noughties" notes that one older resident remembered The Fellows House being known as "The Dock", and with Charles' role as Overseer of the Poor, he may well have had the duty of distributing the coal.

Charles and Jane Anne had three children, two boys and a girl. Their younger son died, aged 4 in 1899; their eldest child, also named Charles, contracted tuberculosis in young adulthood, for which the only treatment in those days was bedrest and plenty of fresh air, so poor Charles was effectively banished to a shed or outhouse in the garden, where he even slept. Some patients did survive such a treatment, but Charles succumbed at the age 29 in 1921. His sister Elizabeth, however, went on to marry Leonard Cornes, and although they moved away from the village, Elizabeth (Lizzie) returned to live in Blackford Way after she was widowed, until she passed away in 1985 aged 88. Charles Taylor senior died in 1944, and the property was presumably sold.

In the 1960s, The Fellows House was bought by Peter and Gill Moreton. Peter, I recall, was passionate about the Civil War re-enactment society, the Sealed Knot, and drafted in a number of the village's more energetic inhabitants, including my sister. I remember our mother sewing period dresses from old brocade curtains for her supporting role as a "wench".

Lynn and Bruce Endenburg now live in Fellows House.



*The Sealed Knot is the oldest re-enactment society in the UK & the biggest in Europe.*

*I first met Peter Moreton shortly after we had taken the pub over in 1967. He had just moved into Fellows House with his wife Jill and daughter and son, Lorelei and Nigel. My friend David Fisher from Kineton had just helped Brigadier Peter Young publish his first book on the English Civil War, Edgehill 1642 and it was decided to form the historical re-enactment society The Sealed Knot. Peter joined straight away and shortly after I was recruited to David's regiment of dragoons.*

*The brigadier hosted a splendid dinner at the Peacock to which he mustered some of his ex army chums, including some of his 'ways and means society' commando regiment, all were dressed in their Cavalier best ! Peter Moreton was made General of The Great Traine of Artillery and Fellows House became the HQ.*

*A Napoleonic 6 pounder bronze cannon barrel was 'borrowed' from Woolwich Arsenal and found its way to Peter's HQ. Back then the Fellows House was two separate buildings with a drive in and courtyard. 17th century plans of a six pounder cannon also known as a saker were found, and using the barrel, a perfect 17th century replica was made in that courtyard. The cannon was huge and weighed in at just over a tonne and a half.*



*Grenville in the Sealed Knot as a Cavalier.*

*There was a wonderful little workshop with a stove and David and myself were working on some armour with the fire roaring when Nigel arrived home from school (all other family members were out) and wanted to help; he was told very politely to go away ! Some minutes later we heard the key click in the door, he had locked us in, he then proceeded to fetch a ladder climb up onto the roof and enthusiastically place a slate over the chimney....we began to choke and no amount of shouting and encouragement would persuade Nigel to let us out. Fortunately we had some water and managed to quench the fire and patiently wait for Peter to arrive and release us....I got home and my mother said "good lord Grenville you smell like a kipper!!"*

*Grenville Moore*

# NATURE NOTES FOR MAY

*by Grenville Moore*

May brings with her the beauty and fragrance of hawthorn blossoms and the song of the nightingale. Our old poets delighted in describing her as a beautiful maiden, clothed in sunshine, and scattering flowers on the earth, while she danced to the music of birds and brooks. She has given a rich greenness to the corn, and the grass is now tall enough for the flowers to play hide and seek among, as they are chased by the wind. The grass also gives a softness to the dazzling white of the daisies and the glittering gold of the buttercups.

Chambers Book of Days (1864)



*Both photographs of a Red Kite were taken by villager Steve MacRae above his garden in January 2022*

A couple of weeks ago Jane and I were walking back from Tysoe playing fields to the car parked outside the shop, we were alerted to look up to the sound of mewing and directly above us in the centre of Tysoe were a pair of Red Kites (*Milvus milvus*) they were cartwheeling and tumbling together; this is generally a mating ritual. They tumbled to tree height at which point the male started to rapidly rise and as he did so from his talons he released a chunk of food, she immediately flipped over onto her back and caught it in her talons: she was barely at rooftop level, it was quite a sight. This is known as ‘food passing’ and is not that uncommon with some species of birds, I have seen Short Eared Owls and Hobbies do it but never large birds of prey. The bird’s long, loose wings are strongly angled



at the carpal joint and, with a deeply flexible forked tail, give it unparalleled manoeuvrability. They have the ability to remain stock still in mid-air with only the tail twisting like a rudder and in a second the wings can fold and they dive like a Stuka bomber.

The Red Kite is now listed as one of the country's favourite birds. They had almost

completely died out in the UK with just a small population in central Wales. I can remember going with the Warden back in the seventies to try and see one and getting terribly excited when we saw one about a mile away through our binoculars. In 1989 seven pairs were released in the Chilterns, and the rest as they say is history. It is now estimated that there are approximately 1,800 breeding pairs in Britain, about half of this number is in Wales and the rest in England and Scotland and this total is about 7% of the world population. Red Kites are scavengers and carrion eaters; their main diet is dead animals and road kill although they will take rabbits, pheasant, rats, mice and very occasionally reptiles. In Tudor times the London population of kites was protected by statute for its valuable refuse-disposal service but they would also readily take food out of people's hands.

One of the Kite's more unusual habits is its penchant for adorning the nest with all sorts of scraps, from animal dung and old corpses (including once, two dead kittens) handkerchiefs, a wig and items off the washing line. The novelist Henry Williamson wrote a short story entitled 'The Flight of the Pale Pink Pyjamas', which describes a 'kite's predatory assault on a Devon washing line'.

Remember on the first of May to leave a branch of May blossom, hawthorn, birch or rowan at a friend's door as a luck giving compliment; but beware gifts of other kinds of tree can be insulting;

Nut for a slut, plum for the glum  
Bramble if she ramble; gorse for the whores.

Philip Strubbes The Anatomy of Abuses 1583

# NEWS FROM ST LAWRENCE CHURCH, MAY 2022



*Brian McLaren*

Easter means new life in abundance: resurrection has begun, and to quote Brian McLaren

*'We are part of something rare, something precious, something utterly revolutionary. It is an uprising, armed with hope, not weapons: with love, not hate.'*

That is something incredibly special that God gives us to bring to our world, rocked as it is by Covid and Ukraine, Sudan, Ethiopia and countless others. May we take hold of it.

## SERVICES IN MAY– IN ST LAWRENCE CHURCH UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.

May 1<sup>st</sup> 9.30am Holy Communion

May 8<sup>th</sup> 9.30am Holy Communion

May 15<sup>th</sup> 9.30am Morning Worship

May 22<sup>nd</sup> 6.30pm Evening Worship

May 26<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm Deanery Ascension Day Service at  
St. George's Church, Brailes

May 29<sup>th</sup> 11.00am United Service at  
St. George's Church, Brailes



## COME BACK TO SINGING

Now that we are singing again, anyone who enjoys singing is warmly invited to join me at our RSCM (Royal School of Church Music) singing event on **Saturday, May 7th between 2.00 pm and 4.00 pm at Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-on-Avon.**

'Come Back to Singing' will explore the readily accessible music of Taizé, Iona and Margaret Rizza. Both singers and those who play wind or string instruments (Grade 5ish) are welcome. The afternoon will be led by Douglas Keilitz, who is Director of Music at Holy Trinity, and will end with a short act of worship incorporating the music we have learnt. The cost of the afternoon is £5.

For further information, or if you wish to book, please contact me, on [revjill.tucker@btinternet.com](mailto:revjill.tucker@btinternet.com)





*'Come back to singing' Choir at the Royal School of Church Music, Stratford upon Avon*

I shall be there, and it would be lovely to see some faces from Oxhill!

## QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

As part of those celebrations, there is some singing to do. There is a Commonwealth Song (A Life lived with Grace) to be sung as the beacons are lit, and some Last Night of the Proms songs for the entertainment. So I will be leading a **practice in The Old Chapel on Thursday, May 19th at 7.30 pm**. No doubt a suitable libation will be served, to assist the vocal chords in their effort! All are welcome!

Also as part of the celebrations, the Sunday Service that weekend will be a Songs of Praise at 3.30 pm in the afternoon, followed by more tea and cake! If you have a favourite hymn you would like us to include, could you let me know?

*Jill Tucker*

01295 680663

[revjill.tucker@btinternet.com](mailto:revjill.tucker@btinternet.com)



## WOT2GROW COMMUNITY ORCHARD

A wonderful Easter tide spell of weather made such a difference to the countryside and the orchard! The early blossom of the stone fruit, plums and damsons etc, gave way to some amazing cherry and pear displays and even some very early apple blossom.

Bright Future is a coxes apple derivative and was the first to come into full bloom along with the dandelions! Although the birds get the cherries every year the beauty of their blossom is a consolation and so long as the late frosts are not too hard there might get some to eat this year.



*Cider Apple Tom Putt*



*English Cherry Blossom*

The perry pears in particular have been a cloud of pure white blossom along with the four varieties of eating pears. And the cider apples are showing wonderful buds along with the Merton Worcester apples which are also an early variety. The rest are yet to come!

Mowing has started and the members have been busy with the soft fruit by pruning, edging the rows and clearing weeds. There are currants, raspberries, blueberries, and gooseberries which all needed attention during the busy Spring time with weather allowing!

Always lots to do so if you would like to help then do get in touch – use the contact numbers below or message us via the web site.

The Community Orchard is just behind the allotments on the Shenington Road in Tysoe.

Liz Atkinson (680045), Paul Sayer (680451), Sue and Mike Sanderson (688080)  
website [www.wot2grow.co.uk](http://www.wot2grow.co.uk)



*Perry Pears and Pear Blossom*

## **MOBILE HAIRDRESSER NEEDED**

We are very keen to try and locate a local, mobile hairdresser who is used to doing hair for older ladies. A personal recommendation from someone in the village would be great. Myrtle needs a cut and blow dry every fortnight or so. We would like to have someone kind and trustworthy visit the house to do this.



Please call Louise Beresford (Myrtle's daughter) on 07809 264884 to discuss rates and schedule.

*Thank you*

# CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION EVENT

The Climate Change Mitigation Event held in the village hall on Saturday 23rd was a great success with a good number of people dropping in. The event was organised by Parish Councillor Lis Stuart and supported by OWLS, three members of SevenTrent were present and gave a lot of valuable information on saving water and electricity and cutting fuel bills. There was a terrific array of environmentally safe kitchen and bathroom products with many for sale. Owls were very busy giving advice on wild flower growing and small ponds for wildlife.

*Grenville Moore*



## LIVE MUSIC!!

So much going on at the hall. “**Richard Leach’s Street Band**” were an absolute treat – photos and video now available on our Facebook page. When this goes out, we will have welcomed Cotswold Events back for an Elton John experience and you might just about be in time to still grab tickets to enjoy their “**The Denotones 60’s Party**” 7th May.



Meanwhile, we had “**Bateman Brothers Jazz Band**”, complete with their own “Louis Armstrong” and “Ella Fitzgerald” for a Basin Street Blues experience! We’ll report back next time, but we’re confident this will have gone down a storm.

Looking ahead, we’ve got “**Fret and Fiddle – Sally Minchin’s String Quintet**” booked for Friday May 27th. Tickets will be available from [ticketsource.co.uk/townsend-hall](https://ticketsource.co.uk/townsend-hall) or from A. Clarke Electrical Services in town. Take a look at [fretandfiddle.co.uk](https://fretandfiddle.co.uk) to whet your appetite.

Looking a bit further ahead, we’re so excited to see that the Proms will be back this June and look forward to welcoming some great events to the hall over the two weeks. As part of the programme, we’re pleased to announce that we’ve got “**Baby Jools and the Jazzaholics**” back. They were previously with us December last year when things were still tough with covid – they were so much fun and not enough people got to enjoy their performance in the circumstances.

As always, keep up your support for the hall, maintained through a charity – so much going on, not just live music – plenty of other events, sports and clubs. **150 Club winners in the April draw** are: £15 no. 46; £10 no. 18; £5 no. 121.

Visit us at [townsendhall.co.uk](https://townsendhall.co.uk) to find out more.

# HONEYBEE SWARMS

A honeybee colony swarming is a natural process. It's the colony reproducing by the old queen leaving with some of the bees. They leave their feral nest or beehive and find somewhere nearby to hang in a cluster until the scout bees decide on their new home.



Most swarms occur on warm Sunny days in May to the end of July between 11am and 4pm. Often there is a peak on a fine day after poor weather when temperatures approach the high teens. A honeybee swarm can be dramatic involving many thousands of bees in a large noisy cloud, however they normally settle into a cluster within 15 minutes. If the scout bees find a new home relatively quickly, the bees can take flight again within a couple of hours but invariably before dusk.

Once the bees have occupied their new home, especially if in a chimney or building, they will be almost impossible to remove. Best advice is to leave them be

if it doesn't interfere with the household routine or activities – they won't cause any damage to the property. Just be proud that they have adopted your dwelling as a des res!

Should you see a swarm cluster please visit [www.bbka.org.uk/honeybee-swarms](http://www.bbka.org.uk/honeybee-swarms) where, by entering your postcode, you can find the nearest swarm collecting beekeeper to you. He or she will ask you questions about where the cluster is, its size, how long it has been there and your contact details. Describe what you have seen or ideally send a picture. Swarm collection is done by volunteer beekeepers at their own discretion. Do not contact other beekeepers once one has agreed to attend. Please call the collecting beekeeper if the swarm leaves before he / she is due to arrive!

Shipston Beekeepers' swarm collection coordinator is Mike Cherry - 07976 316063

*Douglas Netherclef*



## OXHILL VILLAGE HALL

**AGM on Wednesday 25th May starting at 7pm**

Join us for drinks and nibbles before the meeting at 7.30 pm.

Hear the latest news on the renovation project and plans for the coming year.

**Village Fete Saturday 3rd September 2.30 to 5pm.**

At Newborough House

Keep the date - more details later



*Photographs by Barbara Biknell taken at the best of British Evening held at the Village Hall on the 23rd April 2022.*



*John Hales prepared an in-depth study of the Meese family, who are historically connected to Oxhill through Nicholas Meese, rector of the Oxhill Church in the 17th century. Nicholas was also the father of Perletta, whose name survived the centuries as having a slave called Myrtilla. Myrtilla's grave is in the Oxhill church graveyard. John's article is a fascinating look into the Meese family and times of the 17th century. ~ ed.*

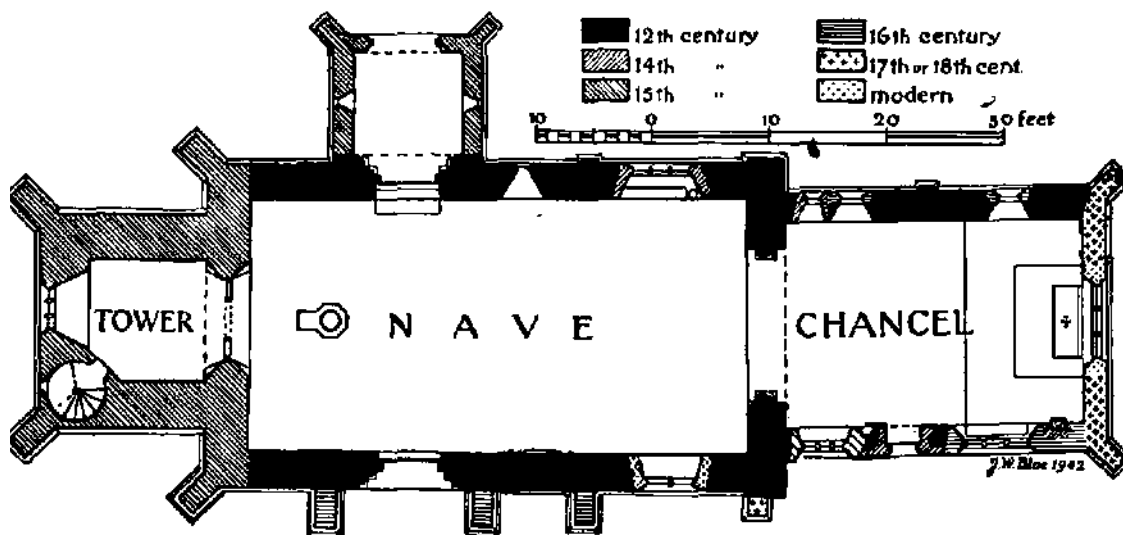
## NICHOLAS MEESE

*by John Hales*

Nicholas Meese, the father of Perletta was for many years rector of Oxhill from 1669 and of Idlicote from about 1679 when Joseph Brooke the rector was buried. Meese would owe his appointment at Idlicote to the Lucy family. He died in 1715 blind [luminibus orbatus deprived of light] and tired of life [vitae taedium]

His monumental inscription:

*17. \* P M S Viri Reverendi NICHOLAI MEESE STB Ecclesiarum Vicinarum de Oxhill et Idlicot Per Multas Annos Rectoris Dignissimis qui dum munus Pastora dignaviter obiter. Luminibus Orbatus Hujusce miserimae Vitae Taedium Ad extremum usq; Senectutum. Mira pertulit Patientia Quem tandem respicere Deus. Post Longam Tenebrarum Noctem Perpetuo redonavit Die Obiit 18 Die Junii Anno Domini 1715 Aetatis suae 86*



*Plan of St Lawrence Church Oxhill with dates of construction.*





*St Lawrence Church exterior north side, Oxhill. 1920s*

Nicholas was the eighth son of Robert, of Over Worton, Oxon, baptised in April 25th 1629. He probably owes his first name to his maternal grandfather Nicholas Brend the landlord of the Globe, but also a barrister as was Nicholas's uncle Edmund Meese.

Nicholas went to St John's College Oxford in 1645, at 15; he was a scholar of Trinity College Oxford but then removed in a purge by a Parliamentary Visitation in around 1648. One infers he submitted to the Parliamentary visitors for he regained his place and in 1650 the Visitation ordered he have a probationer fellowship confirmed as an actual fellowship in 1652. He seems to sit out the commonwealth in Oxford.

He was ordained deacon and priest on the same day by Bishop Skinner 16th December 1660. Canon law probably did not allow this so the ordination is probably a sign of favour from the Royalist Skinner who had been deprived of his bishopric at Oxford between 1646 and 1660.

He was Proctor in 1661 meaning he was exercising the university's right to police the city's streets at night. This post suggests that he was trusted by the Restoration authorities. His ordination and academic career suggest someone who might have expected a notable clerical career.

His next move was to distant Stokenham, in Devon in 1663. This is explained by family connections in Devon. His older brother Robert was also a 'clerk', a priest, and had land there. Stokenham was near Plymouth, a great trading port loyal to Parliament throughout the civil war. Robert's wife Sybell had parliamentary sympathies and was arrested and held in the Marshalsea, Dartmouth for alleged spying for Parliament, that is giving information to His Majesty's enemies, perhaps about troop movements and had to pay a bond of £200, a very large sum of money, the 11th September 1644. There is no doubt this is Nicholas's brother as his will refers to both Sybil his wife mentioned in the bond, and Nicholas who receives his books.

Robert might have been away for Hegarty suggests he may have been rector at Heythrop, Oxfordshire to 1655, where his sister was wife to the Lord of the Manor.

The manor of Stokenham Priory belonged to Sir Gregory Norton, Bart., one of the Regicides who authorised the execution of Charles the First. During the commonwealth there was a fiery priest Mr Cleland at Stokenham but with the restoration, the previous vicarage was restored to Mr Stiles was old by then and so in 1663 Nicholas Meese took over. His task was no doubt to keep things calm.

Robert died in 1664, aged about 45. His death may have been a factor in Nicholas resigning. According to Hegarty, Nicholas was next engaged in raising funds for Trinity college and ceased to be a Fellow of the college in about 1666/7. Fellows were not allowed to be married under the Elizabethan statutes and the Laudian code of 1636. Nicholas married Jane Clarke in Oxhill the 23 Oct 1665 so his Fellowship should have finished around then.

THE  
**World turn'd upside down:**  
 OR,  
 A briefe description of the ridiculous Fashions  
 of these distracted Times.  
 By T. J. a well-willer to King, Parliament and Kingdom.



*London : Printed for John Smith. 1647.*

*"The World Turned Upside Down" is an English ballad. It was first published on a broadside in the middle of the 1640s as a protest against the policies of Parliament relating to the celebration of Christmas. Image: 1646 publication of the ballad with a woodcut frontispiece.*

The Meeses had sold their land in Over Worton in 1649. His oldest brother John had estates in Binley, Warwickshire where he was buried in 1667, as revealed in his will. George Meese and Matthew Meese also lived there. John Meese's will refers to his chaplain William Stevenage. Stevenage ordained a deacon in 1638, had been a curate at Over Worton, officiating at the marriage of Elizabeth Meese in May 30th 1649. He was the vicar at Tysoe, 3 miles from Oxhill, from at least 1654, up to 1670. One sees therefore how Nicholas would have come to know Jane Clarke a young woman, of only 19 when she married him. She was no doubt attractive, and her father's rectorship would have been so too. He was eligible too with his Oxford career, and share of family money.

Nicholas and Jane have many children The first Innie, perhaps Jane or Jennie named presumably for her mother baptised 28 September 1666. Next is Robert Meese 23rd October 1669, named after Nicholas's father. He will become a barrister as not only Edmund Meese in the 1580s and but also his namesake his grandfather, a student of Gray's Inn in 1612. [Hegarty]. The third child is Walwyn 27 December 1670, named after his maternal grandfather he will eventually 'inherit' the Oxhill vicarage that had been his grandfather's. Elizabeth 13 September 1672 named perhaps after her aunt in Heythrop Martha Meese 11 November 1673 is perhaps named after one of the various aunts and is a name that Perletta will give to one of her daughters. The next three names are the most interesting. Harcourt Meese is baptised 10th or 11th May 1676.

There is no other Harcourt Meese recorded on family search 1550-1800. Indeed, as a first name for anyone it hardly occurs. There are four baptisms between 1590 1680, two in one Bicester family. Whereas many first names simply recall a past relative, this name must have been deliberately chosen.

Before considering why this name was chosen, it is best to establish what Harcourt Meese did. Harcourt Meese is recorded as a 2nd and later 1st Lieutenant on HMS Centurion from 1693. [ADM/L/C/78] If he was a second lieutenant in 1693, he had probably been in the Navy several years earlier from perhaps age 13, an age when many apprenticeships would start, something many Meeses went through. For the period of the Journal, HMS Centurion seems to have been patrolling waters from Spain up the channel to the North Sea and back. A career in the Navy involved not only defending England but also the West Indies, where his cousins George Meese and Captain Henry Searle both died in the 1690s, in the war against the French.

## **HARCOURT MEESE SIGNATURES ROYAL MARITIME MUSEUM, GREENWICH**

Harcourt has no record after 1702. He may have left the navy to stay in the West Indies. In any event he would have connections with people who had been there. He would

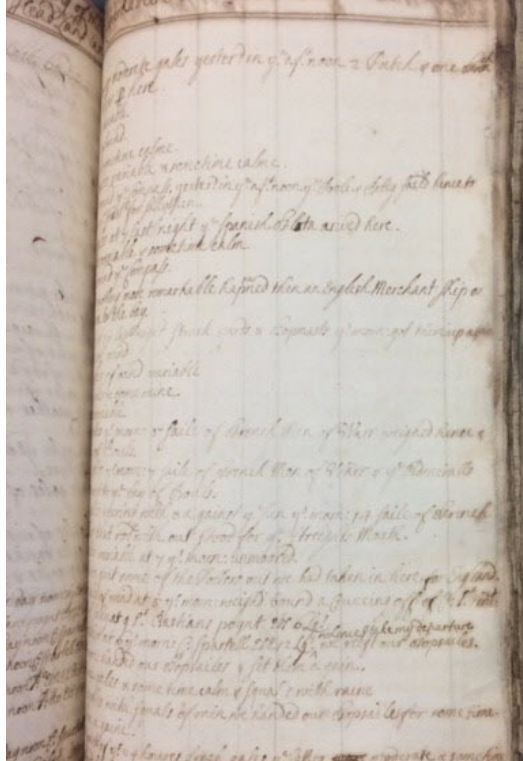
probably share the attitudes of other officers on slavery and Empire. Year by year his captain gave a certificate as to his sobriety diligence.

With Walwyn and Robert one has the sense that the name has sealed the person's career. So, with Harcourt one wonders if his career in the Navy had been determined for him.

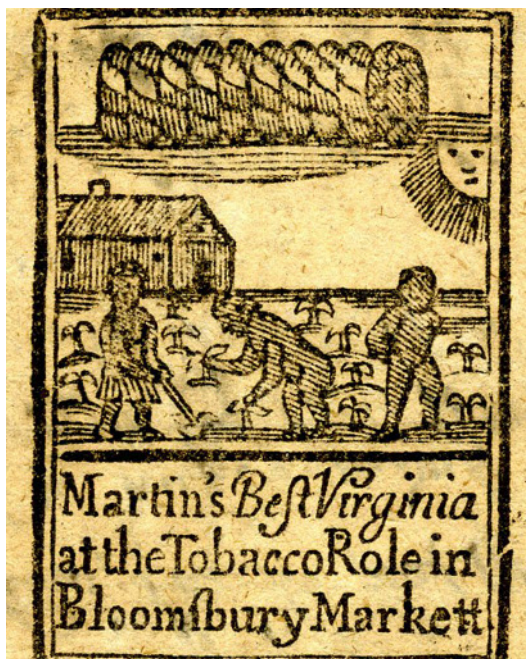
Harcourt is the surname of an English gentleman, from Oxfordshire, Oxford and Inns of court, known to have visited Nevis in 1609. In 1613 he published 'A relation of a voyage to Guyana 1613, republished in 1626. He had a vision of great riches to come from colonies in the Americas. He had followed Raleigh to Guyana and found the Indians still remembered him. Harcourt a name to fit a man who would go to the West Indies and so chosen by Nicholas Meese for his son?

Nicholas in choosing this name and that of his twins in 1677 could have in mind the career of his brother Henry returned in about 1670 from Maryland and Virginia. By now he was a rich merchant trading in tobacco and lending money to colonial Maryland. He had plantations in North America, which he bequeathed to his four children in his will. The North American colonies traded extensively with the West Indian islands and used them too as 'refuelling' stations.

Marguerite and Perletta the twin daughters are baptised 2nd May 1677, and it seems the 20th August 1677. Perletta is almost unique in English first names, Margaret quite common. But Margarett and Perletta have a certain rhythm. Perla means pearl but why not name Perletta Peal and why choose a diminutive in Spanish? A possible connection lies in the



*Harcourt Meese's signature at the Royal Maritime Museum Greenwich*



*18th century tobacco advertisement*

island of Santa Margarita lying off Venezuela, not so far from Nevis, discovered by Columbus and soon known for its pearls. The pearls were fished by West African divers, slaves with this specific skill brought over by the Spanish

If Nicholas had in mind the pearls of the West Indies when he baptised his twin daughters then what could be more natural than that Perletta marry a plantation owner from there?

A few years later he becomes also rector of Idlicote. The providential names have ceased. He baptised there William 7 November 1681 and Katherine 31 October 1683 suggesting by the baptism there that he and Jane had moved to the vicarage there. This would leave the Oxhill vicarage vacant for Perletta. Many of her children will be baptised at Oxhill. The West Indies were dangerous not only for their fevers but their wars with the French, far better live in Oxhill in the otherwise empty vicarage. However after Nicholas's death in 1715, Walwyn becomes the rector and her later children are baptised in Cropredy. Her sister Margaret married from there the 18 Oct 1719 .



The twin sisters may well have lived together until this marriage. Both were living together from some time in the 1730s, in this house in Greenwich (right) with its blue plaque for C Day-Lewis a 20th century poet laureate. Their father's dream of wealth for them came true. Perletta's daughter Finetta would live there to 1783.

## MYRTILLA AND SLAVERY

It is not possible to say what Nicholas Meese's attitude to slavery was. The Church of England permitted it. Slavery is shown in the Old and New Testament without outright condemnation.

One can say there is a cluster of black slaves in the local registers. In Oxhill besides the entries for Myrtilla in 1705, there is one for Will, probably William Archus a black being

adult baptised 29th December 1700. There is Margaret Lucy a black belonging to Lady Underhill baptised 1st January 1690, not 1689 as the previous entries are December 1689, in the Idlicote registers. Nicholas Meese is responsible for the baptisms in these three cases, more perhaps than any other clerics of his time. Margaret Lucy probably owes her surname to the Lucy family. Lady Underhill came from the Lucy family so one presumes they gave Margaret to her. In 1680 Kneller painted a portrait of Captain Thomas Lucy with a black slave and in 1735 a black child called Philip Lucy was baptised at Charlecote.[3]. This portrait has a local precedent in a portrait of Robert or Francis Greville in Warwick with a black servant or slave after 1646. Sir Arthur Throckmorton, from the Coughton, Warwickshire family had a black slave in 1589. The Lucy baptisms in particular may have put the family in mind of baptising Myrtilla.

Gentry behaviour towards Blacks is more likely to induce imitation on the part of Nicholas Meese than rejection. The examples of the lives of his brother Henry, his nephew George, and own children point the same way.


What may be unique about Myrtilla's case is her gravestone. Hers is the earliest of all the gravestones cited in a listing on the Black presence website. That may indicate something of the feeling of Perletta if not her father.




Enhanced view of memorial inscription to Myrtilla  
on the Slave's Grave




# Radway Grange Open Gardens



Saturday 14 & Sunday 15 May 2022  
2.00pm - 5.00pm each day




Proceeds to be donated to the  
Radway playground project



£5 per person, free entry for under 10 years

Tickets can be pre-purchased from:  
[www.radwayevents.co.uk](http://www.radwayevents.co.uk)  
or scan the QR code below



Limited number of tickets available  
Cash only event on the day  
Search for Radway Village Community  
on Facebook to find out more



# WHAT'S ON IN & AROUND OXHILL

## MAY

Sun 8th	15:00	Afternoon Tea, the Old Chapel
Wed 18th	18:00	Oxhill Garden Club Plant Sale, Village Hall
Thurs 19th	14:00-14:30	Mobile Library, outside Village Hall
Wed 25th	19:00	Village Hall AGM, Village Hall
Every Thursday	11:45ish	Awesome Coffee Van, outside Peacock Pub

## JUNE

2nd - 4th The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

## PC MEETINGS

The date of the next PC Meeting is **Tuesday, 10 May 2022 at 7.30pm**. This meeting will be held in the Village Hall. The Agenda for the meeting will be shown on the PC Website or a physical copy will be displayed on the Notice Board by the Peacock a few days before the meeting.

If you want any request to be included for consideration at the above meeting please send details to the Clerk ([oxhillpc@btinternet.com](mailto:oxhillpc@btinternet.com)) at least 10 days prior to the meeting to ensure that it is included on the publicly visible Agenda.

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE OXHILL NEWS

The editors welcome any pictures, photographs, drawings, poems, puzzles, recipes, announcements or items of local news for possible inclusion in The Oxhill News. Submissions must be received by the 15th of each month for publication in the following month.

Please email: [oxhill.news.editor@gmail.com](mailto:oxhill.news.editor@gmail.com)

## BIN COLLECTION CALENDAR



Check the date on the calendar to identify which bins go out for collection.



May						
M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					